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The Absent Empire: The United States and the South American Regional Subsystem

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THE ABSENT EMPIRE: THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOUTH AMERICAN
REGIONAL SUBSYSTEM

by

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ABSTRACT

THE ABSENT EMPIRE: THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOUTH AMERICAN REGIONAL SUBSYSTEM

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Old Dominion University, 2011
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The United States often acted in Latin America as an empire. Nevertheless, there has been an obvious dissimilarity between US actions in South America and US actions in the rest of Latin America, which is illustrated by the fact that the United States never sent troops to invade a South American country. While geographic distance and strategic considerations may have played a role, they provide at best incomplete explanations for US relative absence south of Panama. The fact that the United States has had a distinct pattern of interactions with South America is thus not captured by the typical concept of Latin America. By recuperating the virtually neglected literature on regional subsystems, this dissertation maintains that researchers of inter-American relations would greatly benefit from a characterization that reflected more regional realities than entrenched preconceptions. Such a characterization would mean subdividing the Western Hemisphere in two regional subsystems: North and South America. This subdivision allows for uncovering regional dynamics that can help explain US relative absence from South America when contrasted to the remainder of Latin America. This dissertation argues that the role of Brazil as a status quo regional power in South America is the key to understanding this phenomenon. Through a historical analysis focusing on specific cases spanning three centuries, this research demonstrates that Brazil has deliberately affected the calculations of costs and benefits of a more significant US involvement in

South America. While in the past Brazil has taken actions that resulted in increasing the benefits of US limited involvement in South American affairs, in more recent times it has sought to increase the costs of a more significant US presence. The concluding session considers some of the theoretical and political implications of the framework laid out by this research.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|----------|---|
| ALADI | <i>Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración</i> (Latin American Integration Association) |
| CACM | Central American Common Market |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| EAI | Enterprise for the Americas Initiative |
| EEC | European Economic Community |
| ESG | <i>Escuela Superior de Guerra</i> (Superior School of War) |
| FTAA | Free Trade Area of the Americas |
| GATT | General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| KGB | <i>Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti</i> (Committee for State Security) |
| LAFTA | Latin American Free Trade Association |
| Mercosur | <i>Mercado Común del Sur</i> (Southern Common Market) |
| NAFTA | North American Free Trade Agreement |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| OAS | Organization of American States |
| RSC | Regional Security Complex |
| SAFTA | South American Free Trade Agreement |
| Unasur | <i>Unión de Naciones Suramericanas</i> (Union of South American Nations) |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The first factor that students of US foreign policy toward Latin America immediately have to take into consideration is the obvious disparity of power between the United States and its southern neighbors. Faced with this reality, the second factor should be to avoid the temptation of translating this indisputable fact into monocausal explanations for the international relations of Latin America. While the first aspect has been diligently observed by virtually all studies of the subject, the second has met more resistance. Indeed, every important event in the history of Latin America, from peace to war, from stability to instability, for good or for bad, can be attributed to actions planned in offices in Washington under the usual framework of US-Latin American relations. As one US Ambassador once observed: “We Americans tend to be societally ethnocentric - almost narcissistic - exaggerating the influence of both our positive and our negative actions in the world.”¹ This perspective is greatly helped by the fact that the customary frameworks for the study of international relations are focused on the great powers.

But reality seems to indicate that if there is a region in which it would apparently be difficult to exaggerate US influence, this would be Latin America. After all, history shows an impressive array of military interventions, both overt and covert, territory annexations, and other actions that indeed decisively changed the course of events in Latin American countries. Hence, even before the United States was described as a global

This dissertation follows the format requirements of the *Chicago Manual of Style 15th Edition*. The translations from foreign language sources are those of the author

¹ Nathaniel Davis, *The Last Two Years of Salvador Allende* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), x.

empire after the end of the Second World War, it could already be characterized as a regional empire in the Western Hemisphere. For an extended period of their historical relationship, whenever a country in Latin America was perceived as contradicting US interests, Washington would repeatedly dispatch the Marines or find someone else to do the job. Nevertheless, any brief examination of these actions reveals an obvious geographic pattern concentrated north of the Panama Canal, with the vast South American region basically spared the US imperial urge. This abundance of involvement in one half of Latin America in contrast to a relative absence in the other half has been translated in an abundance of studies focusing on the former in parallel to a relative absence of studies focusing on the latter. The general result is that analyses of US policies toward “Latin America” are mostly analyses of US policies toward Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, with occasional references to South American countries to give an impression of homogeneity or, when the researcher chooses to focus on South American countries, the framework used is basically the same as ones used to analyze US relations with the rest of Latin America. In this latter view, the distinctiveness of South American international relations is occasionally acknowledged, but it is studied as a special case within the broader Latin American framework. In other words, these analyses interpret the different level of US involvement in South America as a mere quantitative issue.

This dissertation aims to address this issue by first laying out a theoretical framework for understanding and investigating South America that captures and explains the distinct dynamics that have characterized the US relationship with that region in contrast to the rest of Latin America. The most evident aspect illustrating these different

dynamics is the fact that, compared to its historical over involvement in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, the United States has been a relatively absent empire in South America. This relative absence must be explained not just by looking into domestic factors in the United States, but also by detecting how particular regional dynamics help to shape the outcome of US foreign policies. Thus, the second aim of this research is to demonstrate that there is a distinct pattern of interactions within Latin America that justify treating South America as a distinct regional subsystem. In other words, South America must be distinguished from the rest of Latin America not only because of the different patterns of relations in respect to the United States, but also because there is clearly a distinctive pattern of relations within South America that is not captured by the customary concept of Latin America. The practical significance of this is that Latin America as a concept has limited applicability in the field of international relations, and its theoretical predominance often leads to error of analysis, judgment and, ultimately, policies. In fact, this research implies that dropping the concept of Latin America altogether in favor of the notion of a South and a North American regional subsystem would lead to a significant refinement of the understanding of the international relations in the Western Hemisphere.

THE ARGUMENT

In labeling the United States as an “absent empire” in South America, this dissertation makes a relatively bold claim. After all, the references to Latin America as the US “backyard” are abundant and the United States indeed frequently acted in the

region as a true empire. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the very notion of Latin America when used to study phenomena related to the discipline of international relations is inaccurate. A central assumption of this dissertation is that analysts of inter-American relations would greatly benefit from a change in perspective that substitutes the culturally defined notion of Latin America for the concept of a North and a South American regional subsystem. The use of Latin America as a theoretical concept in US scholarship tends to generate two main fallacies in the study of international relations in the Western Hemisphere. Firstly, it assumes that there is somehow a level of integration - or at least a very important integrating variable - that gives the region identified as Latin America a degree of homogeneity. Secondly, and as a corollary of the first, it implicitly accepts that there is a pattern of US foreign policy towards the region that justifies treating it as a coherent unit.

This dissertation disputes both claims. First, it demonstrates that the variables generally used to give homogeneity to Latin America, such as culture and level of development, are not evenly used to define other regions in the world, and in any case they are largely irrelevant for the purposes of international relations research. Accordingly, when only the relevant variables are used, the notion of Latin America loses its usefulness. Based on the literature on regional subsystems, it is argued that the relevant variables should be based on geography and patterns of interactions, and that these criteria tend to lead to the identification of a North and a South American regional subsystem. Second, and following this characterization, this research argues that a fundamental distinction should be made regarding the outcomes of US foreign policies in each of the two regional subsystems in the Western Hemisphere. This fundamental

difference is captured by this dissertation's depiction of the United States as an absent empire in South America, as opposed to being historically a very present empire in the remainder of Latin America.

Thus, the central question of this research is *what factors explain US relative absence from South America?* Although the literature has obviously noted the fact that US foreign policies toward South America have displayed distinct characteristics in relation to the rest of Latin America, the explanations given for this phenomenon have been unsatisfactory at best, especially since the central factor typically mentioned has been simply that South America is too far away, while Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean are too close to the United States. In addition, at the same time it acknowledges this distinction, this literature also assumes that there is no reason to see South America as a different region. In other words, the argument goes that the United States has had the same policies towards the whole of Latin America, but because the region south of the Panama Canal is deemed as having little strategic significance, it has paid relatively little attention to South America. This is indeed a compelling argument, but although it may explain a certain lack of interest, it fails to provide explanations for the instances when the United States did pay attention to South America and yet the outcome was the same relative absence of imperial policies. Moreover, as this explanation holds that the United States has paid little attention to South America, researchers have followed suit and the result is that US relative absence from South America has been translated in a relative absence of South America in US studies on Latin America.

This dissertation inverts the traditional argument indicated above and claims that US relative absence from South America, even in the instances when the United States demonstrated a clear interest in the region, must be understood not only in terms of South America's distance from the United States, but also in terms of its "proximity" to Brazil. The hypothesis put forward by this dissertation is that Brazil is a status quo regional power that has affected the calculations of costs and benefits of a more significant US involvement in South America. It is shown that while Brazil historically played a role that resulted in increasing the benefits of relatively limited US involvement in the region, in more recent times it has sought to increase the costs of a more substantial US presence. As this research intends to demonstrate, this change can be understood not as a result of particular domestic circumstances in Brazil, but because of changes in the international and regional environments, with Brazilian regional strategic goal of preserving its position in the South American subsystem remaining by and large invariable throughout time. Hence, the fact that South America has been considered as a region of little strategic relevance for the United States is but part of the explanation, in which it allowed Brazil to play this role with fewer resources than it would have been case had South America been located in a more strategically important region.

THE IDEA OF LATIN AMERICA

The concept of Latin America is fairly recent in its origins and it is usually attributed as originally a French concept - where the idea of a Latin "race" was common - used since at least the late 1830s, but particularly in the 1860s to give an ideological justification for French imperialism in Mexico and to create the impression of cultural

affinity in the region, of which France would be the natural “protectress”² against the Anglo-Saxons in the north. In a pioneering study, John Leady Phelan maintains that the first use of the expression *l’Amérique latine* was in article entitled “*Situation de la latinité*” by L. M. Tisserand, published in January 1861.³ Nevertheless, more recent studies demonstrate that “a number of Spanish American writers and intellectuals – many of them, it is true, resident in Paris – had used the expression ‘América Latina’ several years earlier.”⁴ Joao Feres Jr. claims that the first usage of the term was made by the Colombian poet Jose Maria Torres de Caicedo, who spent most of his life in France, in a poem called *Las Dos Americas* (The Two Americas), in 1856.⁵ As the title of Caicedo’s poem makes clear, not much differently from the French, these Spanish American writers employed the concept of *América Latina* to reinforce a common identity in the Americas in opposition to the “other” America in the North. In fact, Caicedo proposed a union of the “Latin American” republics against the threat of “North American” aggression, which became a particularly relevant issue after the Mexican-American War in the 1840s.

Therefore, before there was Latin America, there was *Amérique Latine* and *América Latina*. For these writers though, Latin America was synonymous with the Spanish American republics, and hence Brazil - which was not only Portuguese-speaking but was also a monarchy - was not included. Likewise, Brazilians also did not consider themselves as Latin American, not least because Brazil on one hand emphasized its

² Michel Chevalier, *Society, Manners, and Politics in the United States*, Reprints of Economic Classics (New York,: A. M. Kelley, 1966).

³ John Leady Phelan, "Pan-Latinism, French Intervention in Mexico (1861–7) and the Genesis of the Idea of Latin America," In *Conciencia y Autenticidad Históricas; Escritos en Homenaje a Edmundo O’Gorman, Emerito, Aetatis Anno LX Dicata*, ed. Juan Antonio Ortega y Medina (México: UNAM, 1968).

⁴ Leslie Bethell, "Brazil and 'Latin America'," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 42, no. 03 (2010): 458.

⁵ João Feres Jr., "A History of the Concept of Latin America in the United States: Misrecognition and Social Scientific Discourse" (Phd Diss., City University Of New York, 2003), 68.

American identity, and on the other it had a certain feeling of foreignness in relation to its Spanish-speaking neighbors; therefore it was not interested in creating a sense of separation in regards to the United States. But with the popularization of the term in US academic circles, the idea that the nations south of the United States could be considered as part of a region called Latin America gained ground and with that Brazil was also included. As Leslie Bethell argues, it was only when “América Latina became Latin America” in the 1920s and 1930s, but most particularly after the Second World War, that Brazil became to be regarded as part of a region called Latin America.⁶ Yet, only much later on, during the Cold War, would some Brazilian writers begin to identify themselves as Latin Americans, which was particularly evident among the Left seeking to reinforce the ties with the Cuban Revolution as well as the distance from the United States.

In the United States, the expression “Latin America” can be found in official documentation by the late 1890s, and before that the term used was “Spanish America” or “Hispanic America.” But it was only after the First World War that “Latin America” became widely used in English. A research in the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library revealed that before 1900 there was not a single publication containing the term “Latin America” in its title, while between 1900 and 1910 only two publications were found, between 1911 and 1920 twenty-three, between 1921 and 1930 twenty-five, with steady growth after that and burgeoning after 1960,⁷ when “Latin American studies” became somewhat fashionable in the United States, owing specially to the Cuban Revolution. An interesting illustration of the problems associated with the concept of

⁶ Bethell, "Brazil and 'Latin America'," 474.

⁷ Feres Jr., "A History of the Concept of Latin America in the United States: Misrecognition and Social Scientific Discourse," 363.

Latin America, and its struggle to be accepted as an adequate referent during its initial stages of existence, can be seen on the occasion of the foundation of the *Hispanic American Historical Review*, in 1918, which was the first journal in the United States dedicated to the study of Latin America. The editors considered naming the journal as “Latin American Historical Review,” but they eventually concluded that the term was “ambiguous, misleading, and unscientific.”⁸ They argued that the original notion of “Hispania” included both Spain and Portugal.

As it was the case when the term was employed both by French and Spanish intellectuals, in the United States the concept of Latin America was also used on one hand to create the impression of cultural affinity among the countries south of the United States, and on the other hand to create a sense of separation between the United States and its less developed “Latin” neighbors. Feres Jr. argues that the notion of Latin America, far from being a value-free geographic concept, has been used in the United States to perpetuate and justify an asymmetry between the perceptions of the American “self” in opposition to the Latin American “other.”⁹ For Feres Jr., “Latin America” can be understood as an “asymmetric concept, i.e., a concept defined in opposition to a collective self-image and used to name a generalized other.”¹⁰

In any case, since its inception, it seems clear that the relatively recent concept of Latin America, in its Spanish, French, and English versions, has been employed not on a geographical basis but on perceived cultural similarities and in order to establish a clear

⁸ Charles E. Chapman, "The Founding of the Review," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 1, no. 1 (1918): 17.

⁹ Feres Jr., "A History of the Concept of Latin America in the United States: Misrecognition and Social Scientific Discourse."

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

contrast in relation to the United States. Given the definitional problems associated with the concept, the fact that it is a unique case of widespread use of a term to identify a region based on cultural referents, as well as its racialist implications, it is remarkable that “Latin America” has been uncritically accepted as a scientific concept used to study the international relations of the Western Hemisphere.

THE QUESTION OF EMPIRE

This dissertation makes reference to the United States as an “empire” or as occasionally pursuing “imperial policies.” Although the United States has been referred to as an empire innumerable times,¹¹ the definition of what this term effectively means in this context is far from a settled issue. In fact, empire is one of those terms in the social sciences that have acquired significant emotional undertones, and as such it has inevitably lost some of its scientific usefulness. This issue is especially controversial in the US context since it was a country born in reaction to an overseas empire and is

¹¹ The examples are virtually endless, but some include, in chronological order: Robert Rutherford McCormick, *The American Empire* (Chicago: Chicago Tribune, 1952); Amaury De Riencourt, *The American Empire* (New York,: Dial Press, 1968); Sidney Lens, *The Forging of the American Empire* (New York,: Crowell, 1971); Jan Knippers Black, *Sentinels of Empire : the United States and Latin American Militarism* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986); Geir Lundestad, "Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952," *Journal of Peace Research* 23, no. 3 (1986); Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, *The Imperial Temptation: The New World Order and America's Purpose* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992); John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1997); Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*, 35th anniversary ed. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998); A. J. Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002); Michael Ignatieff, "The American Empire," *New York Times Magazine*, May 1, 2003; Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Price of America's Empire* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004); Chalmers A. Johnson, *Blowback: The costs and Consequences of American Empire* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004); Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism*, The American Empire Project. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006); David C. Hendrickson, *Union, Nation, or Empire: the American Debate over International Relations, 1789-1941* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009).

therefore imbued with a strong anti-imperialistic rhetoric. While it is not the purpose of this dissertation to offer a final answer to this definitional problem, it is important to make some observations regarding the broad sense in which the term is employed here, even if the term is admittedly used in a loose way.

First of all, a clear conceptual distinction must be made between empire and the notion of imperialism. Indeed, considering the way the concepts have evolved, it seems pretty reasonable to treat empire and imperialism as two distinct sets of literature. A common factor present in the studies of imperialism is an economic interpretation of history, which is insufficient to understand instances when motivations other than economic are present.¹² As Norman Etherington, who wrote one of the best accounts on the subject, remarks, “an enormous amount of confusion has been generated by using empire, colonialism, and imperialism as synonyms. Theories of imperialism were not theories of empire.”¹³ Some may argue that, as the concept of imperialism has historically been appropriated by the left to denounce alleged evils of capitalism, an effort to separate it from the broader concept of empire is an attempt to avoid an ideological contamination. This is not entirely wrong and even William Appleman Williams, who could hardly be considered a right wing writer, acknowledges the problems of putting empire and imperialism in the same basket. Williams observed that “the semantic trouble began with the causal appropriation of the world *imperial*, originally associated with empire, to

¹² Classical studies on imperialism as used in the modern sense include the pioneering work of John Hobson and the influential piece by Vladimir Lenin: J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (New York,: J. Pott & Company, 1902); Vladimir Ilich Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York,: International publishers, 1933).

¹³ Norman Etherington, *Theories of Imperialism: War, Conquest, and Capital* (London; Totowa, N.J.: Croom Helm; Barnes & Noble Books, 1984), 267. For other good accounts on theories of imperialism see: Richard Koebner and Helmut Dan Schmidt, *Imperialism; The Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840-1960* (Cambridge University Press, 1964); Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Theories of Imperialism* (New York: Random House, 1980); Earle Micajah Winslow, *The Pattern of Imperialism: A Study in the Theories of Power* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1948).

describe an evolving set of *different* relationships between advanced industrial societies and the rest of the world.”¹⁴ Likewise, George Liska observes that an “imperial function” is distinctive from “its deformative 'ism', aggressively expansionist imperialism.”¹⁵ Thus, it is not merely a matter of avoiding an ideological corruption, but of elucidating the fact that empire and the conventional notion of imperialism refer in fact to two different sets of relationships. This research is about empire, not imperialism.

The second important characteristic that must be emphasized regarding the use of the term empire in the present dissertation is that it does not refer to a political entity but to *a system of relationships that may or may not be pursued as a strategy by powerful states*. In this sense, the question is not whether the United States *is* or *is not* an empire, but whether or not it has pursued imperial solutions for specific problems. In other words, power is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the establishment of imperial policies, and so the question becomes whether the reality of US power was or was not translated in imperial ways in order to pursue specific policy objectives. This perspective is similar to the one adopted by modern students of empire, such as George Liska, Geir Lundestad, Michael Doyle, Alexander Motyl, Alexander Wendt and Daniel Friedheim.¹⁶

¹⁴ William Appleman Williams, *Empire as a Way of Life: An Essay on the Causes and Character of America's Present Predicament, along with a Few Thoughts about an Alternative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 7.

¹⁵ George Liska, *Twilight of a Hegemon: The Late Career of Imperial America* (Dallas: University Press of America, 2003), 55.

¹⁶ ———, *Imperial America: The International Politics of Primacy* (Baltimore,.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967); ———, *Twilight of a Hegemony: The Late Career of Imperial America*; Geir Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe since 1945: From "Empire" by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); ———, "Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952."; ———, *The American Empire and other Studies of US Foreign Policy in a Comparative Perspective* (Oslo; Oxford: Norwegian University Press; Oxford University Press [distributor], 1990); Michael W. Doyle, *Empires*, Cornell studies in comparative history. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986); Alexander J. Motyl, "Why Empires Reemerge: Imperial Collapse and Imperial Revival in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics* 31, no. 2 (1999); ———, "Is Everything Empire? Is Empire Everything?," *Comparative Politics* 38, no. 2 (2006); Alexander Wendt and

All these authors define empire not as a political entity but first and foremost as a “system” or “structure” of relationships, which allows the researcher to identify which relationships between individual states display imperial characteristics and which do not. Basically, the kind of relationship that characterizes an imperial system described by these authors is one in which the anarchical aspect of the international system is challenged and elements of hierarchy come into the fore. For Doyle, who wrote one of the most relevant works that attempts to give a scientific definition to the concept, an empire is a “system of interaction” characterized by “control of both foreign and domestic policy” whereas hegemony is characterized only by the control of the first.¹⁷ Thus, imperial control is understood as “one form of the exercise of asymmetrical influence and power” among others.¹⁸ This distinction has also been made by Adam Watson, who distinguished between hegemony, “where a powerful state controls the external relations of its client states,” and what the author calls dominion, “where it also intervenes in their domestic affairs.”¹⁹

One useful way to differentiate an imperial relationship from other kinds of relationships, such as hegemony for example, is by relating it to the concepts of autonomy and sovereignty. While the latter relates to the classical Westphalian conception and means that the state “is subject to no other state and has full and exclusive powers within its jurisdiction,”²⁰ the first can be broadly understood from the perspective of international relations as the notion of freedom of action, or the opposite of

Daniel Friedheim, "Hierarchy under Anarchy: Informal Empire and the East German State," *International Organization* 49, no. 4 (1995).

¹⁷ Doyle, *Empires*: 12, 40.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁹ Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1992), 123.

²⁰ Stanley Hoffmann, *Janus and Minerva: Essays in the Theory and Practice of International Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 172-73.

dependence. Doyle remarks that while a dependent state is “a state subject to limited constraints on its economic, social, and (indirectly) political autonomy,” an imperialized state is one whose “effective sovereignty” is controlled by the imperial state.²¹ Similarly, a recent study on the subject of empire has defined an “imperial rule” as “a relationship in which a state assumes some degree of sovereign political control over a subordinate polity.”²² A sovereign state may enjoy more or less autonomy in the pursuit of its objectives on the international arena without necessarily affecting its condition of sovereignty. As Kenneth Waltz commented, “to say that a state is sovereign means that it decides for itself how it will cope with its internal and external problems, including whether or not to seek assistance from others and in doing so to limit its freedom by making commitments to them.”²³ This limitation in freedom that Waltz refers to can be interpreted as the autonomy aspect, which claims that the more limits are placed on its freedom, the less autonomy a state has. Because the condition of sovereignty requires a hierarchical structure in which there is no higher authority within a given territory above that of the state that controls it, whenever an imperial relationship is established, a new hierarchy is in place and the result is loss of sovereignty. For Roberto Russell and Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, who studied the question of autonomy and sovereignty specifically within the context of Latin America, the first

was more a South American issue than a Latin American one. In northern Latin America (of which Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean form a part), the accent was more on the question of sovereignty, given that this region has historically been the object of diverse uses of force by the United States—conquest and annexation of territories, invasion and military intervention, covert

²¹ Doyle, *Empires*: 12-13.

²² Paul K. MacDonald, “Those Who Forget Historiography are Doomed to Republish it: Empire, Imperialism and Contemporary Debates about American Power,” *Review of International Studies* 35, no. 1 (2009): 81.

²³ Kenneth Neal Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 1st ed. (Boston, Mass.: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 96.

operations, and so on. South America, from Colombia to Argentina, on the other hand, had a relatively greater margin for diplomatic, commercial, and cultural maneuvering with respect to Washington. It is thus not surprising that most of the literature on the subject of autonomy has been produced in South America and, more specifically, in the Southern Cone.²⁴

Therefore, when this dissertation refers to the United States as an “absent empire” in South America, it does not imply that this country has been absent in that particular regional subsystem, which would be nonsense, but that a system of relationships between the United States and South America that could be accurately characterized as being imperial in nature has not been established. This observation is even more pertinent when one considers the kind of policies that the United States repeatedly pursued in Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, policies that have historically demonstrated obvious imperial characteristics, the clearest evidence for which being the fact that the US sent troops to decisively affect domestic politics in these regions a number of times during the nineteenth and twentieth century in order to enforce its interests.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

This introductory chapter has made reference to the notion of “regional subsystems.” This concept is not nearly as popular in international relations literature as the notion of an “international system.” While the latter is the focus of much of the research in the field, the former is sparsely studied, and the result has generally been much conceptual confusion and little scientific validity. In order to examine the trajectory of studies focusing on regional subsystems, chapter 2 offers a review of the literature

²⁴ Roberto Russell and Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, "From Antagonistic Autonomy to Relational Autonomy: A Theoretical Reflection from the Southern Cone," *Latin American Politics and Society* 45, no. 1 (2003): 7.

produced on this subject. This chapter seeks to accomplish three main goals. First, it aims to rediscover this literature, which was born around the late fifties but had died down by the late seventies, swallowed first by the neorealist approach during the Cold War, which tended to neglect regional dynamics, and later by the regionalist approach after the Cold War, which tended to neglect systemic factors. Second, by organizing and clearly locating the literature on regional subsystem within the broader international relations literature, I am able to offer a definition of a regional subsystem by arguing that there are only two necessary and sufficient criteria for its establishment: geography and patterns of interaction. Finally, with this conceptualization in mind, I examine how the literature on regional subsystems has been applied to the study of Latin American international relations before and after the Cold War. I show that while earlier works did not make any analytical differentiation between South America and the rest of Latin America, some of the more recent works have discovered the advantages of doing so.

Chapter 3 addresses the advantages of the regional subsystemic approach and sets the methodological basis of the dissertation. I present the regional subsystemic approach as a useful theoretical tool to the study of international relations in terms of overcoming the traditional international-domestic dualism that has prevailed in the field, and argue that the regional level can be seen as a third level of analysis, between the domestic and the international. I define a regional subsystem as a *subset of the international system reflecting the outcome of actual patterns of interactions – including the whole spectrum between conflict and cooperation - among countries in condition of geographic proximity*. Then I indicate what the regional subsystemic approach can accomplish and explore in more detail the definitional aspect by showing what a regional subsystem is

and what it is not, and by stressing the main aspects of the definition. In addition, I make the case for a constructivist approach to the study of regional subsystems as social systems and for the importance of a historical approach based on the notion that agents and structures are not independent variables but are co-determined. The main implication of this constructivist approach is the fact that regional subsystems should be studied by taking into consideration both the spatial dimension and the time dimension.

While chapter 3 makes the methodological case for a regional subsystemic approach to the study of South America, chapter 4 makes the specific case for the existence of a South American regional subsystem. I show that the existence of a South American regional subsystem is a corollary of the methodology and the definition developed on the previous chapter which considers the necessary and sufficient criteria of geographic proximity and patterns of interaction and logically leads to the conclusion that South America should be treated as a separate regional subsystem in the Americas. After some quick geographical considerations, I define what I mean by patterns of interactions and indicate a way to operationalize these patterns in order to include a broad range of interactions, both conflictive and cooperative in nature. Then I apply this to the case of Latin America in order to demonstrate the existence of a South American subsystem, and to emphasize the importance of Brazil within this subsystem. In addition, I draw from Robert Gilpin's work on international system change and adapt these theories to the regional subsystemic approach in order to understand what factors can potentially lead to regional subsystemic change. With this framework in mind, I am then adequately equipped to address the central claim of this dissertation, which is that the United States has been an "absent empire" in South America. I examine the usual explanations

provided by the literature for this relative absence, showing that there is a latent discourse of US absence from South America that is not clearly articulated. After presenting a critique of these explanations, I offer my own point of view based on the role of Brazil affecting the structures of costs and benefits of subsystemic change for the United States. This basic explanation forms the framework for the subsequent case studies.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 are composed of case studies selected following three main criteria. First, if a pattern of interaction was to be demonstrated, they should encompass a lengthy period of time. Indeed the chapters cover a period spanning three centuries, going from the time of the independence of Latin American states until recent years. Second, because the focus is on the regional subsystem, it would be useful if the case studies comprised different configurations of the international system in order to demonstrate that regional subsystemic dynamics remained relatively constant regardless of variations in the international system. Thus, each case study corresponds to a distinct configuration of the international system and of the corresponding US position in it: multipolar, with the United States as a regional power; bipolar, with the United States as a global power; and unipolar, with the United States as the remaining superpower. Third, the cases selected should consider periods when the United States clearly demonstrated an interest in South America in order to detect how its policies interacted with the South American subsystem. Otherwise, just demonstrating US absence in terms of neglect would be repeating the existing argument in the literature. Although they cover lengthy periods of time, each chapter focuses on a specific US policy in which South America was an important component. Therefore, chapter 5 focuses on the Monroe Doctrine in the nineteenth century, chapter 6 on the US actions in Chile during the Cold War, and

chapter 7 on the US proposal for a Free Trade Area of the Americas in the post-Cold War period. The case studies show that for each period there is a corresponding Brazilian strategy affecting the structure of costs and benefits of US presence or absence. While for the first two periods Brazil sought to raise the benefits of US absence from the South American subsystem, in the latter period Brazil attempted to raise the costs of a more significant US presence. Lastly, chapter 8 presents the conclusions of the research, including some theoretical and policy implications.

CHAPTER 2

THE LITERATURE ON REGIONAL SUBSYSTEMS

Virtually as soon as the system's approach took hold in the field of international relations with Morton Kaplan's "System and Process in International Politics", first published in 1957,²⁵ a number of international relations' scholars reacted against the notion that international politics should be assumed as being "total and global," and that it was imperative to consider how the fact that international politics often has a "non-global character" would impact the application of systems theory.²⁶ Most of those scholars were area specialists and were concerned particularly with the connection between area studies and the emerging systems approach to international relations. What derived from this incorporation of systems theory into area studies was a subsystemic approach based on regional criteria.

The literature on regional subsystems (or "subordinate systems"²⁷, or "partial international systems"²⁸ as they have been called) gained momentum in the sixties and

²⁵ Morton A. Kaplan, *System and Process in International Politics* (New York: Wiley, 1957).

²⁶ Leonard Binder, "The Middle East as a Subordinate International System," *World Politics* 10, no. 3 (1958): 409.

²⁷ For example: *ibid*; Larry W. Bowman, "The Subordinate State System of Southern Africa," *International Studies Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (1968); Michael Brecher, "International Relations and Asian Studies: The Subordinate State System of Southern Asia," *World Politics* 15, no. 2 (1963); I. William Zartman, "Africa as a Subordinate State System in International Relations," *International Organization* 21, no. 3 (1967). Additionally, Peter Berton used the term "submacro" to refer to regional subsystems, while Michael Wallace talked about "cluster of nations". Peter Berton, "International Subsystems-A Submacro Approach to International Studies," *International Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1969); Michael D. Wallace, "Clusters of Nations in the Global System, 1865-1964: Some Preliminary Evidence," *International Studies Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (1975).

²⁸ For example: Stanley Hoffmann, "Discord in Community: The North Atlantic Area as a Partial International System," *International Organization* 17, no. 3 (1963); Karl Kaiser, "The Interaction Regional

seventies, but the success of the neorealist approach in the late seventies and its focus on the global level and the constraints imposed by the international system - which was a useful fit for the Cold War environment - eclipsed the regional approach.²⁹ After the end of the bipolar configuration, however, a new wave of studies taking the region as a referent for analysis appeared. The reasons for this resurgence are commonly attributed to the fact that great powers had less incentive to intervene after the end of the Cold War, which tended to give regions more autonomy to develop with a lower degree of outside influence. Nonetheless, this literature was generally more concerned with processes of regionalization based on cooperation and the establishment of institutions and thus little room was left for the regional subsystemic approach that had been developed up until the seventies.

THE REGIONAL SUBSYSTEMIC APPROACH

The regional subsystemic approach to studying regions, as contrasted to other possible approaches, takes into consideration two main factors in order to establish the existence of a regional subsystem: geographical proximity and patterns of interaction. In fact, an approach that takes only the first criterion is not necessarily systemic, while approaches considering only the second are not necessarily regional. The importance of these two aspects will be considered later on, as now the goal is to present an overview of this literature. Although not all authors presented here refer specifically to the term

Subsystems: Some Preliminary Notes on Recurrent Patterns and the Role of Superpowers," *World Politics* 21, no. 1 (1968).

²⁹ Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations 91 (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 77.

regional subsystem, they advance a concept of region that is systemic, and this justifies their inclusion in this literature.

Even though other criteria have been offered for the identification of a regional subsystem, geographic proximity and regular interactions can be considered as providing both necessary and sufficient conditions. Indeed, in a widely cited article analyzing the literature produced on regional systems up until the early seventies, William Thompson concluded that there were a “lack of uniformity” in the concept of regional subsystem and identified a total of twenty-one attributes mentioned in the literature, which he reduced to the two that were the “most consistently cited” and that were after all “already implied by the regional subsystem term”: proximity and regular interaction.³⁰ The other nineteen characteristics attributed to *regional subsystems*, such as common developmental status, degree of integration, or shared ethnic, cultural, and historical bonds were deemed neither necessary nor sufficient conditions.

A corollary of the concept of a regional subsystem is the notion that states in a regional subsystem have a degree of interdependence in the sense that “the activities of other members of the region (be they cooperative or antagonistic) are significant determinants of its foreign policy.”³¹ The caveat that the interactions can be “cooperative or antagonistic” is crucial, as the very notion of system is neutral vis-a-vis the nature of the relationship.³² Karl Kaiser defines a subsystem in terms of pattern of interaction and

³⁰ William R. Thompson, "The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory," *International Studies Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (1973): 96.

³¹ Lynn H. Miller, "Regional Organizations and Subordinate Systems," in *The International Politics of Regions*, ed. Louis J. Cantori and Steven L. Spiegel (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.,: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 1.

³² This is a key difference between the literature on regional subsystems and the literature on regionalism/regional integration as will be seen below.

adds an “awareness of interdependence among participating units” as a characteristic.³³

Similarly, Joseph Nye talks about a region as being characterized by “a limited number of states linked together by a geographical relationship and by a degree of mutual interdependence.”³⁴ Again, it is important to remember that interdependence may involve both conflictive and cooperative aspects, friends and enemies alike. In this sense, states are considered to be interdependent “when the outcome of an interaction for each depends on the choices of the others.”³⁵ As Wendt remarks, interdependence should be distinguished from “common fate”, such as a common threat. The difference between them is that common fate does not imply interaction.³⁶ The interdependence aspect that characterizes the regional level is important because it determines one key assumption of the regional subsystemic approach: the notion that for a number of countries with a number of issues, the regional setting, as “a relatively self-contained network of political interactions,”³⁷ is more relevant than the global setting in foreign policy actions.

Since Thompson’s article was published, there have been no noteworthy challenges to the notion that proximity and patterns of interactions are the key variables to define a regional subsystem. The most significant challenge comes perhaps from David Lake and Patrick Morgan, who concentrate on the security aspect and dropped both geography and interactions as factors in order to define a “regional security complex” in terms of shared “security externalities” among its members – with all other

³³ Kaiser, "The Interaction Regional Subsystems: Some Preliminary Notes on Recurrent Patterns and the Role of Superpowers," 87.

³⁴ Joseph S. Nye, *Pan-Africanism and East African Integration* (Cambridge, Mass.,: Harvard University Press, 1965), vii.

³⁵ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations 67 (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 344.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 353.

³⁷ Michael Haas, "International Subsystems: Stability and Polarity," *The American Political Science Review* 64, no. 1 (1970): 1970.

criteria being secondary.³⁸ However, the more recent scholarship has generally confirmed the conceptualization of geographic proximity combined with patterns of interaction as necessary conditions. Douglas Lemke, based on Haas' earlier conception, defined a regional subsystem in terms of states' "ability to interact militarily," which he claims to combine both proximity and interaction.³⁹ For Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, who developed the notion of regional security complexes, the chief criteria for defining a region must be "the actual patterns of security practices."⁴⁰ Michael Schulz et al also stress that a regional subsystem is characterized "by the patterns of interaction," and add that they can be manifested in a variety of fields such as economic, cultural, and security.⁴¹ Similarly, Arie Kacowicz maintains that regional subsystems "are characterized by cluster of states coexisting in geographical propinquity as interrelated units that sustain significant security, economic, and political relations."⁴²

Nevertheless, as Thompson had detected, besides geography and interactions, several other criteria have been used by a number scholars in order to identify a regional subsystem. Perhaps the most mentioned alternative, and the one that even presently seems to bring more problems to the clarity of the concept, has been the need for a collective identity and culture. Even for those authors who concentrate on the two main conditions presented hitherto, the temptation to include factors related to identity and

³⁸ David A. Lake, Patrick M. Morgan, and University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation., eds., *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

³⁹ Douglas Lemke, *Regions of War and Peace*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations 80 (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 69; Haas, "International Subsystems: Stability and Polarity," 1970.

⁴⁰ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*: 41.

⁴¹ Michael Schulz, Fredrik Söderbaum, and Joakim Öjendal, eds., *Regionalization in a Globalizing World: A Comparative Perspective on Forms, Actors, and Processes* (London ; New York: Zed Books, 2001), 251.

⁴² Arie Marcelo Kacowicz, *Zones of Peace in the Third World: South America and West Africa in Comparative Perspective*, SUNY Series in Global Politics (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 8.

culture has been strong. For instance, after making the case that a regional subsystem is characterized by the interrelatedness among states in a given geographic area, Louis Cantori and Steven Spiegel defined a regional subsystem as consisting of “one state, or two or more proximate and interacting states which have some common ethnic, linguistic, cultural, social, and historical bonds, and whose sense of identity is sometimes increased by the actions and attitudes of states external to the system.”⁴³ Likewise, Kacowicz, after insisting on the geographical and patterns of interactions criteria, feels it necessary to add that an important factor is a “subjective perception of belonging to a distinctive community and having a collective identity.”⁴⁴ Hans Holm and Georg Sorensen maintain that the concept of region is “multidimensional” and used Latin America as an example of “regions of identity.”⁴⁵ In none of these cases is it clear how the cultural criterion is helpful for the analysis of regional subsystems, except perhaps to justify the culturally-defined referent “Latin” in Latin America.

INITIAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE LITERATURE ON REGIONAL SUBSYSTEMS

Often-cited works of the initial wave of the literature on regional subsystems include Leonard Binder on the Middle East, which is considered one of the first works referring to the region as an analytical level between the global and the local, Michael Brecher on Southern Asia, Larry Bowman on Southern Africa, and George Modelski on

⁴³ Louis J. Cantori and Steven L. Spiegel, *The International Politics of Regions* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.,: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 6-7.

⁴⁴ Kacowicz, *Zones of Peace in the Third World: South America and West Africa in Comparative Perspective*: 8.

⁴⁵ Hans Henrik Holm and Georg Sørensen, eds., *Whose World Order?: Uneven Globalization and the End of the Cold War* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 2.

South-East Asia.⁴⁶ Because of their important early efforts to elaborate the notion of regional subsystems, a brief exploration of these four works is necessary.

Binder's pioneering work is especially relevant as he was perhaps the first author to acknowledge that approaching the study of international relations uniquely through the lenses of the international system - that is, the assumption that "international politics is total and global" - led to "a lack of refinement" when dealing with issues that did not necessarily fall under the bipolar logic. These issues were particularly germane when moving from a great-power view to the study of lesser powers. International politics should then be viewed, Binder argued, not "as a single global international system" but instead as several systems "with a variety of relationships".⁴⁷ The author recognized that the bipolar system of the Cold War was in fact the dominant system, thus the label "subordinate systems" to define what we call regional subsystems. Therefore, Binder maintained, the need for describing and analyzing these several systems would have to be an important task for area specialists and political scientists. Although he attempts to present some general guidelines, Binder does not offer specific criteria for the delimitation of such subordinate systems, but hints that they "must be referred to substantive problems which cannot be solved without the concept of area."⁴⁸ He then goes on to analyze the Middle East as a subordinate system, noticing the "inapplicability of the theory of bipolarity to Middle Eastern international politics"⁴⁹ both to describe "relations within the Middle East or between the major bipolar system itself and this

⁴⁶ Binder, "The Middle East as a Subordinate International System."; Brecher, "International Relations and Asian Studies: The Subordinate State System of Southern Asia."; Bowman, "The Subordinate State System of Southern Africa."; George Modelski, "International Relations and Area Studies: The Case of South-East Asia," *International Relations* 2, no. 3 (1961).

⁴⁷ Binder, "The Middle East as a Subordinate International System," 409.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 410.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

subordinate system.”⁵⁰ Binder argues that, notwithstanding a history of US and Soviet intervention, the Middle East region operated with rules that were “relatively independent of the 'rules' regulating the dominant bipolar system.”⁵¹ The consequence of these relatively independent rules would be that when external power was projected into a subordinate system it would be “refracted” by the particular dynamics of that system.⁵² Binder’s evident interest in the application of the concept of subordinate systems to analyze both the relationships within those systems as well as how those relationships related to the global system and affected the projection of power by the great powers is an important factor that often reappeared in subsequent studies.

Brecher also challenges the assumption of a single international system in the study of international politics. Like Binder, Brecher considers the international system to be the dominant system but not the only one, and while the international system approach was valid to explain certain features of international politics, there was “an array of inter-state problems, conflicts, and relationships among actors outside the blocs that have nothing or little to do with the bloc system”, and thus the notion of subordinate systems was pertinent.⁵³ In examining the “Southern Asian” subordinate system, Brecher notes that for all states composing that system, except China and India, the subordinate system “is the primary, if not exclusive, framework for foreign policy.”⁵⁴ Although Brecher focuses on Southern Asia, his article is fundamentally an attempt to build a systematic approach to the study of subordinate systems and in this sense it is a further step in

⁵⁰ Ibid., 427.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 415.

⁵³ Brecher, "International Relations and Asian Studies: The Subordinate State System of Southern Asia," 217.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 228.

relation to Binder's work. Brecher identifies five "definable subordinate systems": Middle Eastern, American, Southern Asian, West European, and West African.⁵⁵ He does not explain how to categorize the other regions in the world left out of the five subordinate systems he presents nor the specific composition of the other four systems he does not examine in detail, but offers six conditions for the conception of a subordinate system: delimited geographical scope, at least three actors, external recognition by other actors, internal recognition by the members, relative inferiority of power in relation to the powers composing the dominant system, and the fact that changes in the dominant system have a greater effect in the subordinate system than the reverse.⁵⁶ Brecher also identifies three "structural features" for classification of subordinate systems: the configuration (distribution and level) of power, organizational integration, and "character and frequency of interaction among the members."⁵⁷ In the case of the American system the structural features would be respectively: "unqualified domination" of the United States ; "impressive" organizational integration, but only "on paper;" and "continuous bilateral ties with the hegemonial power, but variation of intensity among Latin America – high in Central America and the "deep south", and lower among the other members.⁵⁸ Similarly to Binder's concern with the relationship between outside powers and subordinate systems, Brecher draws attention for the question of examining the links between the dominant and the subordinate systems, especially "the nature and degree of penetration" of one system into the other. In the case of the "American system," Brecher argues that

⁵⁵ Ibid., 218.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 220.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 221. Zartman offers a similar threefold categorization: configuration (level, distribution, basis and use) of power; normative characteristics; and nature of relations. Zartman, "Africa as a Subordinate State System in International Relations."

⁵⁸ Brecher, "International Relations and Asian Studies: The Subordinate State System of Southern Asia," 223-27.

thanks to American hegemony, and unlike Southern Asia, there was no power vacuum and hence Soviet penetration was prevented until the Cuban Revolution in 1959. .⁵⁹

In a similar effort to systematize the study of regional subsystems, Modelski, who actually prefers the term “regional subsystem” over “subordinate system,” identifies some characteristics of such systems.⁶⁰ The main innovation introduced by Modelski – and not generally followed by the subsequent literature – was the consideration of only small powers as constituting a regional subsystem. Thus, for Modelski, a regional subsystem is defined as “a less than universal pattern of relationships created by a cluster of small powers in a condition of proximity.”⁶¹ Therefore three conditions for the establishment of a regional subsystem are presented. The first of these conditions is the existence of “a number” of countries, which the author estimates in “around a dozen,” in order to “create favorable conditions for the emergence of certain system properties.” The second condition established by Modelski is the exclusion of great powers since they “tend to have world-wide and small powers only sub-system centered interests” and that “the great power’s impact upon a sub-system is the key to the understanding of its functioning.” Finally, a regional subsystem is geographically determined but “functionally diffuse” and should therefore be “distinguished from regional alliances which are functionally specific arrangements concluded by some or all members of a sub-system, usually with one or more great powers, for certain determinate political and military purposes.”⁶² Modelski also adds that a crucial factor to be taken into consideration is the level of influence that great powers have upon the regional

⁵⁹Ibid., 228.

⁶⁰ Modelski, "International Relations and Area Studies: The Case of South-East Asia."

⁶¹ Ibid., 148.

⁶² Ibid., 148-49.

subsystems. Hence, subsystems should be distinguished by the number of great powers that exert influence over them: if there is one dominant power, if there are two or more, or if the subsystem is relatively free from great power influence.⁶³

Although not identified by Brecher as one of his five subordinate systems, Bowman draws from Brecher's framework to argue for the existence of a subordinate system in Southern Africa, emphasizing that it is even more justified than the existence of a West African system mentioned by Brecher. According to Bowman, one central factor that would give unity to this subordinate system is the regional economic dominance of South Africa.⁶⁴ Besides arguing for the existence of a separate Southern African system, the main innovation Bowman introduced to the analysis of subordinate systems is related to the exploration of factors determining the reasons for the stability of the Southern African system in terms of its power to prevent outside intervention. This supposed power to prevent intervention has two sources, one defined negatively and other positively. The first relates to the "unpredictability of the direction of coerced change" in a "troubled" region of the world. This would have as a consequence a "lack of great power interest in a Southern Africa military adventure" which would constitute a "central pillar of support for the system." The second positive source of stability is identified as the "South African defense establishment," the existence of which would mean that "any

⁶³ Ibid., 149.

⁶⁴ Bowman, "The Subordinate State System of Southern Africa." For Zartman, the whole African continent should be treated as a subordinate system, based on the fact that it is so recognized by outsiders when making reference to region, and because of a supposed "sentimentalized continental identity." Different regions would then be just "subregional constellations within the continental pattern." Zartman, "Africa as a Subordinate State System in International Relations," 548-55.

invasion would meet strong resistance.”⁶⁵ Bowman can thus explain the stability of the South African system exclusively through references to subsystemic properties.

A common theme that appears in all early works mentioned above is the role of outside powers when they interact with the regional subsystem. This theme is taken up by Karl Kaiser in an article specifically addressed to examine how external factors, particularly the role of superpowers and the interactions with other subsystems, affect the evolution of regional subsystems.⁶⁶ Kaiser seems eager to demonstrate that a regional subsystem is not necessarily based on states. He develops a typology of regional subsystems based on “the location of the elites who make decisions on matters relevant to relations between the members of the regional subsystem.”⁶⁷ The three ideal types described by Kaiser are: the Transnational Society Subsystem (nongovernmental elites acting independent of states), Intergovernmental Regional System (decisions taken by governmental elites), and Comprehensive Regional Subsystem (a hybrid of the other two). But possibly more important than this typology developed by Kaiser are his considerations regarding the interaction between different regional subsystems. Two forms of interaction deserve particular consideration: the “demonstration effect” and the “threat effect.” For instance, Kaiser remarks that the process of European integration would have worked both as a model and as a threat (because the potential exclusion from the European system) to similar processes in Central and South America.⁶⁸ Regarding the role of superpowers, Kaiser points out “the desire to gain autonomy vis-à-vis the superpower” as a driving force for the consolidation of regional subsystems and again

⁶⁵ Bowman, “The Subordinate State System of Southern Africa,” 257.

⁶⁶ Kaiser, “The Interaction Regional Subsystems: Some Preliminary Notes on Recurrent Patterns and the Role of Superpowers.”

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 98-100.

mentions the examples of Central and South America, with the United States acting as an incentive for processes of regionalization.⁶⁹ Although Kaiser claims not to be interested in the study of regionalism and processes of integration, his analysis is focused on institutions such as the EEC and NATO, and he seems heavily influenced by the regionalist literature.⁷⁰

This first wave of literature in the fifties and sixties was followed by a renewed attempt to theorize the notion of regional subsystems in the seventies. Two major efforts during this period are Louis Cantori and Steven Spiegel's "The International Politics of Regions", and Bruce Russett's "International Regions and the International System".⁷¹ What distinguished these works from the early wave is their greater effort to define what exactly a regional subsystem consists of and how to delimit their borders. Russett's book is a particularly good example of this preoccupation. Faced with a number of criteria to demarcate regional subsystems, Russett selected five different criteria in order to come up with five different ways of categorizing regional subsystems: social-cultural homogeneity (economic development, religion, size, etc); political attitudes/external behavior (based on pattern of United Nations voting); political interdependence and institutions (measured by membership in international organizations); economic interdependence (measured by trade); and geographical proximity. For each of the five criteria, Russett presented a distinct possibility of demarcating a region. For example, according to the criterion of geographic proximity, there would be a region called Africa and another called Asia, but

⁶⁹ Ibid., 105.

⁷⁰ The distinction between the literature on regionalism and the literature on regional subsystems will be made below.

⁷¹ Louis J. Cantori and Steven L. Spiegel, *The International Politics of Regions* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970); Bruce M. Russett, *International Regions and the International System: A Study in Political Ecology* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975).

using the criterion of socio-cultural homogeneity or external behavior, a new “Afro-Asian” region is conceived. Russett’s book is especially important in the sense that it makes clear the different ways one can conceive a region depending on the criteria that are being used. However, beyond this effort of categorization, Russett does not offer much theoretical insight.⁷²

In comparison to Russett’s, Cantori and Spiegel’s book is more theoretically oriented. In contrast to Brecher, who a few years earlier had identified only five, Cantori and Spiegel identified a total of fifteen regional subsystems (Middle East, West Europe, East Europe, USSR, North America, Latin America, East Asia, Southwest Pacific, Southeast Asia, South Asia, North Africa, West Africa, Southern Africa, Central Africa, East Africa), but concentrated only on five of them for the purposes of their study (West Europe, Middle East, West Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America). It is interesting to note that the subsystems on which they chose to focus are very similar to the five subsystems identified by Brecher, but where Brecher identified an American system, Cantori and Spiegel see Latin America as separated from North America. Like some of the earlier works mentioned, Cantori and Spiegel offer some variables to compare and construct a typology of different regional subsystems: nature and level of cohesion (social, economic, political, organizational); nature of communications (high or low degree); level of power; and structure of relations (conflictual or cooperative). Likewise, mirroring the concerns presented in the first wave of literature on regional subsystems, the authors remark on the important role played by outside powers in defining those systems in their concept of “intrusive” systems. Here, two types of “externally based

⁷² For a criticism of Russett see Oran R. Young, "Review: Professor Russett: Industrious Tailor to a Naked Emperor," *World Politics* 21, no. 3 (1969).

regional participation” are offered: politically insignificant and politically significant involvement. The first “comprises material aid, trade, economic investment, and cultural and educational efforts which do not usually produce participation in the balance of power in the region”, while the latter

is expressed by the possession of a colony; economic or military aid producing an alteration in the balance of power in the region; formal alliance, troop commitment, or any agreement which causes the external power to act in ways which resemble the types of actions that would ordinarily be taken by a country indigenous to the region.⁷³

LATIN AMERICA IN THE EARLIER LITERATURE ON REGIONAL SUBSYSTEMS

With these theoretical efforts that accompanied the development of the literature on regional subsystems, the problem of how to treat Latin America became evident. As shown above, while some authors spoke of an American subsystem, others referred to a Latin American subsystem. With few exceptions, none of these works came to the conclusion that it would be analytically useful to treat South America as a separate subsystem,⁷⁴ and little was produced on Latin America. One of the few works applying the concept of regional subsystem and the theoretical insights of the earlier works in order to analyze specifically the case of an “emerging” Latin American subsystem did not bother to notice any distinctions between South America and the rest of the region.⁷⁵ This is even more remarkable considering the authors began their essay by mentioning Robert Burr, who talked explicitly about a South American system in contrast to the rest of the

⁷³ Cantori and Spiegel, *The International Politics of Regions*: 25-26.

⁷⁴ For an example of an exception to this rule, Kaiser is careful enough to refer always to “Central and South America”, although he does not explore this distinction. Kaiser, “The Interaction Regional Subsystems: Some Preliminary Notes on Recurrent Patterns and the Role of Superpowers.”

⁷⁵ Weston H. Agor and Andres Suarez, “The Emerging Latin American Political Subsystem,” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 30, no. 4 (1972).

region⁷⁶. But since the authors used the terms South America and Latin America interchangeably, this difference seems to have escaped their analysis. Another study on “Latin American International Politics,” treats Latin America as a coherent subsystem and at some point refers to the existence of “a balance of military power, particularly among the South American countries.”⁷⁷ The addition of the adverb *particularly* leads the reader to assume that there is a balance of military power among other parts of Latin America, but the author is silent about this possibility.

A common feature of the works making the case for treating Latin America as a coherent regional subsystem is their lack of compelling evidence for doing so. For example, in their study, Cantori and Spiegel acknowledge in a footnote that there may exist in fact some problems in considering Latin America as a single system, but they present evidence to justify their choice of doing so. It is worth noticing that, akin to other works, while all fifteen subsystems proposed by Cantori and Spiegel are geographically referenced, the only one that is culturally referenced is Latin America. Whereas the authors consider Latin America as a single system, they divide the African continent in North Africa, West Africa, Southern Africa, Central Africa, and East Africa. Their explanation for this profusion of African subsystems is that “the African continent is fragmented by a variety of local interactions, while in Latin America, despite great differences, the area is more interrelated.”⁷⁸ To demonstrate the supposed interrelatedness of the Latin American subsystem they mention the fact that the region has organizational

⁷⁶ Robert N. Burr, "The Balance of Power in Nineteenth-Century South America: An Exploratory Essay," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 35, no. 1 (1955). In fact, as will be shown, Burr argues that only South America had the conditions for a regional balance of power, in contrast to the rest of Latin America.

⁷⁷ Carlos Alberto Astiz, ed. *Latin American International Politics; Ambitions, Capabilities, and the National Interest of Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina* (Notre Dame Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 14.

⁷⁸ Cantori and Spiegel, *The International Politics of Regions*: 6.

cohesiveness, high degree of communication, and a low level of conflict – predictably, thanks to American hegemony. The evidence they offer, however, fails to make the case for either variable. To show “organizational cohesiveness” the authors mention the creation of LAFTA (Latin American Free Trade Association, today known as ALADI) and CACM (Central American Common Market) and conclude that “a high degree of cooperation of the alliance variety” exists in Latin America.⁷⁹ A closer look on the membership of these organizations, however, would only serve to reinforce the notion that there are actually two different systems at work in Latin America – while LAFTA included only South American countries (with the exception of Mexico), CACM included only Central American countries. To demonstrate the high degree of communication in Latin America, the authors footnote a work that focused specifically on South America.⁸⁰ Finally, arguing that the structure of relations in the region was characterized by low levels of conflicts, they except the Chaco War, and “a variety of disputes which include Peru vs. Ecuador, Chile vs. Peru and Bolivia, Argentina vs. Chile, and Argentina vs. Brazil,” which are all examples taken exclusively from South America.⁸¹

In his study on the influence of the United States and the Soviet Union in Latin America and Eastern Europe respectively, Edy Kauffman adopted Cantori and Spiegel’s framework but went even further in his defense of the existence of a single Latin American subsystem. The author uses the usual criteria of geography and patterns of interaction and concludes that given the “high intensity of interaction between the twenty Latin American countries,” Latin America could be treated as “a unified entity, while

⁷⁹ Ibid., 65.

⁸⁰ The book is Robert T. Brown, *Transport and the Economic Integration of South America* (Washington, Brookings Institution, Transport Research Program, 1966).

⁸¹ Cantori and Spiegel, *The International Politics of Regions*: 61. These issues will be explored in chapter 4.

Africa, Asia and Europe can be divided into two or more subsystems.”⁸² One major problem of Kauffman’s analysis is that he is not consistent with his own adopted criteria of geography plus patterns of interactions. For example, he justifies the exclusion of some countries from Latin America, like Jamaica and Guyana, on the basis of “different historical tradition and experience, and the linguistic, ethnic, religious and cultural differences of these countries.”⁸³ The rest of Latin America would be unified in terms of “common historical links, religion, race and culture, not only inside the component states but crosscutting them.”⁸⁴ Therefore, argues Kauffman, given this remarkable degree of “cohesiveness,” it would be “impossible to divide the subsystem into smaller regions.”⁸⁵ At some point, the author also considers particular governments such as Castro’s Cuba and Allende’s Chile as “exceptions.” They would not be part of the Latin American subsystem, the author affirms, because “they maintain policies different from the majority of countries in their respective subsystems” and thus they would constitute “exceptions to the rule of superpower domination in Latin America.”⁸⁶ This means that Kauffman implicitly includes the convergence of policies among its members as another variable for the constitution of a regional subsystem, which means that participating in the subsystem becomes a matter of domestic decision. It is interesting to note that in contrast, Eastern Europe is seen as a complex region with important cultural, historical, and economic differences, and it is considered single a subsystem basically because of penetration by the Soviet Union. Why Kauffman abandoned the cultural and historical

⁸² Edy Kaufman, *The Superpowers and their Spheres of Influence: The United States and the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe and Latin America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), 62.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 68. Simon Bolivar and San Martin are mentioned as being “the saviours of all the countries of the continent, and represent the ideal of continental unity” (p.71). Kaufman does not even bother to mention Brazil as an exception.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 117; 141.

criteria he used for Latin America when he switched to Eastern Europe is never explained to the reader.

There were, of course, some exceptions to the rule of lumping together Latin America as a regional subsystem in this earlier literature. Jorge Dominguez, for example, differentiates between a Middle American and a South American subsystem based on different patterns of territorial disputes and economic links. He adds that they are not only distinct but they “compete against each other” for the “economic favors” of the United States.⁸⁷ Russett had forewarned that although he used the concept of Latin America as a single subsystem, it seemed apparent to him that “not all Latin America is equally involved in this potential subsystem” but that a core group existed in Central America and the Caribbean, “with the nations in the lower half of South America, and of course the United States and Canada, very much more marginal.” In fact, with more careful scrutiny, the author detected discrepancies on trade, “where the hemisphere was split into two components, a North and Central American aggregate, and one for South America”, as well as in political behavior and international organizations.⁸⁸ Even so, in the few instances where Latin America was studied under the regional subsystemic perspective during this period, the general rule was that it was commonly treated as a single coherent unity, and that included Russett in spite of his caveats. Typically, this interpretation led to generalizations about international politics in the region - particularly concerning the relationship with the United States - that were often based on empirical data taken from Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.

⁸⁷ Jorge I. Dominguez, "Mice that do not Roar: Some Aspects of International Politics in the World's Peripheries," *International Organization* 25, no. 2 (1971): 194.

⁸⁸ Russett, *International Regions and the International System : A Study in Political Ecology*: 175.

REGIONAL SUBSYSTEMS AND THE END OF COLD WAR

Although a good amount of theoretical insights were produced by the literature on regional subsystems from the fifties to the seventies, the consolidation of neorealism as the main theoretical paradigm in international relations, especially after the publication of Kenneth Waltz's "Theory of International Politics" in 1979, eclipsed the subsystemic approach.⁸⁹ The main argument of neorealism was that the most important features of international politics could only be explained by references to systemic pressures which emanated from the anarchical environment of the international system. Any reference to interacting units should therefore be seen as "reductionist," as opposed to a "systemic" approach. Likewise, neoliberal reactions to neorealism also generally took the point of view of the global international system.⁹⁰ Consequently, the regional subsystems became a mere footnote when explaining international politics and little interest was directed to this literature. The resilience, and in a certain way the neatness, provided by the bipolar environment certainly contributed for the success of the neorealist approach. With two global superpowers struggling for supremacy, references to balance of power concerns seemed, in effect, to explain a great deal of international politics. The dissolution of the Soviet Union, however, changed the international landscape and removed an important incentive for intervention by the remaining superpower. This in turn gave more relative

⁸⁹ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

⁹⁰ For example, Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984); Stephen D. Krasner, ed. *International Regimes*, Cornell Studies in Political Economy (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977).

autonomy to regional subsystems which translated into new impulse to the literature focused on regional processes.

Despite this renewed interest, when scholars turned their attention to regional dynamics with the end of the Cold War, the majority of the literature produced dealt with processes of regionalization, i.e., when statesmen deliberately design strategies of regionalization through political-economic integration and formalize it in regional organizations. However, as Oran Young points out, it is analytically important to make a clear differentiation between institutions and organizations.⁹¹ While the first refers to social practices, the latter is translated into formal structures, or “material entities possessing physical location (or seats), offices, personnel, equipment, and budget.”⁹² The notion of a trade regime would be an example of the former, while the World Trade Organization would be an example of the latter. Likewise, regional subsystems can be understood as institutions, while regional trade agreements are organizations, and the first may or may not coincide with the latter. This commonly overlooked distinction is important because, as Young remarks, it allows the analyst to explore the relationships between institutions and organizations. Therefore, it can be argued that empirical observable processes that characterize a given region are based on actual patterns of interactions that may or may not be eventually formalized in formal organizations. In other words, the formalization of a regional subsystem in the form of a regional organization is not an independent phenomenon, but the two generally follow previous patterns of relationships that were socially constructed. The reality of interactions

⁹¹ Oran R. Young, *International Cooperation: Building Regimes for Natural Resources and the Environment*, Cornell Studies in Political Economy (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 31.

⁹² *Ibid.*

precedes the building of formal organizations, which does not mean to negate the fact that the establishment of formal organizations may affect the pattern of interactions in a region.⁹³

As a matter of fact, one could hypothesize that a regional subsystemic perspective based on actual patterns of interactions can help to predict the relevance and effectiveness of formal regionalist schemes.⁹⁴ As David Lake observes, rather than including the establishment of institutions in the definition of regional subsystem, “it is preferable to treat the degree of institutionalization as a dimension of possible variation for further analysis.”⁹⁵ Cooperation is just one extreme aspect of a spectrum of interactions in which the other end may be characterized as conflict. Hence, this dissertation will not focus on processes of regional cooperation among governments leading to policies of regionalization, but rather on the consolidation of regional subsystems as *subset of the international system reflecting the outcome of actual patterns of interactions – including the whole spectrum between conflict and cooperation - among countries in condition of geographic proximity*. It is not the concern of the present study to analyze states’ integration strategies or to raise normative concerns, but to make the case that the existence of regional subsystems as a social reality and as an analytical tool is an

⁹³ The idea that regional institutions shape patterns of interaction is a central claim in the literature on regional integration. See for example Edward D. Mansfield and Helen V. Milner, eds., *The Political Economy of Regionalism*, New Directions in World Politics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

⁹⁴ Kupchan makes a similar argument, but in contrast to the argument made here, his notion of region is more focused on identity and cooperation than on actual patterns of interactions. For Kupchan, “conceiving of a certain group of states as a region can be a necessary precondition for inducing them to behave as if they belong to that region and thus enabling them to share in the associated benefits. Structure shapes agency [...] Ideational change precedes, and does not follow from, changes of behavior. A region is conceived of, then it comes to exist” Charles Kupchan, “Regionalizing Europe’s Security: The Case for a New Mittleuropa,” in *The Political Economy of Regionalism*, ed. Edward D. Mansfield and Helen V. Milner (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 211.

⁹⁵ Lake, Morgan, and University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation., *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*, 47.

important factor to consider in the study of foreign policy. Therefore, this dissertation assumes that, while there may be some overlapping between the literature on regionalism and the literature on regional subsystems, the two can and should be clearly distinguished.⁹⁶

When this distinction is made, it becomes clear that while the “regionalist” literature burgeoned after the end of the Cold War, the literature on regional subsystems reappeared quietly and sparsely. Probably the most significant theoretical insight among the works taking the regional subsystemic perspective to study contemporary international politics is the development of the concept of “regional security complexes” by Barry Buzan and the so called “Copenhagen School.” Buzan adapted much of the early literature on regional subsystems in order to apply it specifically to the context of security. He criticized, for instance, Cantori and Spiegel for attempting “to tackle regions across the whole agenda of international relations” which would be “too complex and cumbersome to establish a generally followed understanding of region.” Thus, by focusing on security, Buzan seeks to “provide a narrower and more manageable

⁹⁶ The literature on processes of regionalization based on cooperation and the establishment of formal institutions is considerably large. By 1956, for example, one researcher observed that this literature had “already become voluminous” and offered thirty pages of selected bibliography on the subject: Norman J. Padelford, “A Selected Bibliography on Regionalism and Regional Arrangements,” *International Organization* 10, no. 4 (1956). With the end of the Cold War, the literature on regionalism burgeoned, at the same time that the literature on regional subsystems subsided, and in many cases they were treated as synonymous. See, for example, Louise L'Estrange Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell, *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Andrew Hurrell, “Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics,” *Review of International Studies* 21, no. 4 (1995); Mansfield and Milner, *The Political Economy of Regionalism*; Etel Solingen, *Regional Orders at Century's Dawn: Global and Domestic Influences on Grand Strategy*, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998); Björn Hettne, Andrés Inotai, and Osvaldo Sunkel, *Globalism and the New Regionalism*, International Political Economy Series. New regionalism v. 1 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Schulz, Söderbaum, and Öjendal, *Regionalization in a Globalizing World: A Comparative Perspective on Forms, Actors, and Processes*; Mary Farrell, Björn Hettne, and Luk van Langenhove, eds., *Global Politics of Regionalism: Theory and Practice* (London ; Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2005).

approach.”⁹⁷ The problem with this argument is that, while claiming to offer a “narrower” approach, the concept of security itself employed by Buzan and the Copenhagen School in general, is considerably broad, covering military, political, economic, societal, and environmental security.⁹⁸ Buzan characterizes a regional security complex, or RSC, as being “defined by durable patterns of amity and enmity taking the form of subglobal, geographically coherent patterns of security interdependence”⁹⁹ and that has a “mediating effect [...] on relations between the great powers and the local states.”¹⁰⁰ Consequently, even though geographical proximity is considered to be an important factor, the author remarks that RSCs “are socially constructed in the sense that they are contingent on the *security practice* of the actors.”¹⁰¹ The fact that RSCs are “socially constructed” evidences its “constructivists roots,” given the fact that regional subsystems are “dependent on the actions and interpretations of actors, not just a mechanical reflection of the distribution of power.”¹⁰² Hence, as regions are then defined both by geographic factors as well as “by the actual patterns of security practices,”¹⁰³ it becomes clear that the regional subsystemic perspective used by Buzan is similar to the one that was developed by the early literature as seen above. Moreover, reminiscent of the earlier literature on regional subsystems, Buzan acknowledges the effects of regional subsystems in the relations between great powers and states in a given subsystem.

⁹⁷ Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: L. Rienner, 1991), 189.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁹⁹ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*: 45.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 191.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 41.

At the same time that this double focus on geography and patterns of interactions places the notion of regional security complexes side by side with the literature on regional subsystems, it also distinguishes it from the notion of “security communities,” a concept initially developed by Karl Deutsch¹⁰⁴ in which boundaries are “determined by shared understanding rather than geography.”¹⁰⁵ Somewhere between these two literatures lies the notion of regional security complex as developed by David Lake and Patrick Morgan. Contrary to Buzan, Lake and Morgan do not define a regional security complex in terms of geography plus patterns of interactions, but on the idea of “security externalities”. A regional security complex is thus defined as “a set of states continually affected by one or more security externalities that emanate from a distinct geographic area.”¹⁰⁶ While Buzan sees geography as a necessary condition for a RSC, Lake and Morgan do not. Whereas Buzan stresses that “the actual patterns of security practices” are the key to define a RSC, Lake and Morgan maintain that since externalities are what define a RSC, they “may be created even when there is no manifest or measurable ‘interaction’ between states, such as the exchange of goods and services.”¹⁰⁷ The problem with this argument is that the authors seem to equal interactions with the “exchange of products or material,”¹⁰⁸ or only with practices of cooperation, which is evidently a mistakenly narrow definition of interaction.

¹⁰⁴ Karl Wolfgang Deutsch, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area; International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience*, Publications of the Center for Research on World Political Institutions (Princeton, : Princeton University Press, 1957).

¹⁰⁵ Emanuel Adler and Michael N. Barnett, eds., *Security Communities*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations 62 (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 58.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Other examples of the application of the insights generated by the literature on regional subsystems after the Cold War are Arie Kacowicz's "Zones of Peace in the Third World" and, more recently, Markus Kaim's "Great Powers and Regional Orders."¹⁰⁹ Kaim's edited book is dedicated to the analysis of the role of external powers in regional subsystems with a focus on the United States in the Persian Gulf. Kaim develops an analytical framework based on four variables that would determine an external actor's influence in regional subsystems: the level of domestic consensus such as "the influence of societal forces, predominantly manifested in the existence of specific interest or lobby groups;" intra-regional dynamics, or "the quality of a given regional order," which includes "intra-regional patterns of power and influence and the way the regional parties cooperate with, or confront, each other;" domestic politics of regional players; and the structure of the international system.¹¹⁰ These variables, Kaim maintains, "determine whether the United States can be influential in a regional order, when, and under what circumstances."¹¹¹

Kacowicz focuses on South America since the 1880s and West Africa since the sixties in order to explain "the maintenance of periods of extensive peace" in these two regions in spite of the fact that they have not been democracies for most of the given time frame.¹¹² Because Kacowicz is interested in explaining the "preservation of

¹⁰⁹ Kacowicz, *Zones of Peace in The Third World: South America and West Africa in Comparative Perspective*; Markus Kaim, ed. *Great Powers and Regional Orders: The United States and the Persian Gulf*, US Foreign Policy and Conflict in the Islamic World Series (Aldershot, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008).

¹¹⁰ _____, *Great Powers and Regional Orders: The United States and the Persian Gulf*, 5-8.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 263.

¹¹² Kacowicz, *Zones of Peace in the Third World : South America and West Africa in Comparative Perspective*: xi.

international peace at the regional level,”¹¹³ the framework of regional subsystems is uniquely well-suited for his purposes as it allows him to focus on a level between the dyadic and the international system and “to define several *zones* of peace instead of just one democratic zone.”¹¹⁴ Although Kacowicz presents several possible explanations for this phenomenon, he emphasizes the satisfaction with the territorial status quo by states within the region as the strongest factor. By focusing on regional subsystems, Kacowicz is able to produce some interesting insights, one of the most relevant of which is the idea to highlight the role of Brazil in the South American subsystem and at the same time situate the commonly overemphasized role of the United States in that region within perspective. Brazil, Kacowicz points out, has been the most territorially satisfied country in the subsystem and is the country that would have most to lose from a change in status quo, which “might affect the existing structure of prestige.”¹¹⁵ Therefore, as a “quintessential status quo power,” Brazil would play an important role in maintaining South America peace.¹¹⁶ Thus, the Brazilian interest in keeping the status quo in the region is presented by Kacowicz as being an important part of the explanation for the establishment of a zone of peace in South America since 1883, in contrast to Central America which is characterized as a zone of conflict. As Kacowicz argues, “in regional rather than systemic terms it can be argued that Brazil has played a more preponderant role as a potential hegemonic power than the United States.”¹¹⁷ Likewise, Buzan and

¹¹³ Ibid., 26.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 8.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 110.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 90.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 89.

Wæver argue that the role of Brazil as a “hegemonic stabilizer” is “more important than the often-made reference to the United States as a regional hegemon.”¹¹⁸

LATIN AMERICA IN THE RECENT LITERATURE ON REGIONAL SUBSYSTEMS

In relation to Latin America, a common trait of Buzan’s and Kacowicz’s approach is their insistence in making a clear differentiation between South America and the rest of Latin America, which allows them to provide interesting insights that would be lost if they did not make this distinction. In his study, Kacowicz found it necessary to “clearly distinguish between two regions or subsystems: Middle America [...] and South America.”¹¹⁹ The reason for this is that only in South America could Kacowicz identify a zone of peace, as Middle America was a zone of conflict until at least the end of the Cold War. Similarly, in their study on regional security complexes, Buzan and Wæver also found it useful to take apart South America as a distinct region from the point of view of security, while incorporating Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean into the North American complex. The authors justify that “despite recurrent hemispheric projects [...] North and South America have different security dynamics and connections are highly asymmetrical.”¹²⁰ In fact, Buzan and Wæver argue that the North American and the South American complex are not only dissimilar, but they also consist of different types of RSCs – while the South American RSC is characterized as a “standard” RSC, the North American would be a “centered” RSC. The difference is that a centered RSC is

¹¹⁸ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*: 313.

¹¹⁹ Kacowicz, *Zones of Peace in The Third World : South America and West Africa in Comparative Perspective*: 67.

¹²⁰ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*: 263.

dominated by a great power, while in the standard RSC the polarity is determined by regional powers.¹²¹ It is interesting to notice that this preoccupation in clearly distinguishing South America from the rest of Latin America was present only in an embryonic way in Buzan's earlier work. In "People, States, and Fear" Buzan found the Americas "somewhat harder to characterize" and made mention to a "Latin American complex" that was congruent with South America, but only by exclusion, since the fact that Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean were included as a "hegemonic complex" part of the North American complex, because they "have been so penetrated by the United States" that "any independent security dynamics" was "virtually impossible to discern."¹²² The direction of his subsequent work demonstrated how Buzan later refined this idea. Nevertheless, for some unexplained reason, Buzan and Waever felt it necessary at a certain point to justify treating South America as a distinct regional subsystem would be relevant only from the point of view of security. In fact, they claim that the South American subsystem "is a useful example of where the pattern of *regional security* does not line up with other patterns of regionality." However, aside from a general mention of the "southward ties" of Central America and the Caribbean, the authors do not explain what other "patterns of regionality" would make Latin America a coherent regional subsystem.¹²³

Like the works just mentioned, other works in the post Cold War era also tend to consider South America as a separate regional subsystem, yet they generally either view this as a new phenomenon or as restricted to some issue-areas. David Myers, for

¹²¹ Ibid., 61-62.

¹²² Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*: 206.

¹²³ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*: 264.

example, argued that the view of South America “as an autonomous international arena in its own right” was an “emerging” trend and while in the past “the United States once crafted policies for all of Latin America (the Monroe Doctrine, the Good Neighbor Policy, and the Alliance for Progress) more recent initiatives have centered on the Caribbean Basin.”¹²⁴ In Schulz et al there is a separate chapter dedicated to South America, but because of their focus on cooperation, the authors see this detachment of South America as a trend that began only with the end of the Cold War.¹²⁵

Perhaps the most important work applying the concept of regional subsystem exclusively to the case of Latin America is G. Pope Atkins’ “Latin America and the Caribbean in the International System.”¹²⁶ Contrary to Buzan/Waever and Kacowicz, Atkins chose to make the case that Latin America as a whole should be treated as a regional subsystem. Like the earlier works previously mentioned, the problem with this view is that Atkins is unable to make a convincing case why it is relevant to do so. The author claims that the criteria for the identification of boundaries of a subsystem are not only geographic proximity and “regularity of interactions among the units,” but also a “degree of mutual identity” based on “regional self-perception and the views of the external actors about the region.”¹²⁷ As it is the case with other authors who overlook the centrality of patterns of interaction in order to emphasize the notion of a supposed “mutual identity” in Latin America as a justification for treating it as a coherent system, Atkins also encounters some difficulties. The author argues that the reason some

¹²⁴ David J. Myers, ed. *Regional Hegemons: Threat Perception and Strategic Response* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 225,31.

¹²⁵ Schulz, Söderbaum, and Öjendal, *Regionalization in a Globalizing World: A Comparative Perspective on Forms, Actors, and Processes*, 245.

¹²⁶ G. Pope Atkins, *Latin America and the Caribbean in the International System*, 4th ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1999).

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

specialists prefer not to treat Latin America as a system would be because of “great differences and heterogeneity among the states within the region,” and that this view of Latin America as “so internally different” that “it cannot be treated as a whole” would be “exaggerated and misleading.”¹²⁸ However, the fact that internal differentiation is not a part of his own definition of a regional subsystem seems to have escaped his examination. In fact, states in a regional subsystem can be very different internally and still be part of the same regional subsystem. Therefore, Atkins is left with supposed notions of a shared identity and recognition by external actors – which would be proven by their “Latin American policies” – to make the case for treating Latin America as a regional subsystem.¹²⁹ When Atkins attempts to show patterns of interactions, he briefly mentions some regional organizations, with many of them, such as the Latin American Parliament, having little or no actual significance. Other important aspects of interaction, such as trade and conflicts, are not mentioned. Although claiming to be “appropriate” to treat Latin America as a single coherent unit, Atkins concedes that it is “incomplete” because it is necessary “to highlight those subsystems with different conditions,” and he mentions Mexico, Circum Caribbean, South America and Brazil as subsystems within the subsystem.¹³⁰ By considering individual countries, the author confuses a subsystem with a *regional* subsystem and does not make clear why this is analytically useful from the point of view of international relations. Atkins acknowledges that “much of the Mexican international subsystem has been and is largely divorced from the broader inter-American arena,” that “the United States has engaged in unilateral military intervention only in Mexico and the Circum-Caribbean,” and that the Southern Cone “forms a regional

¹²⁸ Ibid., 27-28.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 32.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 33.

subsystem distinguished by a number of characteristics that make it dramatically different from the northern sector of Latin America” with “intense patterns of interaction among themselves largely shaped by regional factors with minimal reference to outside states or intergovernmental organizations.”¹³¹ When these factors are taken into consideration, it becomes hard to justify why Atkins stick to the notion of a Latin American subsystem as analytically dominant in the field of international relations over the notion of a South American and a Middle American regional subsystems. In fact, throughout Atkins’ book there is not a single relevant explanation that is generated by the notion of a Latin American subsystem, as the author is constantly forced to remember the different patterns of interaction in the region. Chapter 4 aims to address these weaknesses by making the case for a South American subsystem. Before that though, a few theoretical considerations are necessary.

¹³¹ Ibid., 33-37.

CHAPTER 3

INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM AND REGIONAL SUBSYSTEMS

The concept of a subsystem as applied to international relations theory is straightforward: an international subsystem can be understood as “any subset” of the international system.¹³² In general, a subsystem can by and large be considered as “a component of a larger system” but one “with systemic properties of its own.”¹³³ Within this basic conception, a subsystem of the international system can actually be “any set of specific variables”¹³⁴ according to the purposes of the researcher.

In fact, the idea of a subsystem within the overall international system has been used to direct attention to different sets of variables. For example, when Kenneth Waltz refers to subsystem he means the nation-states.¹³⁵ Similarly, in his celebrated “level-of-analysis” essay, J. David Singer uses the notion of subsystem to refer to the domestic level – the choice would then be selecting between “the international system and the national sub-systems” as a referent for analysis.¹³⁶ For Morton Kaplan, subsystems can be either national actors or supranational actors such as the United Nations.¹³⁷ Thomas Robinson analyzed the “Communist System” as a subsystem of the larger international

¹³² Haas, “International Subsystems: Stability and Polarity,” 100.

¹³³ Thompson, “The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory,” 97.

¹³⁴ Morton A. Kaplan, *System and Process in International Politics*, ed. Andrew Lakoff and Stephen J. Collier, ECPR Classics (Colchester, UK: European Consortium for Political Research Press, 2005), 20.

¹³⁵ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 62-63.

¹³⁶ J. David Singer, “The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations,” *World Politics* 14, no. 1 (1961): 78.

¹³⁷ Kaplan, *System and Process in International Politics*.

system.¹³⁸ One aspect of Niklas Luhmann's Modern Systems Theory is the notion that subsystems in the international systems are functionally differentiated. Thus, functional subsystems would include politics, law, the economy and science.¹³⁹

Consequently, the choice to focus on *regional* subsystems is but one choice among other possibilities for subsystemic research in international relations. The justification for this preference is based on the belief that delimiting the boundaries of international subsystems in terms of regional factors can bring significant contributions for the understanding of international politics. Perhaps the main contribution would be overcoming the conventional domestic-international dualism that has shaped the majority of the researches in international relations, thereupon opening up different possibilities for analysis by taking a step down in relation to the neorealist focus on the global system and a step up in relation to the liberal focus on the domestic system. It is not a matter of attempting to integrate both theories, but of acknowledging the existence of a third level beyond the usual two that are considered by these theories. Yet, by identifying a new locus of investigation between the nation-state and the international system, between *domestic politics* and *international politics*, the *regional subsystemic approach* holds the promise of bringing together foreign policy analysis and theory of international politics. It therefore seeks to transcend the notion that theory of foreign policy and theory of international politics are utterly distinct¹⁴⁰ by using some of the theoretical framework provided by systemic theories of international relations in order to generate explanations

¹³⁸ Thomas W. Robinson, "Systems Theory and the Communist System," *International Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1969).

¹³⁹ Mathias Albert and Lena Hilkermeier, *Observing International Relations: Niklas Luhmann and World Politics*, The New International Relations (London ; New York: Routledge, 2004).

¹⁴⁰ For a classic defense of the distinction between the two see Kenneth N. Waltz, "International Politics is not Foreign Policy," *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (1996).. He also stresses this point in Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

for foreign policies' outcomes. Thus, a regional subsystemic approach is not "reductionist" as it does not make reference solely to unit-level attributes of particular states in order to provide explanations. This approach is in fact "systemic" but its main focus shifts from the global system to the regional system. It does not look for the domestic sources of foreign policy, but more for what one author called the "foreign sources of foreign policy".¹⁴¹

At this juncture, it is important to make a distinction between foreign policy formulation, which may be satisfactorily explained by references to domestic politics, and foreign policy outcomes, which cannot be fully understood without making reference to systemic processes. As Harold and Margaret Sprout demonstrated, for any political undertaking, it is important to differentiate between "decisions and operational results," in other words, to distinguish between "what is undertaken and what is accomplished."¹⁴² The regional subsystemic approach - akin to the "ecological perspective" advocated by Sprout and Sprout - is thus less interested in examining specific foreign policy decisions than analyzing the "achievements, actual or potential, with reference to a *given* undertaking or strategy."¹⁴³ Thus the methodological focus of regional subsystemic research should not be on what is undertaken, but on what is or can be accomplished. For that reason, this dissertation will not attempt to explain, for example, why the United States decided to intervene in Chile in the seventies or to push for a Free Trade Area of the Americas in the nineties, but how regional subsystemic dynamics contributed to the

¹⁴¹ Kjell Goldmann, "The Foreign Sources of Foreign Policy: Causes, Conditions, or Inputs?," *European Journal of Political Research* 4(1976).

¹⁴² Harold Hance Sprout and Margaret Tuttle Sprout, *The Ecological Perspective on Human Affairs, with Special Reference to International Politics* (Princeton, N.J.,: Published for the Princeton Center of International Studies by Princeton University Press, 1965), 12.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 213.

actual outcomes of these initiatives. In general terms, this means that the “absentness” thesis proposed here is demonstrated not in terms of thoughtful decision-making processes by US statesmen, but in terms of the particular dynamics of the South American regional subsystem and its interaction with the United States.

Additionally, the stress on *regional* subsystems postulates an explicit assumption that geography matters in international relations.¹⁴⁴ This is not only “because geographic dimensions [...] are nearly always significant in discussions of political undertakings and the operational results thereof,”¹⁴⁵ and it thus has an impact on the aforementioned distinction between decisions and outcomes, but especially because geography shapes a number of important interactions such as “the intensity of economic exchanges and the likelihood of war.”¹⁴⁶ This is particularly relevant for a concept of subsystem that is based on interactions ranging from the whole spectrum between cooperation and conflict. Moreover, as Hans Mouritzen argued, besides anarchy, the other fundamental characteristic of the international system is the fact that “its major units are mutually non-mobile,”¹⁴⁷ and while the consequences of anarchy have been thoroughly explored by the international relations literature, the consequences of “non-mobility” have consistently been overlooked. In fact, both theories of foreign policy as well as theories of international politics seem to neglect the importance of geography. As a result, most of the systemic theories of international relations, which were imported from other fields

¹⁴⁴ Some authors have made reference to “the power of place”. John A. Agnew and James S. Duncan, *The Power of Place: Bringing Together Geographical and Sociological Imaginations* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989); Harm J. De Blij, *The Power of Place : Geography, Destiny, and Globalization's Rough Landscape* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁴⁵ Sprout and Sprout, *The Ecological Perspective on Human Affairs, with Special Reference to International Politics*: 12.

¹⁴⁶ Peter J. Katzenstein, *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium*, Cornell Studies in Political Economy (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005), 12.

¹⁴⁷ Hans Mouritzen, *Theory and Reality of International Politics* (Aldershot ; Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate, 1998), 5.

where the basic units are mobile, do not take into account the fact that states, contrary to firms for example, are fixed in space.¹⁴⁸ The major implication of this characteristic is that there is “a cleavage between unit and system”¹⁴⁹ which “means that each state faces a specific and stable salient environment rather than the international system as a whole.”¹⁵⁰ The notion of “salient environment” that is explored by Mouritzen is coterminous with the concept of regional subsystem as employed by this research.

WHAT A REGIONAL SUBSYSTEM IS – AND WHAT IT IS NOT

Following the review of the literature presented in the previous chapter, there are two - and only two - sufficient and necessary variables for the establishment of a regional subsystem: geographic proximity and patterns of interaction. This reasonably parsimonious definition serves the purpose of international relations research and the field would greatly benefit if it was applied more consistently.

Indeed, the exclusive focus on geography plus patterns of interactions does not mean that there are no other ways to delimit a region depending on the purposes of the researcher. Students of geography, comparative politics, or anthropology may find it necessary to choose among a different set of variables, but if the purpose of the regional analysis is to refine our understanding of international politics and to advance theoretical propositions in this field, the regional subsystemic approach seems to be an adequate fit. For this reason, it may be useful to distinguish the term *regional subsystem* from the

¹⁴⁸ The analogy between international relations theory and microeconomics and thus between states and firms is famously made by Waltz in Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

¹⁴⁹ Mouritzen, *Theory and Reality of International Politics*: 8.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

usual notion of *region*, with the first being the focus of investigation of international relations.¹⁵¹ This distinction is not merely nominal since a region is not necessarily a regional subsystem. The perspective presented by this research, for instance, is that while the existence of Latin America as a region is justified from the point of view of other disciplines, within the field of international relations the view of a North and a South American subsystem is far more useful. The failure to make this distinction has led to recurrent errors of analysis, judgment, and policies. This is especially true when it comes to US foreign policy towards the hemisphere. In particular, it obscures fundamental differences between US foreign policy toward South America and the rest of Latin America. Additionally, it prevents a more sophisticated understanding of the role of Brazil, which has historically felt uncomfortable being labeled as “Latin American.”¹⁵²

As mentioned in the previous chapter, by focusing on geography and interaction a regional subsystem is understood here as being a *subset of the international system reflecting the outcome of actual patterns of interactions – including the whole spectrum between conflict and cooperation - among countries in condition of geographic proximity*. Members of the same regional subsystem have a higher degree of interaction among themselves in relation to members outside the subsystem, and as a result their primary foreign policies concerns lie within their own regional subsystem. That means that they usually seek first and foremost to establish a position within their regional subsystem before taking into account their situation in the international system as a whole – this fact, which is commonly neglected by studies focusing on great powers, is

¹⁵¹ Even though both terms have often been employed interchangeably by scholars of international politics, as for example in Cantori and Spiegel, *The International Politics of Regions*.

¹⁵² For an excellent study on Brazil’s historical discomfort as Latin American see: Leslie Bethell, "Brazil and 'Latin America'," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 42, no. 03 (2010).

especially consequential when it comes to analyzing the foreign policies of regional powers. Defining a regional subsystem only in terms of geographical proximity and patterns of interaction, without specifying a minimum number of states, means that there can be as many regional subsystems as there are neighboring interacting states. In fact, one could envisage a number of different regional subsystems containing only two states, and the fewer the number of states, the more coherence of the proposed subsystem. But at the same time, the larger the number of regional subsystems identified, the less parsimonious the subsystemic approach becomes. The question of drawing boundaries then is related to balancing the need for coherence with the need for parsimony in order to retain the usefulness of the regional subsystem concept as an analytical tool and a research program.

The definition proposed above has three main components that deserve careful consideration. The first is the fact that a regional subsystem is a subset of the international system as a whole, which means that the international system can be considered the subsystem's environment. This implicates the acknowledgment that pressures from the overall system coexist alongside subsystemic pressures, but the latter is usually more significant for the members of a regional subsystem. Second, a regional subsystem reflects *actual* patterns of interaction, which implies that it can only be detected by looking at past interactions and not by measuring the potential for interaction. A regional subsystem is conceived here as being a social system and, as James Rosenau has pointed out, "recurring - and therefore patterned - interaction is the distinguishing feature of a social system."¹⁵³ This means that attempts to operationalize a regional

¹⁵³ James N. Rosenau, "The Functioning of International Systems," *Background* 7, no. 3 (1963): 112.

subsystem in terms of, for example, the “ability to interact militarily”, is faulty in the sense that it does not reflect the actual patterns of interaction.¹⁵⁴

One needs to look at a reasonably long period of time in order to detect these patterns and bear in mind that “not all interactions are equally important in shaping the external behavior of an individual state; key patterns of interaction must be uncovered and explored.”¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the problem of operationalizing interaction is certainly challenging.¹⁵⁶ As Michael Wallace remarked, “nations may enter into relationships with one another in so many different ways, and interact by such a wide variety of means at so many different levels, that no single measure, however comprehensive, can claim to be completely adequate.”¹⁵⁷ In fact, the index presented by Wallace himself – based on common membership in international organizations – is highly inadequate as it concentrates only in the cooperation aspect of interaction, thus ignoring the possibility of subsystems in which conflictual relations prevail. Finally, the third characteristic of the definition suggested above is the fact that a regional subsystem includes members in condition of geographic proximity. The geographic criterion is crucial regardless of the level of interconnection or interdependence of the global international system, a condition that has led some scholars to discount the importance of geography.¹⁵⁸ As Mouritzen

¹⁵⁴ This criterion is offered by Lemke, *Regions of War and Peace*. The author gives an objective measurable definition of regional subsystems based on the distance that can be covered by day between a “home country's locus of power to the nearest point of its dyadic partner” in miles per day and its share of regional power. Then he calculates “what each state's adjusted power [to consider distance] is at other state's national capitals.” If it's less than 50% of the local state's power share, then it's not militarily reachable, thus it is not considered as part of a region.

¹⁵⁵ Michael Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel; Setting, Images, Process* (New Haven,: Yale University Press, 1972), 5.

¹⁵⁶ The next chapter seeks to offer a suggestion on how to operationalize patterns of interaction.

¹⁵⁷ Wallace, “Clusters of Nations in the Global System, 1865-1964: Some Preliminary Evidence,” 70.

¹⁵⁸ For example, by 1969 one author had stated that the geographic criterion used to identify regional subsystems “may no longer be sufficient in the face of a vastly expanding technology in electronic

suggests “even a perfectly interconnected international system does not overrule the fact that one is primarily connected to one's neighbors.”¹⁵⁹ Moreover, geographic proximity is positively related to intensity and opportunities for interaction, since distance is assumed to increase costs of both trade and conflict, for example.¹⁶⁰

But in order to define a regional subsystem, it is also necessary to make clear what it is not meant by regional subsystem, since there has been much conceptual confusion regarding the use of the term. Perhaps the two most common misconceptions are first, equating regional subsystem with processes of regional integration, and second, the emphasis on variables other than geography and pattern of interactions. The first common misconception, illustrated by the aforementioned index used by Wallace, can be explained by the fact that when the literature of regional subsystems emerged in the late fifties, the literature on regional integration was already well developed.¹⁶¹ Therefore, there was to some extent an amalgamation of these two literatures, and the inability to clearly make the distinction contributed to keeping the regional subsystemic approach in the fringes of international relations theory. As Thompson commented, the focus on

communications.” Instead, the criterion he used was based on “news flows analysis”: John H. Sigler, “News Flow in the North African International Sybsystem,” *International Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1969): 382.

¹⁵⁹ Mouritzen, *Theory and Reality of International Politics*: 16.

¹⁶⁰ As John Vasquez observes, “contiguity is the single largest factor promoting interactions.” John A. Vasquez, “Why Do Neighbors Fight? Proximity, Interaction, or Territoriality,” *Journal of Peace Research* 32, no. 3 (1995): 280. Well known theoretical perspectives in which the variable distance is central to determine opportunities for interactions are the “gravity model” developed by Jan Tinbergen, in the case of trade, and the “loss of strength gradient” developed by Kenneth Boulding, in the case of military power: Jan Tinbergen, *Shaping the World Economy: Suggestions for an International Economic Policy* (New York,: Twentieth Century Fund, 1962); Kenneth E. Boulding, *Conflict and Defense: A General Theory* (New York,: Harper, 1962). For a more recent examination on how distance affects conflict and cooperation see: Yuan-Ching Chang, Solomon W. Polachek, and John Robst, “Conflict and Trade: The Relationship between Geographic Distance and International Interactions,” *Journal of Socio-Economics* 33, no. 4 (2004).

¹⁶¹ As demonstrated by Padelford, “A Selected Bibliography on Regionalism and Regional Arrangements.”

institutions and integration are “legacies or at least ‘spillovers’ of the older interest in processes of regionalism.”¹⁶²

Systems analysis, as applied to the field of international relations, has never been only about cooperation, as the centrality of the notion of balance of power makes clear. As Lynn Miller reminds, the term system is “instrumentally neutral as used in the social sciences: it neither assumes an inevitable growth in cohesion and stability on the part of the processes studied nor does it prescribe for such growth.”¹⁶³ A regional subsystem can be less or more integrated, less or more institutionalized, but the degree of integration or institutionalization should not determine the existence of a regional subsystem. These two factors can, at best, serve as one variable to explain patterns of interactions - above all in the cooperation end of the interaction spectrum - or be used to classify different regional subsystems. The establishment of international organizations may have an effect on regional subsystem, but only as long as they affect patterns of interactions. Thus, the mere creation of international organizations should not be fundamental for regional subsystemic analysis. Equating integration with the establishment of a regional subsystem entails at least two important drawbacks. The first is neglecting to consider the role of conflict in regional subsystems. This limitation is particularly relevant if the focus of study is, for example, on security issues. The second is “the danger of circular reasoning” whereas a regional subsystemic perspective is used to explain processes of integration, but regional subsystems themselves are equated with integration.¹⁶⁴ This approach removes a lot of the explanatory power of regional subsystems - including

¹⁶² Thompson, "The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory," 99.

¹⁶³ Miller, "Regional Organizations and Subordinate Systems," 364.

¹⁶⁴ Young, "Review: Professor Russett: Industrious Tailor to a Naked Emperor," 494.

when it comes to explaining processes of regional integration. Nonetheless, this “spillover” from the regionalist literature remains somewhat in place until today, which makes it important to constantly remember, as Thompson did forty years ago, that “just as some students of regionalism apparently have little use for regional subsystems research [...], regional subsystems analysts need not immediately burden themselves with the problems of regional integration studies.”¹⁶⁵

The second common misconception of regional subsystems - and this is especially relevant for the case of Latin America - is the emphasis on variables other than geography and patterns of interactions. Most commonly, the notion of a common culture or identity, or of supposed historical affinities, occupy a central place in this second category of misconceptions. Since the term *Latin America* is itself culturally referenced – as opposed to being geographically referenced like every other standard regional classification in the world such as “Eastern Europe,” “West Africa,” or “Southeast Asia,” for example, the temptation to justify treating Latin America as a regional subsystem based on cultural factors is immense. Obviously, this is true only for those who bother offering an explanation for this choice, since many analysts just assume the existence of a Latin American subsystem as a self-evident truth. Apart from the discussion of the questionable wisdom of ascribing to Latin America a “common culture, religion, language, and race,”¹⁶⁶ culture and identity - as in the case of the establishment of international organizations - only matter for regional subsystemic analysis as long as they affect patterns of interaction. As a matter of fact, again as Thompson remarked, “with

¹⁶⁵Thompson, "The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory," 99.

¹⁶⁶ Agor and Suarez, "The Emerging Latin American Political Subsystem," 153.

emphasis on interaction, these characteristics are rendered unnecessary even though they may be frequently present and of some significance.”¹⁶⁷

If the culturally-defined concept of Latin America is used to refer to a regional subsystem, one has to prove that it is somehow more useful to group Mexico with Brazil than to group Mexico with the United States in a regional subsystem. If culture and identity are used as the main variables, the first grouping would arguably make more sense. However, if patterns of interaction (as well as geography, for that matter) are used as the central factor, the United States and Mexico should be grouped as part of a North American subsystem. The case of Mexico is illustrative because several analyses seem to assume that including Mexico in studies that mainly focus on South America makes the notion of a supposed Latin American subsystem more credible.¹⁶⁸ In the same manner, the inclusion of Mexico and other Latin American countries in an all-encompassing Latin American subsystem instead of in a North American subsystem is often justified in the basis of the level of development. Because the United States stands out as an industrialized developed country, the reasoning goes, it somehow does not make sense for it to be grouped with less developed Latin American states. However, like culture, a common level of development is not a criterion for the identification of a regional subsystem. In fact, as also rightfully pointed out by Thompson, “proximate and interacting actors may be rich or poor.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Thompson, "The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory," 99.

¹⁶⁸ A good example is Astiz, *Latin American International Politics; Ambitions, Capabilities, and the National Interest of Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina*. The section on Mexico's foreign policy obviously concentrates on its relation with the United States and it barely mentions Mexico's relations with other Latin American countries. When it does is mostly Cuba, such as the discussions about expelling Cuba from the Organization of American States.

¹⁶⁹ Thompson, "The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory," 101.

In sum, patterns of interaction and geographical proximity are the only two variables needed to detect a regional subsystem. Perhaps one of the major reasons that the regional subsystemic literature has not enjoyed the importance it deserves in the field of international relations is the irregularity in defining what a regional subsystem is. When it is equated with integration, it loses significance as it is absorbed by the overwhelmingly larger literature on regionalism. When other variables are included, it loses definitional consistency, thus becoming little useful for theoretical purposes. As Arthur Kalleberg remarks with reference to the study of political systems, in order to classify and compare, it is crucial that the criterion for classification be the same for all objects being compared.¹⁷⁰ Hence, if one uses cultural variables to define a regional subsystem in one area, but uses a different set of variables for another, the result is typically conceptual confusion and the subsequent loss of scientific utility.¹⁷¹

REGIONAL SUBSYSTEMS AND SOCIAL THEORY

This dissertation assumes that regional subsystems should be defined not only in terms of geographical considerations but also in terms of patterns of interactions. This reliance on patterns of interaction as a key element in delimiting the borders of a given regional subsystem has several implications, the most important being the fact that regional subsystems are treated as social systems. This proposition means that in order to

¹⁷⁰ Arthur L. Kalleberg, "The Logic of Comparison: A Methodological Note on the Comparative Study of Political Systems," *World Politics* 19, no. 1 (1966).

¹⁷¹ For example, Cantori and Spiegel argue that "primarily political boundaries divide East and West Europe; social and political boundaries divide Latin America and North America; geographic boundaries help to identify the Middle East and divide North Africa from the rest of Africa". The authors do not explain why a different set of criteria is used for different regions. Louis J. Cantori and Steven L. Spiegel, *The International Politics of Regions* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 6.

study the emergence and impact of such systems in the realm of international relations, it becomes necessary to use a methodological approach that moves beyond the mere calculations of power in order to incorporate social elements into the analysis so as to better understand the interplay between individual states and regional subsystems. In other words, the study of regional subsystems raises the need for the utilization of a social approach to international relations.

In fact, a central concern of social theories in general is the debate on the relationship between the individual and society or, more generically, between agents and structures. In the field of international relations, this debate can be put in terms of the relationship between individual states and the international system. For the purposes of the present study, the main preoccupation will be with the relationship between states and the regional subsystem. The fundamental question here is whether agents are determined by the structure of a particular social system, or the social system is determined by the agents. In other words, what is the causal relationship to be studied? Is it the international – or the regional – system that affects the behavior of states, or is it the foreign policy actions of states that shape the system? The answer to this puzzle is crucial, for it determines what the causal direction is and thus which is the independent and which is the dependent variable to be studied.

One of the most prominent answers to this dilemma in the field of international relations is offered by the neorealist approach. The neorealist answer to the puzzle of the relationship between agents and structure is straightforward – the behavior of the first is directly determined by the configuration of the latter. For Kenneth Waltz, the interaction among the units in a system should be clearly separated from the properties of the system.

The author insists that for a system approach to be valid, one must “carefully keep the attributes and interactions of the system's units out of the definition of its structure.”¹⁷² Thus, any approach that takes into account the interaction among the units should be classified as “reductionist,” in opposition to what would be a systemic approach. In other words, the neorealist approach implies a clear separation between the structure of the system and the interactions between the agents within it. The structure of the international system is thus defined not in terms of interaction among states, which is seen as exclusively a property of units, but in terms of how the units are arranged in relation to one another. “To define a structure,” Waltz claims, “requires ignoring how units relate with one another (how they interact) and concentrating on how they stand in relation to one another (how they are arranged and positioned). Interactions, as I have insisted, take place at the level of units [...]. The arrangement of units is a property of the system.”¹⁷³ For Waltz, the way the units are arranged within the international system is a function of the distribution of power, expressed fundamentally by military capabilities, and this view is in light of the anarchical character that is the ordering principle of the international system. Therefore, by ignoring the systemic effects of interaction among states and concentrating exclusively on the distribution of power, the neorealist approach becomes focused solely on material attributes and moves away from any interpretation that may include elements of a social nature.

These “mechanistic and unsocial”¹⁷⁴ conceptualizations form the base of the constructivist critique to neorealism. Whereas Waltz focuses on the material aspects of

¹⁷² Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 57.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁷⁴ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*: 100.

the international system, Alexander Wendt claims that social aspects are more relevant. The author contrasts the “materialistic” approach offered by neorealism with the “idealistic” approach proposed by constructivism. Hence, the international system should not so much be characterized by the distribution of power as it should be characterized by the “distribution of knowledge.” For Wendt, “the character of international life is determined by the beliefs and expectations that states have about each other, and these are constituted largely by social rather than material structures.”¹⁷⁵ Consequently, the basic criticism that Wendt advances toward neorealism is not directed toward its systemic approach, but to its materialism, since he claims that structure is also constituted by ideas. The author is careful enough to remark that this belief does not mean that material forces are not important, as a radical version of constructivism would claim. For Wendt, “ideas are based on and are regulated by an independently existing physical reality”¹⁷⁶ and therefore “the ideational aspect of international structure [...] supervenes on this material base.”¹⁷⁷ Among the material factors mentioned by Wendt as having an independent effect in the international life are “geography and natural resources,”¹⁷⁸ the first being central to the notion of regional subsystem developed in this research.

Since constructivism sees the structure of the international system as also being constituted by ideas, it is clear that agents have an effect on the structure, which complicates the neorealist view that the international system should be treated as an independent variable. Wendt rejects the Waltzian notion that in order to adopt structuralism as a methodological principle one must clearly separate the structure and

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 20.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 110.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 189.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 111.

the interaction of the agents within this structure, and argues that, because structure and agents are not independently existing entities, there cannot be established a causal relationship between them. "Structure exists, has effects, and evolves only because of agents and their practices,"¹⁷⁹ argues Wendt, and therefore "it is impossible for structures to have effects apart from the attributes and interactions of agents."¹⁸⁰ Similarly, Walter Carlsnaes maintains that foreign policy processes "are a consequence of, and can hence only be fully explained with reference to, a dynamic process in which both agents and structures causally condition each other over time,"¹⁸¹ and therefore there is the "need to view the relationship between actors and social structures in terms of mutual linkage rather than causal reduction."¹⁸² The methodological implication of such a view is that, as Wendt argues, causal theorizing loses its value in the analysis of international politics, and for that reason it should give way to "constitutive theorizing."¹⁸³ Since agents and structures are in fact "simultaneously involved in the production of social phenomena,"¹⁸⁴ the question of whether agents determine structure or vice-versa is misplaced since the relationship is actually one of "co-determination."¹⁸⁵ As social structures, the international system in general, and the regional subsystems in particular, are not independent of the actors that constitute them, and therefore the effects of interactions among the actors must become a key element in the analysis.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 185.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 12.

¹⁸¹ Walter Carlsnaes, "The Agency-Structure Problem in Foreign Policy Analysis," *International Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (1992): 256.

¹⁸² Ibid., 250.

¹⁸³ Wendt, *Social Theory of International politics*: 84ff.

¹⁸⁴ Alexander E. Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory," *International Organization* 41, no. 3 (1987): 361.

¹⁸⁵ Carlsnaes, "The Agency-Structure Problem in Foreign Policy Analysis." Also, Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory."

In separating the structural dimension from the unit level, Waltz, in the words of Wendt, “reifies” structure and ignores the effects of interaction.¹⁸⁶ In fact, for Waltz, units and the interactions among them are treated as being the same thing. To unravel this issue, Wendt adds a third level of analysis between unit and structure – the “interaction level.” By doing so, Wendt seeks to situate the “reductionist” charge within the unit level while keeping both the structural and the interaction level within the systemic camp. Thus, like Waltz, Wendt also discards theories that attempt to explain international politics only with reference to unit level factors, since this approach would exclude the possibility of a social analysis and treat states as being “autistic” as opposed to “social.”¹⁸⁷ But instead of putting the question in terms of either systemic or reductionist theories, he sees different kinds of systemic theories, one that he denominates “macro-structural” and the other as “micro-structural.” While macro-structural explanations, like the one offered by Waltz, would see the structure from the point of view of the system and would not seek to explain the behavior of individual actors, micro-structural explanations, by focusing on the interaction level, seeks to see structure from the point of view of agents. Recognizing the effects of agents on structure opens up the possibility of structural change through social interaction and the ensuing production and reproduction of identities and interests. Therefore, focusing exclusively on material elements means to lose sight of the ideational elements that are also important in international politics and that are a “continuing outcome of interaction, always in process.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*: 146.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 148.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 316.

THE TIME DIMENSION

If agents and structure both have constitutive effects on each other, but at the same time they are not the same thing, there remains the problem of how to treat them for analytical purposes. In other words, if, agents “are inseparable from social structures”¹⁸⁹ and, as James Rosenau remarks, they “are so inextricably linked, so endlessly interactive, that each is a product of the other,”¹⁹⁰ how can the analyst overcome this agent-structure challenge in order to identify dependent and independent variables and assess the effects that one may have over the other? The answer to this question begins by escaping from two kinds of methodological faults. One is to treat either the units or the system as completely autonomous, one having ascendancy over the other. This is the kind of problem that the neorealist approach falls upon. Nevertheless, there is a second methodological fault, which is treating both as “so inextricably linked” that it is impossible to separate the two and thus to evaluate how one can have influence upon the other. Both of these errors fall under what Margaret Archer termed the problem of “conflation.” The author detected three kinds of conflation: downward conflation, upwards conflation, and central conflation. The first two mean treating structure or agents “as an epiphenomenon of the other.”¹⁹¹ The problem with these approaches is that they lead to “rather crude unilateral accounts” of the social reality, therefore precluding any possibility of interplay between the two levels.¹⁹² Essentially, Archer adds, there is no

¹⁸⁹ Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory," 365.

¹⁹⁰ James N. Rosenau, *The Study of World Politics* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2006), 104.

¹⁹¹ Margaret Scotford Archer, *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory* (Cambridge Cambridgeshire ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 97.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, xiii.

interplay but “one-way domination.”¹⁹³ Conversely, the problem of central conflation means denying any autonomy to agents and structures, and treating them as “so tightly constitutive of one another” that it makes it impossible to separate the two¹⁹⁴ “and thus their influences upon one another cannot be unraveled.”¹⁹⁵ Hence, the major problem with central conflation is that even though it acknowledges the interplay between agents and structure that exists in the real world, “in the absence of any autonomy, it becomes impossible to *examine* their *interplay*.”¹⁹⁶ Since the “practical analyst of society needs to know not only *what social reality is*, but also *how to begin to explain it*” a methodology that addresses this concern becomes necessary in order to overcome “one-dimensional theorizing.”¹⁹⁷

The methodological solution for this dilemma is an alternative to conflation that Archer calls “analytical dualism.” The key here is that even though the entities themselves cannot be clearly separated, they are “analytically separable” and thus their interplay can be effectively explored.¹⁹⁸ This analytical distinction between agents and structures, as Archer explains, “allows for their independent variation and in turn makes the *interface* between them the site of intensive investigation.”¹⁹⁹ In practical terms, when agents and structure are analytically separable, one can attempt to explain a given system in the present by moving one stage back in time and referring to past interaction within the previous system. A system in fact originates from agency, Archer remarks, but with time it acquires autonomy. Hence, we solve the dependent-independent variable

¹⁹³ Ibid., 97.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., xiii.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., xiv.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 80.

¹⁹⁷ ———, *Realist Social Theory: The Morphogenetic Approach* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 5-6.

¹⁹⁸ ———, *Culture and Agency: The Place of Culture in Social Theory*: xiv.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., xviii.

dilemma by *analytically* separating agents and structures, states and systems, and begin analysis by assuming that the system is, at one point in time, the independent variable that affects the behavior of actors, but as actors interact within this system they can eventually transform it, at which point the system itself is treated as a dependent variable. As a new system is in place, it can now be analytically treated as the independent variable once again, and so on. In other words, regional subsystems can be treated as the independent variable affecting interaction among states and foreign policy outcomes, but as states interact they can create new patterns and eventually transform the regional subsystem through foreign policy actions.

The corollary of such approach is that the variable of time gains a central place in the theory, being “incorporated as a theoretical variable rather than simply as a medium in which events take place.”²⁰⁰ Without the centrality of time, “the problem of structure and agency can never be satisfactorily resolved” because it is only “by examining the *interplay between them over time*” that the analyst can link structure and agency “rather than sinking them one into the other.”²⁰¹ Likewise, if the variable time is not properly incorporated, system change “becomes an immanent but indeterminate possibility, equally likely or unlikely at any given moment and therefore unpredictable and inexplicable.”²⁰² Archer presents a sequential process that she calls a “morphogenetic approach” which allows for the study of system formation and system change or stability. This approach is a three part cycle that begins with any given systemic configuration that can be termed “structural conditioning” of that conditions’ action. The next step of the

²⁰⁰ Ibid., xxii.

²⁰¹ ———, *Realist Social Theory : The Morphogenetic Approach*: 65.

²⁰² ———, *Culture and Agency : The Place of Culture in Social Theory*: xxiii.

cycle is the “social interaction” which happens within the systemic context and is a response to it. Finally, the last step is “elaboration,” which is when the form, structure or state of the system changes. Accordingly, even though they cannot be separated in the real world, we can analytically separate system and agency, with system logically predating action which transforms it, and this interaction being followed by elaboration at which point a system change can be detected.

In this sense, an approach that focuses on processes of interaction in which the variable time necessarily plays a central role is inevitably fated to address historical processes. As Wendt claimed, alongside a structural analysis, historical research is needed in order “to trace the causally significant sequence of choices and interactions which lead to particular events (and to the reproduction of social structure).”²⁰³ For this reason, this dissertation is organized along historical lines. The fact that this research covers a lengthy time period allows for a more accurate testing of the hypothesis that the United States has been an “absent empire” in South America. A focus on a narrower time span may be biased in the sense that it would reflect a particular configuration of forces and interactions that would not necessarily translate into a broader pattern, and could represent an important obstacle when attempting to make generalizations about larger trends. The problem of confining the research of regional subsystems to a relatively limited time span, as one scholar had observed in the seventies, was a characteristic of most of the early studies in this subject.²⁰⁴ In the case of South America, for instance, if the analysis is concentrated between the forties and the sixties, which was the apex of US influence in the region, one would be more tempted to rely on explanations making

²⁰³ Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory," 364.

²⁰⁴ Wallace, "Clusters of Nations in the Global System, 1865-1964: Some Preliminary Evidence," 68.

reference to a homogeneous exercise of US hegemony and to blur the distinctions between South America and the rest of Latin America.

THE SPATIAL DIMENSION

It is crucial to address the particularity of using the methodological tools aforementioned to analyze not the international system as a whole but the regional subsystems within it. Such particularity resides in the fact that, in addition to the time dimension, a spatial dimension is added. To some extent, the application of this constructivist framework to specifically analyze regional subsystems is a novelty, since this literature remains largely concerned with the overall structure of the international system. Nevertheless, even though this is not clearly addressed in the constructivist literature, the notion that there are distinct regional subsystemic configurations within the international system is implicitly present, when, for example, Wendt talks about three different “cultures of anarchy”: Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian. The author not only locates these three different cultures temporally, with the first comprising much of international history, the second emerging during the seventeenth century, and the third during the late twentieth, but also spatially, since he explicitly locates the Lockean culture in Europe and the Kantian in the West.²⁰⁵ This effort mirrors the literature dealing with the transformation of the international system into an international society with shared norms and values. A leading scholar of the international society literature admits that the emergence of an international society is spatially uneven while, at the same time, he acknowledges the “difficult problems of the tracing of boundaries” of

²⁰⁵ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*.

where modern international society began.²⁰⁶ Later, in an effort to bring the literature of international system and international society together, Buzan conceded that there was a need not only to establish the boundaries between international system and international society, that is, when an international system develops into an international society, “but also between societal subsystems existing within larger nonsocietal international systems (i.e., where two or more international societies exist contemporaneously).”²⁰⁷ Thus, for Buzan, “international societies, like international systems, will emerge initially within regional subsystems and only later develop at the level of the international system as a whole.”²⁰⁸ Indeed, the whole notion of a “Westphalian” system of states was at some point obviously situated within a regional space.

Similarly, the idea of a spatial variance within subsystems in the international system is also explicitly present in Hans Morgenthau’s realism and latent in Waltz’s neorealist theory. Morgenthau, whose *Politics Among Nations* is one of the most influential books in international relations theory, made explicit reference to the existence of regional subsystems operating under the mantle of the international system. After describing the functioning of the balance of power in international politics, Morgenthau warns that a balance of power is not “one single system comprehending all nations,” but instead it is “composed of a number of subsystems that are interrelated with each other, but that maintain within themselves a balance of power of their own.” Using the same terminology employed by the early scholarship of regional subsystems, Morgenthau

²⁰⁶ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 15.

²⁰⁷ Barry Buzan, “From International System to International Society: Structural Realism and Regime Theory Meet the English School,” *International Organization* 47, no. 3 (1993): 345.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 344.

added that the relationship between the “local systems” and the “dominant system” was “one of subordination.”²⁰⁹

Waltz was characteristically far less explicit than Morgenthau in admitting regional variance, but he acknowledges that even though his theory focused on the great powers, it “could also be applied to lesser states that interact insofar as their interactions are insulated from the intervention of the great powers of a system.”²¹⁰ This affirmation was clearly meant to open up the possibility of a regional balance of power, which Morgenthau makes reference to and was eventually taken up by the neorealist literature. Indeed, a more recent study on the balance of power theory explicitly analyzed the global and the regional dimensions of balance of power, the latter meaning a clear stance that balance behavior “tends to be reflected at both systemic and subsystemic levels of international relations,” which therefore means that balance of power theory “is also relevant to regional subsystems.” The difference between global balancing and regional balancing would be the fact that, in accordance with the Waltzian condition of “insulated” interactions, “regional powers are less autonomous than great powers, and often it is the latter that undertake policies that preserve or upset regional balances.”²¹¹

The spatial dimension is also evident when dealing with the emergence of the international system. Because Waltz’s analysis is largely ahistorical, he does not have to deal with this question and seems to assume that the international system has always existed. When more historical approaches are used, it becomes obvious that one major

²⁰⁹ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 4th ed. (New York,: Knopf, 1967), 191.

²¹⁰ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 73.

²¹¹ T. V. Paul, James J. Wirtz, and Michel Fortmann, eds., *Balance of Power : Theory and Practice in the 21st Century* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004), 2, 7.

problem in the notion of the emergence of an international system is derived from its inherently Western or Euro-centric approach. Basically, there seems to be the assumption that once a regional European system was in place, it eventually became global and this is the international system as we know it. The problem is not specifically the assumption of the globalization of the European system, but the tacit assumption that at the same time the European system was globalized, there was no regional European subsystem left, at least for the purposes of relevant international relations analysis. Accordingly, the reasoning goes on to say that, after 1945, a global system emerged that included basically every nation on Earth that substituted the effects of formerly compartmentalized regional systems. Raymond Aron, for example - whose definition of an international system is based on the notion of political units “capable of being implicated in generalized war” - maintains that, consequently, there was no international system before 1945.²¹² Robert Gilpin recognizes that the notion of an “international system” is “ambiguous” and that before the modern era “there was no single international system, but rather several international systems.”²¹³ In sum, the reasoning seems to be based on the assumption that before 1945 there were several regional systems, but afterwards, one encompassing international system emerged concomitant with the disappearance of those regional systems. The obvious question is if regional patterns of interactions that were operative before 1945, in Europe and other regions, suddenly ceased to have any relevance for analytical purposes. The reason for this negligence is known – the claim that the study of

²¹² Raymond Aron, *Peace & War: A Theory of International Relations* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 94-95.

²¹³ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 26.

international politics should be “necessarily be based on the great powers.”²¹⁴ Therefore, with the emergence of the bipolarity of the Cold War, the regional dynamics in Europe apparently lost analytical relevance. While it is perfectly understandable the methodological need to concentrate on great powers in order to explain broader patterns in international politics or, as Waltz put it, “a small number of big and important things,”²¹⁵ it is also true that this approach misses a lot of important things of all sizes that happen below the great-power game. Regional patterns of interactions were important before and continued to be important after the emergence of the modern international system.

THE REGIONAL SUBSYSTEM AS AN ADDITIONAL LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

At the same time that neglecting the importance of regional patterns of interaction in the name of an overwhelming present international system seems analytically faulty, recognizing the existence of regional subsystems, with dynamics of their own, should not negate the effects of the broader international system on the behavior of states. This is why the prefix “sub” is used, since it purports to convey the idea that it is a system within a dominant system. With the emergence of the modern international system, previous compartmentalized regional systems became regional subsystems. It is not that the modern international system is the sum of the different regional subsystems, but they operate with diverse logics. The regional subsystems can be seen as “a complement to the

²¹⁴ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 73.

²¹⁵ Kenneth Waltz, "Reflections on Theory of International Politics: A Response to my Critics," in *Neorealism and its Critics*, ed. Robert O. Keohane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 329.

global nature of the overall international system.”²¹⁶ The way to interpret this analytically is to acknowledge the fact that systemic pressures under which states are subjected coexist alongside and interact with subsystemic pressures at the regional level. But while systemic pressures, as Waltz makes clear, explain more international politics than foreign policy, regional subsystemic pressures are more useful to explain the outcome of particular foreign policies followed by states.²¹⁷ In other words, while, in accordance with neorealism, systemic pressures explain general patterns of state behavior in an anarchic environment, regional subsystemic pressures may be more helpful in explaining specific state actions and their outcomes without the necessity of having to make reference to unit attributes.

The international system and the regional subsystems are not just two different levels of a system. They are, in fact, two different types of system. In his *General Systems Theory*, the biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy, considered a pioneer in applying the concept of system scientifically, described two kinds of systems: closed and open systems. The basic differentiation here is between the system and the environment in which the system exists. While open systems are characterized by the possibility of interaction between its internal elements and the environment, closed systems are a limited case wherein the environment has no significance, that is, the system does not interact with its environment.²¹⁸ The international system, as Lake and Morgan remark, can be analytically treated as closed systems, whereas regional systems “are inherently open. The global system, other regional systems, and even 'outside' states can have a

²¹⁶ Oran R. Young, "Political Discontinuities in the International System," *World Politics* 20, no. 3 (1968): 378.

²¹⁷ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

²¹⁸ Ludwig von Bertalanffy, *General System Theory; Foundations, Development, Applications* (New York, G. Braziller, 1969).

major impact on a region. In open systems, the constraints and processes of the system are only partial explanations of behavior.”²¹⁹ This caveat is important in order to underscore the fact that the focus on regional subsystems should not be intended to offer a complete explanation for the behavior of states, since outside factors must be taken into account. Nonetheless, regional subsystemic dynamics should be understood as an important part of the analysis.

Moreover, the fact that the international system is a closed system while regional subsystems are open generates different possibilities for research. If the international system comprises the total set of interactions across the globe, the notion of an environment in which the international system exists is problematic. Fred Riggs, for example, characterized the international system as “a power structure in which the weight of external pressures approaches the vanishing point,” which is equivalent to saying that it is a system with no environment.²²⁰ Rosenau attempted to solve this issue by making a distinction between political and non-political forms of interaction, the latter comprising the environment of the “international political system.”²²¹ Gilpin refers to the “environmental conditions” of the international system when describing things such as economic factors and military and transportation technologies which are directly connected to the possibility of system change.²²² For Waltz, there should be a differentiation between the “environment of states,” which would be the international system, and the “environment of the system.”²²³ Waltz rejects the use of the term

²¹⁹ Lake, Morgan, and University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation., *Regional Orders: Building Security in a New World*, 9-10.

²²⁰ Fred W. Riggs, "International Relations as a Prismatic System," *World Politics* 14, no. 1 (1961): 151.

²²¹ Rosenau, "The Functioning of International Systems," 112.

²²² Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*: 67.

²²³ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 54.

“environment” to refer to the international system and uses instead the notion of structure.²²⁴ The problems in using the notion of environment to refer to international systems are so evident that in a book dedicated to the application of this concept to the study of international politics, Harold and Margaret Sprout claimed that the solution should be dropping the concept altogether to describe the international system.²²⁵ On the other hand, since regional subsystems are open systems, the notion of an external environment seems to make more sense and the interaction between the subsystem and their environment can be more easily detected. As a matter of fact, one could conceive of the environment of regional subsystems as being the international system as well as other subsystems. The regional subsystems themselves constitute what Mouritzen called the “salient environment” for the states members of the subsystem.²²⁶

Even though the international system and the regional subsystems consist of different types of systems, the variance that is being explained by reference to the regional subsystems is indeed systemic, but it relates to what was referred to above as the interaction level more than to the structural level. To use Wendt’s terminology, the regional subsystems approach is inherently “micro-structural” rather than “macro-structural.”²²⁷ While the first sees structure from the point of view of agents, and thus patterns of interactions can be uncovered, the second sees it from the point of view of the system. Like the unit level, the interaction level explains foreign policy rather than international politics, but unlike the unit level, the interaction level incorporates a systemic dimension. Assuming the relevance of *regional* subsystems as an analytical tool

²²⁴ Ibid., 80.

²²⁵ Sprout and Sprout, *The Ecological Perspective on Human Affairs, with Special Reference to International Politics*.

²²⁶ Mouritzen, *Theory and Reality of International Politics*.

²²⁷ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*.

involves the acknowledgment that there are variances in the pattern of interactions among states along spatial lines, which implicates in tandem, as mentioned earlier, the acknowledgment of the importance of space, or of geography and territoriality in the realm of international relations. While the focus given on patterns of interactions means a shift away from mainstream neorealism, the emphasis given on territoriality means a similar shift away from some of the constructivist literature. The notion of regional subsystem used here is thus one that emphasizes concomitantly the importance of material conditions and territoriality as well as the importance of ideational conditions. From the point of view of a regional subsystemic approach, geographic location is considered to be the material base that influences – but do not determine - the production and reproduction of patterns of interactions. Geography is then one “independently existing physical reality” that regulates interaction among states.²²⁸ In a certain sense, this means bringing together the ontological dispute between the neorealist literature with its stress on material structures and the constructivist literature with its stress on social structures. This double focus on interactions and territory also makes clear why the concept of *regional subsystem* is well-suited for the purposes of this research. The term *region* is more static as it implies a focus on geography and does not highlight the notion of patterns of interaction. On the other hand, using just the term *subsystem* without any qualifier would be incomplete since other criteria for the identification of subsystems can be devised, as shown at the beginning of this chapter. Therefore, the term *regional subsystem*, by underlining the effects of space on the interactions in the international level, is compatible with the objectives of this research. As already mentioned, the literature on international relations has focused on either domestic or systemic structures

²²⁸ Ibid., 110.

as the main variables affecting interests of states, thus neglecting the role of regional subsystemic structures. This is one important gap that this research intends to fill.

Accordingly, the focus on regional subsystems means the introduction of an additional level of analysis between the nation-state and the international system, which constitutes the traditional way of thinking in international relations. As Singer described, the level-of-analysis problem is a central conceptual issue to be resolved by any research in the discipline.²²⁹ Singer argued that choosing each level entails advantages and disadvantages. Taking the international system as a level of analysis means the analyst will be able to offer a comprehensive approach at the cost of sacrificing a more detailed description, whereas taking the nation state as the level of analysis would entail the opposite problem. Moreover, the international-system-as-level-of-analysis approach usually results in an “inaccurate homogenization” of subsystemic actors, while the nation-state-as as-level-of-analysis results in “a marked exaggeration” of their differences.²³⁰ In one well-known attempt to synthesize these two levels, Robert Putnam argued that international relations should be understood as a “two-level game” where both international and domestic factors interact to produce policy outcomes, and therefore every policy-maker should deal with pressures emanating from both sides.²³¹ While the boundaries of domestic politics can be cleared defined, it is not clear what would constitute the international level in Putnam’s analysis. If it consists of “the totality of interactions which take place within the system and its environment”, as Singer describes

²²⁹ Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations."

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 84.

²³¹ Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988).

the international level,²³² then any analysis of specific foreign policy outcomes would constitute a herculean task. One way of overcoming this complexity is considering the international level itself as a two-level game: global and regional. The regional subsystem as level of analysis allows the student to concentrate on interactions restricted in space, instead of having to consider the totality of interactions comprising the international system. When regional subsystems are brought to the picture, the analytical toolbox at the disposal of the analyst increases by one additional level, thus converting the study of international politics into a “three-level game.”

In the same way that taking the nation state as level of analysis provides explanations for foreign policy behavior that may be different than the one offered by the international system as the level of analysis, focusing on regional subsystems may also produce specific sets of explanations as well as generate distinct research questions. For example, in his celebrated study of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Graham Allison looks into the nation state to provide three conceptual models for the actions of governments.²³³ He is interested in answering, for example, why the Soviet Union decided to place missiles in Cuba and why the United States chose to respond with a blockade. He explains these actions through three different models he presents – the rational actor model, the organizational behavior model, and the governmental politics model, all of them of little or no consideration to systemic pressures at work outside the nation state or beyond the scope of US-Soviet bilateral relations. This absence may be explained by Allison’s conception of international relations as a mere “overlap” of “intra-national games.”²³⁴ On

²³² Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations," 81.

²³³ Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision; Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston,: Little, 1971).

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 149.

the other hand, to remain with the same example, a systemic approach to the Cuban Missile Crisis would probably refer to US and Soviet preoccupations with the global balance of power of the Cold War in order to explain their respective actions. This systemic approach would likely be unable to answer why the United States chose to respond with a blockade rather than other options, but would explain the US concerns with the Soviet action in the first place. A regional subsystemic approach would probably follow the same line of reasoning as the systemic one, but, in order to understand how regional subsystemic pressures work, one would have to ask what would US actions and ensuing outcomes would be demonstrated if the missiles been placed a few miles away, let's say, in Venezuela. Would other actors, like Brazil, weigh in, and would that affect the outcome in any way? Obviously, the answer to this question is only speculative, but what we know is that both the nation state and the international system as level-of-analysis are largely unable to offer a complete account for this putative regional variance. Likewise, the same is true in explaining foreign policies of South American states in relation to the United States. If one takes the systemic approach, the explanations for the behavior of states in South America would be based on concepts such as US hegemony and the presumed effects of it, whereas the regional subsystemic approach that considers South America as a distinct subsystem would include other notions, such as the functioning of a regional balance of power and the role of regional powers.

One important way to explore what possible explanations the regional subsystemic point of view could offer is by looking to the historical record. This dissertation will look at different historical periods in order to argue that the analytical framework offered by the regional subsystemic approach illuminates important aspects of

United States-South America relations that are obscured by alternative outlooks traditionally used to study that relationship. For example, if the traditional systemic approach concludes that the Monroe Doctrine was a relatively homogenous policy adopted for all Latin America, the regional subsystemic alternative reevaluates and reinterprets the true scope and actual outcome of this policy. If traditional systemic approaches understand US actions in Chile in the sixties and seventies as following the same pattern of intervention in the rest of Latin America during the Cold War, the regional subsystemic alternative unveils the profound differences in the Chilean case. If traditional systemic approaches saw the launch of the Free Trade Areas of the Americas as the confirmation of US global preponderance in the nineties, with which all Latin America would be inevitably fated to go along given the disparities in power, the subsystemic alternative helps to explain its ultimate outcome. The case studies selected for this dissertation will explore each of these three historical examples.

CHAPTER 4

THE SOUTH AMERICAN REGIONAL SUBSYSTEM

As seen in the previous chapter, there are only two sufficient and necessary variables needed to identify a regional subsystem: geography and patterns of interactions. Both of these criteria justify the existence of two relevant regional subsystems in the so-called “Western Hemisphere” – a South American and a North American subsystem. This chapter makes the case for the existence of a distinctive South American subsystem based on the criteria established earlier. It demonstrates that, in addition to geography, there is a pattern of conflict and cooperation in South America that is distinct from the rest of Latin America. The chapter also addresses the usual explanations for US relative absence in South America and explores why they do not provide a completely satisfactory explanation for this fact. Finally, by stressing the role of Brazil in the South American subsystem, this chapter lays out the framework for the subsequent case studies by arguing that Brazil is a status quo regional power that has sought to affect the structure of costs and benefits of US involvement in that regional subsystem.

THE CASE FOR A SOUTH AMERICAN SUBSYSTEM

The division between a North and a South American continent is part of the “standard seven-part continental scheme employed in the United States,”²³⁵ which would

²³⁵ Martin W. Lewis and Kären Wigen, *The Myth of Continents : A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 3.

immediately provide evidence that the geographic criterion for the establishment of a regional subsystem is fulfilled. But dividing and labeling the globe into continents implies a great deal of arbitrariness, and in much of Latin America, for example, North and South America are grouped as one “American” continent, which was indeed the view prevalent among geographers until the nineteenth century.²³⁶ In any case, even though there is a degree of arbitrariness in any geographic division, from the point of view of a pure spatial analysis, when one looks at “the massive triangles of North and South America, tenuously linked by the Panamanian isthmus,”²³⁷ it becomes clear that if one intends to divide the Americas in two parts, common sense would advise the line to be drawn at the Panamanian isthmus rather than at the Rio Grande. In fact, in a study of South American geopolitics, Philip Kelly described North America and South America as “two largely disconnected American continents” which are “widened by great distances, sometimes harsh climates and topographies.”²³⁸ Ronald Steel notices that “New York is closer to Paris than it is to Lima; closer to Athens than to Buenos Aires. Seattle is nearer to Tokyo than it is to Santiago. Geographically, most of South America might as well be in another hemisphere, which indeed it is.”²³⁹ In sum, this brief geographical digression is just to make obvious that if the only criterion used to divide the Americas was geographic proximity, the notion of Latin America would probably not subsist.

What this discussion is meant to make clear is that the concept of Latin America is not based on spatial geographical considerations - even though it is often used as a geographical concept - but on presumed cultural similarities. It is not the purpose of this

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid., 2.

²³⁸ Philip Kelly, *Checkerboards & Shatterbelts: The Geopolitics of South America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 161.

²³⁹ Ronald Steel, *Pax Americana* (New York: Viking Press, 1970), 186.

research to challenge the assumption of cultural homogeneity in Latin America, but rather to present a critique of the use of cultural variables as the primary factor for regional classification.²⁴⁰ If culture is assumed to be the central variable for the identification of regions for the purposes of international relations analysis, several – if not all - other conventional regions of the world would have to be reclassified. Additionally, a case would have to be made as to what cultural aspects matter the most for the purposes of identification of regional subsystems. If it is assumed to be, for example, religion and language, then it makes as much sense to disassociate the United States from Mexico as it makes disassociating France from England, Egypt from Israel, and India from Pakistan and locating them in different regional subsystems. Nevertheless, very few international relations scholars would make the case that it is practically and analytically useful to do so. In fact, the implicit reason why it would not be helpful to do so is exactly because France and England, Egypt and Israel, and India and Pakistan are proximate and interacting states and this is what really matters when analyzing their international relations.

Nevertheless, some would say that even though it is proper to conclude that Latin America does not fit the geographic criterion, it might very well suit the criterion of patterns of interaction. Before evaluating this claim, it is necessary to clarify the idea of patterns of interaction. In its broader sense, interaction is understood as being the result of reciprocal responses of action and reaction.²⁴¹ In international relations, forms of

²⁴⁰ For a critique of the concept of Latin America in cultural terms as justifying the perception of the American “self” against the Latin American “other” see: João Feres Jr., " A History of the Concept of Latin America in the United States: Misrecognition and Social Scientific Discourse" (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2003). Also useful for this debate is Bethell, "Brazil and 'Latin America'."

²⁴¹ Sprout and Sprout, *The ecological perspective on human affairs, with special reference to international politics*: 24.

interaction may include, for example, diplomatic, political, social, economic, cultural, and personal interactions.²⁴² Likewise, the instruments of interaction can be diplomatic, psychological, cultural, economic, or military.²⁴³ These interactions can range in a spectrum from conflictual to cooperative. Conflictual interactions include events such as war, intervention, blockade, clandestine actions, embargoes, covert intelligence activities, etc. Cooperative interactions consist of, for example, trade, capital investment, aid, military grant, arms transfers, personnel exchanges, etc.²⁴⁴ These different interactions “may exhibit regularities, or patterns, in space and through time, both in the foreign policies of particular states and in political relations of two or three or many states.”²⁴⁵ Therefore, by examining the spectrum of interactions through space and time in a given area of the world, certain regularities may be uncovered and general patterns can be identified. Some states will exhibit a higher degree of interactions with particular states in comparison with others. More often than not, neighboring states will tend to exhibit a relatively high degree of interaction, which is why geography matters. This relatively high degree of interaction is likely to create all sorts of interdependencies among states. States are considered to be interdependent “when the outcome of an interaction for each depends on the choices of the others.”²⁴⁶ For example, states have security interdependence when they are linked “together sufficiently closely that their securities cannot be considered separate from each other.”²⁴⁷ In contrast, the lower the degree or intensity of interaction, the lower the interdependence, the extreme case being

²⁴² Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel; Setting, Images, Process*: 51.

²⁴³ Atkins, *Latin America and the Caribbean in the International System*: 16.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁴⁵ Sprout and Sprout, *The Ecological Perspective on Human Affairs, with Special Reference to International Politics*: 24.

²⁴⁶ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*: 344.

²⁴⁷ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*: 43.

indifference. A regional subsystem is then characterized by a higher degree of interaction - and thus of interdependence - among the states in the subsystem relative to states outside the subsystem. Detecting these patterns of interaction across space and time helps the analyst to draw the boundaries of different regional subsystems.

Yet the issue remains of how to operationalize these patterns of interactions in order to assess the degree of interactions and locate them within the spectrum varying from intense contacts, or interdependence, to infrequent contacts, or indifference. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, this is an obviously difficult task that apparently has not been completely resolved by the literature. Among the few who present some evidence of interaction patterns, the main shortcoming is focusing only on a narrow aspect of interactions. For example, Haas and Lemke concentrate on the military aspect, Buzan and Wæver on security patterns, and Wallace on international organizations membership.²⁴⁸ This research does not intend to dwell upon interaction in order to unravel this operationalization issue because our main concern is not the analysis of the South American subsystem per se, but how it interacts with and affects the outcomes of US foreign policy. In any case, a few remarks must be made in order to make the case for our assumption of the existence of a South American subsystem in terms of patterns of interaction. Along with these remarks, a suggestion on how to operationalize patterns of interaction will be proposed.

The first prerequisite for operationalizing patterns of interactions is that it should be made in such a way as to cover at least one aspect of each end of the interaction

²⁴⁸ Haas, "International Subsystems: Stability and Polarity."; Lemke, *Regions of War and Peace*; Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*; Wallace, "Clusters of Nations in the Global System, 1865-1964: Some Preliminary Evidence."

spectrum, which means including variables that account for both conflict and cooperation. Moreover, it would be useful to include different forms and instruments of interaction, such as economic, military, and political. It would also be noteworthy if the data required were easily available in order to make this operationalization effort attainable. Taking into consideration these qualifications, three variables could be used in order to evaluate patterns of interactions: wars and/or armed conflicts, trade, and regional organizations. Although far from reflecting all possibilities of interaction among states, these three variables characterize three important kinds of interstate interaction within the range between conflict and cooperation. Wars and armed conflicts represent conflictual interactions, while trade and regional organizations correspond to cooperative interactions. Moreover, these three variables cover military, economic, and political instruments and forms of interaction. Finally, data collection for these variables is readily available.

An additional advantage of using the three variables suggested above is that they have gone through extensive examination throughout the years, and therefore there is currently little significant debate in regards to definitional issues. Interstate war and armed conflicts are the classic object of international relations. Although determining the point in which a conflict becomes a war is far from being an uncomplicated task, scholars at least since the late sixties seem to agree on the 1,000 battle-connected deaths threshold.²⁴⁹ Therefore, a war can be defined as comprising “sustained military hostilities between the regular armed forces of two or more states, resulting in 1,000 or more battle

²⁴⁹ Melvin Small and J. David Singer, "Patterns in International Warfare, 1816-1965," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 391(1970).

fatalities.”²⁵⁰ An armed conflict can be understood in the current parlance as a “militarized interstate dispute” short of war and it has been defined as “a set of interactions between or among states involving threats to use military force, displays of military force, or actual uses of military force.”²⁵¹ Therefore, when a militarized interstate dispute results in more than 1,000 battle-connected deaths, it can technically be considered a war. The expectation of this research is that any detailed examination of militarized interstate disputes and wars in the Americas would probably reveal a pattern following the subsystemic perspective explored here.

The trade variable is pretty straightforward, and in fact, within the literature on interdependence, trade has been used almost as a synonymous with interdependence, or at least economic interdependence, with occasional addition of capital flows as a supplementary variable.²⁵² One could begin, for example, by looking at individual countries and assessing what percentage of the value of their imports and exports comes from each of the subsystems in the Americas. In any case, this research would expect that an analysis of trade patterns would reveal a higher concentration of trade within each of the subsystems in the Americas, rather than a coherent Latin American pattern of trade.

Finally, membership in regional organizations is a classic measure of the level of regional integration and it has been widely used in the literature on regionalism.²⁵³ One

²⁵⁰ Charles S. Gochman and Zeev Maoz, "Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816-1976 " in *Measuring the Correlates of War*, ed. J. David Singer and Paul F. Diehl (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 196.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 192.

²⁵² For example: Mark J. Gasiorowski, "The Structure of Third World Economic Interdependence," *International Organization* 39, no. 2 (1985); Dale C. Copeland, "Economic Interdependence and War: A Theory of Trade Expectations," *International Security* 20, no. 4 (1996); Katherine Barbieri, *The Liberal Illusion : Does Trade Promote Peace?* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

²⁵³ For example: Edward D. Mansfield and Helen V. Milner, eds., *The Political Economy of Regionalism, New Directions in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Gordon Mace and Louis

possible good criterion for selecting the organizations for purposes of identifying patterns of interaction in the Americas could be those in which at least two countries in the Western Hemisphere participate. Counting the number and membership of regional organizations is a quantitative endeavor that can be accomplished without much complication. However, it would be relevant if a qualitative analysis was also pursued, that is, one that would assess the trajectories and the actual effects of each of these organizations. Mentioning the moribund Latin American Parliament as a Latin American organization on par with, for instance, Mercosur or CACM, means ignoring the profound differences in substance and importance between these institutions. Therefore, alongside an investigation of the number and geographic concentration of the regional organizations in the Western Hemisphere, an analysis of their quality would be pertinent. This research would expect that the number and relevance of regional organizations in the Americas would reveal the existence of a South American regional subsystemic pattern that would be more salient than a supposed Latin American pattern.

As mentioned, it is not the aim of this research to conduct an extensive investigation of patterns of interaction in the Americas, but, by using the approach suggested above, we can at least indicate evidence that there are two different patterns in Latin America which justify treating it as two distinct regional subsystems. A number of authors have made mention to wars in Latin America to justify patterns of interaction at the conflictual end of the interaction spectrum. Cantori and Spiegel, for example, argue that what they identify as the Latin American subsystem was at that time characterized by

a low level of conflict, but they except the Chaco War between Paraguay and Bolivia, as well as “a variety of disputes which include Peru vs. Ecuador, Chile vs. Peru and Bolivia, Argentina vs. Chile, and Argentina vs. Brazil.”²⁵⁴ The fact that all exceptions mentioned by the authors are in South America seems to have escaped their analysis. Atkins mentions a number of “inter-Latin American” disputes and conflicts to express conflictual patterns of interaction and makes reference to the Chaco War, conflicts between Peru and Ecuador, Colombia and Peru, Ecuador and Peru, and Argentina and Chile. It is true that, contrary to Cantori and Spiegel, he at least mentions other conflicts outside South America, such as disputes between Haiti and Dominican Republic in the thirties and the war between El Salvador and Honduras in the sixties, as well as a variety of “Central American conflicts” during the eighties.²⁵⁵ Similarly, Robert Burr talks about “intra-Latin American rivalries” adding that “above all, the Latin American nations are concerned with rivalries among themselves.” He mentions rivalries between Argentina and Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, Chile, Peru and Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador, Dominican Republic and Haiti, Guatemala and other Central American countries, and Mexico and Guatemala.²⁵⁶ What becomes obvious from this picture is that what is termed by these authors as “inter-Latin American” conflicts are not exactly inter-Latin American, but inter-South American, inter-Caribbean, or inter-Central American. This is because there is no way to provide evidence that there is a pattern of conflict in Latin America; instead, the patterns of conflict have followed the subsystemic division proposed here. The obvious reason for this pattern is that in most of these conflicts –

²⁵⁴ Cantori and Spiegel, *The International Politics of Regions*: 61.

²⁵⁵ Atkins, *Latin America and the Caribbean in the International System*: 325-43.

²⁵⁶ Robert N. Burr, “International Interests of Latin American Nations,” in *The International Politics of Regions*, ed. Louis J. Cantori and Steven L. Spiegel (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 101.

particularly in South America - there was some kind of territorial dispute involved. This is an unquestionable example of geographical proximity affecting patterns of interaction and of the fact that geography is the main factor contributing to the durability of regional subsystems.

Patterns of conflict are especially important because they determine one key systemic characteristic: because a system is defined by the interaction among the units, a change in one unit tends to cause changes in others. This means, for example, that an arms race caused by higher defense spending in one state of the subsystem that is not a global power tends to be confined within the regional subsystem. If Honduras suddenly decided to acquire new weapons to modernize its army, it is conceivable that Bolivia or Argentina would not be as concerned as El Salvador or Nicaragua, for example. As a matter of fact, in 2007, there were reports about an arms race in South America that did not spill over to other places in Latin America. At the same time Venezuela started acquiring military equipment from Russia, Brazil announced an increase in defense spending.²⁵⁷ When Chile started upgrading its armed forces, Bolivia, Peru, and Argentina reacted.²⁵⁸ This example shows clearly that, as Robert Pastor noticed, the “principal geopolitical concerns” of the countries in the South American subsystem “are with each other. Many have fought each other; some have lost territory to another.”²⁵⁹ In fact, one scholar examined the works of sixteen South American writers in the field of geopolitics and concluded that one common theme among them was that “their geopolitics pertain to

²⁵⁷ Andrew Downie, "A South American Arms Race?," *Time*, December 21, 2007.

²⁵⁸ Alex Sanchez, "Chile's Aggressive Military Arm Purchases Are Ruffling the Region, Alarming in Particular Bolivia, Peru and Argentina," *Council on Hemispheric Affairs*, August 7, 2007. <http://www.coha.org/chile%E2%80%99s-aggressive-military-arm-purchases-is-ruffling-the-region-alarming-in-particular-bolivia-peru-and-argentina/> (accessed September 17, 2010).

²⁵⁹ Robert A. Pastor, *Whirlpool : U.S. Foreign Policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean*, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics. (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 24.

South American regional and subregional affairs.”²⁶⁰ This makes evident the interdependence aspect that is characteristic of a regional subsystem.

But demonstrating the absence of any serious conflict that is truly “inter-Latin American” is a relatively straightforward and uncomplicated task that, once examined with more careful attention, becomes self-evident. Nevertheless, patterns of trade could reveal a different picture. A comprehensive investigation of the patterns of trade would require looking at every individual country and assessing the percentage of exports and imports with every other country in the hemisphere across a reasonably long period of time. Although this investigation is beyond the scope of the present dissertation, evidence suggested by other studies seems to indicate that if this task was to be completed, it would reinforce the notion of two different subsystems in the Americas and these would not be Latin America and North America, but South America and North America. For example, in his classificatory effort in the seventies to identify regions, Russett, when using only the criterion of economic interdependence based on trade, concluded for the existence of a South American and a North/Central American region. Indeed, he observed that the major discrepancy in the western hemisphere was on trade “where the hemisphere was split into two components, a North and Central American aggregate, and one for South America.”²⁶¹ Because Russett’s book was published in 1975, the data he used went only up until the seventies. Later, Gordon Mace and Louis Belanger examined trade patterns in the western hemisphere using data from 1975 to 1994. Using a variety of statistical tools, the authors concluded that the “pattern clearly reveals the relative

²⁶⁰ Kelly, *Checkerboards & Shatterbelts: The Geopolitics of South America*: 84. For an extensive examination of geopolitical thought in South America see: Howard Taylor Pittman, "Geopolitics in the ABC Countries: A Comparison" (PhD diss., American University, 1981).

²⁶¹ Russett, *International Regions and the International System : A Study in Political Ecology*: 175.

weakness of the Southern Cone's relationship with North America, as well as its remarkable lack of economic ties with Central America and the Caribbean.”²⁶²

Additionally, when looking at the four last years of their data, they detected a pattern showing that “the Southern Cone is developing a distinct regional trading structure” and that the “Southern Cone's integration into the region as a whole is relatively weak.”²⁶³

Similarly, Jeffrey Schott, when analyzing trade patterns in the Americas, observed that “[t]he trade profiles of Western Hemisphere countries differ markedly from one side of the equator to the other,” with the countries in the northern half of the hemisphere generally far more dependent on the United States.²⁶⁴ Mace and Bélanger’s conclusion is particularly relevant for the purposes of this research and deserves to be quoted in full.

They see

a growing concentration of commercial relations around two main centers: In the northern part of the hemisphere, Canada, Mexico, and the countries of Central America and the Caribbean are coalescing around the United States, which acts as the central magnet. A similar situation is developing in South America around the Brazil-Argentina axis.²⁶⁵

For the authors, the future of any hemispheric integration scheme will be determined by how these two centers interact. Chapter 7 of this dissertation will explore the significance of this notion in more detail.

Beyond conflictual relations and trade patterns, the separation between the South American subsystem and the North American subsystem can also be demonstrated in political terms. Traditional analyses of the emergence of the so called Inter-American

²⁶² Gordon Mace and Louis Bélanger, eds., *The Americas in Transition: The Contours of Regionalism* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999), 50.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

²⁶⁴ Jeffrey J. Schott, *Prospects for Free Trade in the Americas* (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 2001), 92.

²⁶⁵ Mace and Bélanger, *The Americas in Transition: The Contours of Regionalism*, 244.

System that culminated with the creation of the Organization of American States (OAS) begin by distinguishing two phases: before and after 1889.²⁶⁶ The reason is that only after 1889, with the First Pan-American Conference, the conferences summoned were truly inter-American in the sense of including most Latin American countries and the United States. Before that year, there were four Hispano-American conferences – thus with limited participation and not including both the United States and Brazil - with few concrete results: in 1826, 1847, 1856, and 1864. The usual historiography informs that these first conferences helped to establish the “fundamental rules of national behavior destined later to become basic features of inter-American cooperation,”²⁶⁷ thus giving the impression that the Inter-American system was the result of the absorption by the United States of patterns of interaction that had been previously established among Latin American states. However, closer examination again indicates the existence of two regional subsystems from the political interaction point of view, even at that early stage. For example, by focusing on the Hispano-American conferences, these analyses overlook that, in 1888, one year before the First Pan-American Conference, Argentina and Uruguay summoned a “South American Congress of International Private Law” in Montevideo which was attended also by Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Paraguay, and Chile. Commenting on the fact that the conference included only South American states, the Foreign Minister of Argentina justified it on the basis of “their close bonds of political and commercial interests and even of neighborliness. The other states of North and Central America either would not come or would come late, and perhaps one of them

²⁶⁶ For example J. Lloyd Meham, *The United States and Inter-American Security, 1889-1960* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1961), and Gordon Connell-Smith, *The Inter-American System* (London, New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1966).

²⁶⁷ Meham, *The United States and Inter-American Security, 1889-1960*: 46.

would assume a disturbing role of supremacy.”²⁶⁸ This short sentence expressed the two main components of the South American subsystem – distinct patterns of interaction given especially their “neighborliness,” and a certain wariness regarding the potential influence of the United States in the region.

Like most analyses on the emergence of the Inter-American System, those who concentrate on the establishment of regional institutions to demonstrate the level of political interaction in Latin America often overlook the existence of a double pattern. Cantori and Spiegel claim that “Latin American relations are characterized by cooperation of the alliance variety, as is evidenced in LAFTA and the Central American Common Market.”²⁶⁹ Again, what the authors present as evidence of a Latin American subsystem actually confirms the notion of two different subsystems, the first organization basically a very limited South American scheme of integration that included Mexico, while the second was exclusively Central American. To reinforce the notion of Latin American political cohesiveness, the authors add that Latin American leaders had “met with President Johnson at Punta del Este, Uruguay, in April 1967 and declared their intention to create a region-wide Common Market by 1985.”²⁷⁰ While this meeting actually took place, when one goes beyond a declaration of intentions and examines what actually happened afterwards, one will again detect that regional subsystemic pressures seem to have contributed to keep South America a separate subsystem. Following the meeting with President Johnson, Central American states issued a separate invitation to the United States for a “Central American Summit Conference,” and what actually

²⁶⁸ Thomas Francis McGann, *Argentina, the United States, and the Inter-American System, 1880-1914*, Harvard Historical Studies v. 70 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), 78.

²⁶⁹ Cantori and Spiegel, *The International Politics of Regions*: 61.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.

happened in 1985 was the initial push for the creation of a Southern Common Market, when Brazil and Argentina signed a cooperation agreement that would eventually develop into the Mercosur. Indeed, as Atkins observed, the “actual practice of Latin American integration favored the subregional approaches.”²⁷¹ The author mentions several integration schemes from the fifties to the nineties, all basically organized around two areas: “Circum-Caribbean” and “South American.”²⁷² It is curious, though, to notice that Atkins refers to NAFTA – the North American Free Trade Area – as a “hemispheric” arrangement, even though it is clearly a North American arrangement.²⁷³ However, as some authors have remarked, NAFTA in North America and Mercosur in South America can actually be seen as “competing models” of integration in the hemisphere.²⁷⁴

Therefore, evidence indicates that in all three variables considered here to measure interaction among states, it is possible to detect two different patterns of interaction in the region referred as Latin America. From this point of view, it makes little sense to think about a Latin American subsystem, since Latin America, as a Brazilian scholar has recently put it, is “separated not only by the Panama Canal, but it is actually divided by divergent interests, economic links, and conflicting geopolitical

²⁷¹ Atkins, *Latin America and the Caribbean in the International System*: 179.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 181-93.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 203. Other authors share the same view, which seemed to be prevalent in the nineties before it became clear the failure of the FTAA. Perhaps this is because of the implicit assumption that Latin America is indivisible, which means that any arrangement between the United States and any Latin American country is logically “hemispheric”. Andrew Hurrell, for example, sees NAFTA as an example of “hemispheric regionalism”. What the author calls “Latin American regionalism” is actually the development of Mercosur in South America. Andrew Hurrell, “Regionalism in the Americas,” in *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order*, ed. Louise L'Estrange Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

²⁷⁴ Ivan Bernier and Martin Roy, “NAFTA and Mercosur: Two Competing Models?,” in *The Americas in Transition: The Contours of Regionalism*, ed. Gordon Mace and Louis Bélanger (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999); Katzenstein, *A World of Regions: Asia And Europe in the American Imperium*: 231. This issue will be further explored on chapter 7.

factors.”²⁷⁵ On the other hand, by any criterion of actual interactions, Mexico, for example, “would appear to be entirely North American.”²⁷⁶ The same would also be true for Central American and Caribbean states. Nevertheless, by focusing on other variables, a significant portion of scholarship has given little attention to the actual patterns of interaction in the Americas, which has led to frequent errors of judgment, analyses, and policies. It is true that when studies focusing on regions resurfaced after the Cold War, the analytical disadvantages of treating Latin America as a coherent unit of analysis became more evident, as shown in chapter 2. Even though there seems to currently be a more widespread acceptance that South America comprises a distinct subsystem, its implications have to be considered more deeply than has been the case thus far.

Acknowledging that there are analytical and empirical grounds to treat South America as a distinct regional subsystem in its own right opens up unique possibilities for research that are usually neglect by the customary approaches to studying international politics of Latin America.

Obviously, drawing precise boundaries of a regional subsystem just on the basis of geography and patterns of interaction may be a problematic task, since not every state in a given regional subsystem may conform to these patterns. In South America, some borderline cases would include Venezuela and Colombia, for example. Because of their geographic position, these countries can be considered as having a “dual nature of being

²⁷⁵ Moniz Bandeira, "O Brasil como potência regional e a importância estratégica da América do Sul na sua política exterior," *Revista Espaço Acadêmico*, no. 91 (2008): 18.

²⁷⁶ Robert O. Keohane, "Between Vision and Reality: Variables in Latin American Foreign Policy," in *Latin America in the New International System*, ed. Joseph S. Tulchin and Ralph H. Espach (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 207.

both Caribbean and South American.”²⁷⁷ This is also reflected by their patterns of interaction, particularly in regards to their trade profiles. Nevertheless, especially after the second half of the twentieth century, they can be increasingly considered part of the South American subsystem because of the main factor that contributes to hold the subsystem together – the role of Brazil.

BRAZIL AND THE SOUTH AMERICAN SUBSYSTEM

Comprising about half of South America’s territory, GDP, and population, sharing borders with every South American country except Ecuador and Chile, and having the second largest economy of the Americas, Brazil stands out as the backbone of the South American regional subsystem and is the key country for explaining it. Because of its size, population, and economy, Brazil is the country with the greatest capability of affecting patterns of interaction in the region. It also is the country that connects the “hard core” of South America – the Southern Cone – with the northern part of the continent, thus giving a certain level of coherence to the subsystem. Brazil connects the La Plata, the Andes and the Amazon region, and it could hardly be ignored by any South American country. This combination of factors means that “Brazil’s looming, at times threatening, presence seems to imprint strongly on the foreign policy of the other republics” in South America.²⁷⁸ As Buzan and Waever argue, even though the differences between the southern and the northern part of South America could be “striking enough to justify

²⁷⁷ Augusto Varas, ed. *Hemispheric Security and U.S. Policy in Latin America*, Westview Special Studies on Latin America and the Caribbean. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), 146.

²⁷⁸ Kelly, *Checkerboards & Shatterbelts: The Geopolitics of South America*: 48.

seeing them as distinct subcomplexes, Brazil remains the linchpin that holds the South American” regional subsystem together.²⁷⁹

This is why it is justified to include the northern countries of South America in the regional subsystem, particularly after the seventies when Brazil began to be more concerned about developing and populating its northern part. A clear example of Brazil’s “looming” presence imprinting on the foreign policy of northern South American states was the fact that, by the early seventies, when Brazil’s military government had laid down the plans to develop the Amazon region, the Venezuelan president visited six countries in South America and suggested a Spanish-American alliance against “Brazilian expansionism” at the same time he initiated efforts to develop Venezuela’s southern region as a response.²⁸⁰ Likewise, the 1969 Andean Pact, signed by Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Colombia, and joined by Venezuela in 1973, was motivated in part by a desire “to counter growing Brazilian power” in the region.²⁸¹ In 1976, Brazil proposed a treaty of cooperation with the members of the Andean pact as an effort “to reduce fears of Brazilian imperialism,”²⁸² which were “particularly [evident in] Peru and Venezuela.”²⁸³ The Amazon Pact was finally signed in 1978 after Venezuelans and Peruvians were reassured of the inexistence of “Brazil’s expansionist intentions.”²⁸⁴ In

²⁷⁹ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*: 332.

²⁸⁰ Robert D. Bond, "Venezuela, Brazil, and the Amazon Basin " in *Latin American Foreign Policies : Global and Regional Dimensions*, ed. Elizabeth G. Ferris and Jennie K. Lincoln, *Westview Special Studies on Latin America and the Caribbean* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1981), 154; John D. Martz, "Venezuelan Foreign Policy toward Latin America," in *Contemporary Venezuela and its Role in International Affairs*, ed. Robert D. Bond (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 162-63.

²⁸¹ Elizabeth G. Ferris, "The Andean Pact and the Amazon Treaty: Reflections of Changing Latin American Relations," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 23, no. 2 (1981): 147.

²⁸² Bond, "Venezuela, Brazil, and the Amazon Basin " 159-60.

²⁸³ Riordan Roett, "Brazil Ascendant: International Relations and Geopolitics in the Late 20th Century," *Journal of International Affairs* 29, no. 2 (1975): 151.

²⁸⁴ Ferris, "The Andean Pact and the Amazon Treaty: Reflections of Changing Latin American Relations," 155.

fact, as John Martz argues, Venezuela has historically been interested in Central America and the Caribbean, especially because of economic interests, but “territorial integrity and national security necessarily lie at the core of foreign policy interests,” thus the importance of neighboring South American countries of Brazil, Guyana, and Colombia in the formulation of its foreign policy.²⁸⁵ Obviously, the opposite is also true. For example, in its annual report of 1956, the Brazilian army noted that “the impetuous development of Venezuela requires special attention” adding that the possibility that Venezuela would become a military power should “demand closer vigilance.”²⁸⁶

The focus on Brazil for the purposes of studying the South American regional subsystem is also justified for theoretical reasons. If the traditional systemic approach to international relations should be “necessarily based on the great powers,”²⁸⁷ the regional subsystemic approach should likewise be based on the regional powers. According to Robert Gilpin, the international system’s focus on the major powers is justified because the system generally tends to reflect the interests of the most powerful actors, which have “determined the patterns of international interactions and established the rules of the system.”²⁸⁸ In a passage that could be better applied to the regional subsystemic than to the international systemic approach that he makes the case for, Gilpin argued that:

The boundaries of the system are defined by the area over which great powers seek to exert control and influence [...] geographic boundaries do matter, in that they affect which other actors and considerations a state must take into account in the formulation of its foreign policy.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵ Martz, “Venezuelan Foreign Policy toward Latin America,” 188.

²⁸⁶ Diniz Esteves, *Documentos históricos do Estado-Maior do Exército* (Brasília: Edição do Estado-Maior do Exército, 1996), 334.

²⁸⁷ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 73.

²⁸⁸ Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*: 42-43.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

This same theoretical position generally used to analyze the international system can be applied to regional subsystems. As Donald Hellman remarked:

The regional subsystem is seen not only in terms of its relationships to the global system, and the local (regional) patterns of international politics, involving conflict as well as cooperation, but in terms of the actions and capabilities of the major regional powers.²⁹⁰

Hence, it is unlikely that any analysis of the South American regional subsystem that neglects the role of Brazil will be entirely successful. The history of South America also shows that Argentina and Chile could play the role of regional leaders. Contrary to Brazil, these countries are limited by their geographic position which tended to confine their concerns to a more restricted area. Recognizing the role of Brazil as the key to understanding the South American subsystem does not imply considering Brazil as a regional hegemon with power to dictate the course of the subsystem as it pleases. In fact, as David Myers observed, for reasons of domestic and regional considerations, "Brazil is far from being a regional hegemon."²⁹¹ But Brazil is and has consistently been a regional power, and even if only because of its size, population, and geographic circumstance, this is a fact to be taken into consideration by the other states' foreign policies. Likewise, Brazil's foreign policy choices and behavior are definitely important to determine the dynamics of the subsystem. "A stable Brazil tends to stabilize the continent," writes Kelly, and any radical transformation of Brazil, such as breaking up in smaller independent countries, would radically transform the South American subsystem.²⁹² Correspondingly, had Brazil, like the Spanish-American republics, had its territory

²⁹⁰ Donald C. Hellmann, "The Emergence of an East Asian International Subsystem," *International Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1969): 422.

²⁹¹ Myers, *Regional Hegemons: Threat Perception and Strategic Response*, 226.

²⁹² Kelly, *Checkerboards & Shatterbelts: The Geopolitics of South America*: 53.

fragmented when obtaining its independence from Portugal, the history of the South American subsystem would most likely be considerably different.

A central characteristic of the South American regional subsystem is that not only must the other states of South America necessarily take Brazil into consideration in matters of conflict and cooperation, but also, as will be explored later, Brazil has historically considered South America as its privileged area of influence. This assumption by Brazilian policymakers is one key factor determining the boundaries of the subsystem. If the boundaries of the international system, as Gilpin argues, can essentially be “defined by the area over which great powers seek to exert control and influence,”²⁹³ the same should be true for the boundaries of a regional subsystem, which could be then defined by the area over which regional powers seek to exert influence. According to Moniz Bandeira, it is the “geopolitical” notion of South America that has effectively guided the foreign policy of Brazil, and not the “ethnic” concept of Latin America, which “is not consistent with its actual economic, political, and geopolitical interests.”²⁹⁴ For this reason, a former Brazilian foreign minister mentioned “the South American component” as a central aspect of Brazil’s “international identity.”²⁹⁵ Thus, if US policymakers have occasionally seen the whole of Latin America as its sphere of influence, their Brazilian counterparts have seen consistently throughout history the hemisphere’s two halves in a different way – a South American half, where Brazil would strive to exert influence, and a North American half that constituted the sphere of influence of the United States in which Brazil would thus abstain to be seriously involved. By the same token, Brazil

²⁹³ Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*: 38.

²⁹⁴ Bandeira, “O Brasil como potência regional e a importância estratégica da América do Sul na sua política exterior,” 3.

²⁹⁵ Celso Lafer, “Brazilian International Identity and Foreign Policy: Past, Present, and Future,” *Daedalus* 129, no. 2 (2000): 218.

would attempt to limit US influence in South America. Because of the centrality of this argument for the present research, I will return to it later in this dissertation.

THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOUTH AMERICAN SUBSYSTEM

Focusing on the most important powers in the system is also vital to detect and understand potential processes of systemic change. In his prominent endeavor to study political change in international politics, Gilpin distinguished between three types of international change: system change, systemic change, and interaction change. While the first entails a change in the nature of the most important actors that compose the system – for example, from nation-states to empires or multinationals – the second is a change within the system in which the focus is the relative changes of power culminating with “the replacement of a declining dominant power by a rising dominant power.”²⁹⁶ The third type of international change described by Gilpin involves modifications in the patterns of interaction and may presage systemic changes. In fact, Gilpin comments that both systemic and interaction changes involve changes in “the rules and rights embodied in the system.”²⁹⁷ We can adapt this framework originally created for the study of international systems to the study of regional subsystems. According to Gilpin’s approach, the central factor to understand the destabilization of the system and systemic change is the rise of new powers and the consequent redistribution of relative power in the overall system. What is central in his argument is the idea that the power of the members of the international system changes at different rates, and thus this “differential

²⁹⁶ Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*: 43.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

growth in power of the various states” is the most important factor in explaining systemic change.²⁹⁸ This theory can also be applied at the regional level, but while Gilpin considers the international system as whole and thus must find the sources of power redistribution exclusively within the system, the regional subsystem approach allows for a second source of power redistribution which comes from outside the subsystem.

In the case of the South American subsystem, the main candidate for changing the regional distribution of power from the outside is the United States, which seems to be the only actor that could incorporate the South American subsystem in an all-encompassing American system. If the United States acted in South America the same way it has done in the rest of Latin America, the concept of a South American regional system would indeed lose much of its analytical muscle as the North American country would absorb most of their regional interactions. There is little doubt that the United States has possessed the capabilities to change the subsystemic status quo in South America and to effectively affect the distribution of power in the subsystem through direct action either in the form of military intervention or action of some other kind that Cantori and Spiegel called “politically significant involvement,” which, as quoted in chapter 2,

is expressed by the possession of a colony; economic or military aid producing an alteration in the balance of power in the region; formal alliance, troop commitment, or any agreement which causes the external power to act in ways which resemble the types of actions that would ordinarily be taken by a country indigenous to the region.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 13.

²⁹⁹ Cantori and Spiegel, *The International Politics of Regions*: 26.

For Gilpin, the international system tends toward stability as long as no state judges that it is profitable to change it.³⁰⁰ Adapting Gilpin's framework to the study of the regional subsystem, if US policy makers at some point concluded that the benefits of transforming the South American subsystem's status quo would outweigh the costs, they could have attempted to do so through significant political involvement. The argument of this dissertation is that Brazil has affected this calculation by either increasing the costs or reducing the benefits of subsystemic change for the United States. Therefore, the stability of the South American subsystem must be explained not only in reference to geography, but also through the interaction between the United States and Brazil, which has contributed to maintaining the United States as an "absent empire" in South America in contrast to other regions of Latin America. From this follows that the present, past, and at least the near future of the South American subsystem depends largely on the relationship between the United States and Brazil, a theory which is in line with the discussion mentioned in the previous chapter of the relationship between agents and structure. In other words, the structure of the South American subsystem affects the outcomes of US foreign policies but does not determine them, and, depending on how the interactions between the United States and Brazil develop, this structure can be changed, whether because the United States may be willing to pay the costs of change or because Brazil may be unwilling to affect US calculations.

Therefore, the patterns of interaction aspect of the South American subsystem is characterized both by distinct patterns of cooperation and conflict within the subsystem as well as by a relative US absence in comparison to the rest of Latin America. Both of these factors are interrelated and contribute to keeping South America as a separate

³⁰⁰ Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*: 50-51.

regional subsystem. While the first has already been emphasized, this research will focus on the latter. The main goal is to demonstrate that the resulting interaction between the United States and the South American regional subsystem has not led to a subsystemic change in South America, which would mean its outright incorporation into either a Latin American or an American subsystem. In other words, this dissertation aims to explain the remarkable degree of stability of the South American subsystem and to make the case for the analytical strength of treating South America as a separate regional subsystem in order to assess, and possibly predict, the outcomes of given US foreign policies initiatives toward the region. If it is true that the outcomes of interaction “have an inherently systemic dimension,”³⁰¹ a refinement of the understanding of a given system - in this case the South American subsystem of the international system - holds the promise of generating better explanations.

It is true that many authors have noticed the relative US absence from South America in comparison to the rest of Latin America. These authors focus generally on the most evident aspect of this difference – the lack of direct unilateral US military intervention south of Panama. Two basic sets of explanations are usually provided to account for this difference – South America is too far away or it has little strategic significance, and South American states are more stable than other countries in Latin America. Typically, the combination of these two factors – proximity and political instability – is used to explain the abundance of US military involvement in Central America and the Caribbean in contrast to South America. For example, Pastor argues that Central America’s and Caribbean’s “proximity, vulnerability, and instability” are the

³⁰¹ Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*: 149.

three characteristics that “make the region of special concern to the United States.”³⁰² For Harold Molineu there are “obvious security interests” that arise “out of the region nearness.”³⁰³ Ronald Steel asserts that, while the Caribbean is of immediate interest, some nations in South America “are twice as far from the United States as Europe” and therefore they could be considered “irrelevant” for the security of the United States.³⁰⁴ David Myers sees South America as less subjected to US influence in general because of the “greater difficulty of projecting North American military, diplomatic and economic power into an arena that is larger, more populous and geographically remote.”³⁰⁵ The notion of “geographic proximity” as “the most important factor” in explaining US involvement in Central America and the Caribbean is also present in more recent studies.³⁰⁶ David Healy and Thomas Leonard single out the “search for stability” as the main characteristic of US actions in Central America and the Caribbean.³⁰⁷ Likewise, for Molineu “the constant seeking of stability for its own sake may be the common denominator in understanding the definition of U.S. interests in Latin America.”³⁰⁸ Louis

³⁰² Pastor, *Whirlpool : U.S. Foreign Policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean*: 23.

³⁰³ Harold Molineu, *U.S. Policy toward Latin America: From Regionalism to Globalism*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), 10.

³⁰⁴ Steel, *Pax Americana*: 195.

³⁰⁵ Myers, *Regional Hegemons: Threat Perception and Strategic Response*, 244.

³⁰⁶ Todd R. Greentree, *Crossroads of Intervention : Insurgency and Counterinsurgency Lessons from Central America* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2008), 22. Likewise, Crandall has explained this difference in involvement by the fact that “Central America and the Caribbean are much closer” than South America, while O’Brien notices that “most of the nations of South America were large and lay at a considerable distance from the borders of the United States.” Russell Crandall, *Gunboat Democracy : U.S. Interventions in the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Panama* (Lanham [Md.]: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 11; Thomas F. O’Brien, *Making the Americas : the United States and Latin America from the Age of Revolutions to the Era of Globalization* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), 106.

³⁰⁷ David Healy, *Drive to Hegemony : the United States in the Caribbean, 1898- 1917* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); Thomas M. Leonard, *Central America and the United States: The Search for Stability*, The United States and the Americas. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991).

³⁰⁸ Molineu, *U.S. Policy toward Latin America: From Regionalism to Globalism*: 10.

Perez Jr. remarks that American officials saw US presence in the Caribbean as necessary to bring “political stability and fiscal responsibility.”³⁰⁹

From the perspective presented by the present research, there are three main aspects of these approaches that deserve particular consideration. The first is that, by focusing on how geographical proximity affects interactions between the United States and the two different subsystems in Latin America, the approaches implicitly acknowledge the existence of a North American subsystem distinct from a South American subsystem. However, because this is just implicit, the research is unable to explore the consequences of this separation and to go beyond an overemphasis on Central America and the Caribbean. In fact, it seems apparent that the overwhelming majority of the works on “United States-Latin America relations” are works on the relations of the United States with Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, with occasional references to one or other South American state just to give the impression of covering the whole region. Because South America is considered too far away, too irrelevant, or relatively stable, it does not deserve any deeper analytical treatment by specialists in US foreign policy. In other words, studying a region where the United States has been an absent empire is far less interesting than looking at the instances where the imperial urge has been very present. Thus, the result of US relative absence from South America results in an absence of South America in the study of US foreign policy.

The second aspect that deserves consideration is closely related to first. As mentioned, geographic proximity and instability are often mentioned as the main reasons for why the United States has been less involved in South America in comparison to the

³⁰⁹ Louis A. Perez, Jr., "Intervention, Hegemony, and Dependency: The United States in the Circum-Caribbean, 1898-1980," *The Pacific Historical Review* 51, no. 2 (1982): 171.

rest of Latin America, but with the overemphasis on the “unstable” Central American and Caribbean states, little attention is given to the supposed stability of South American states. While geographic distance is self-explanatory, the sources of stability or instability are not an unchangeable and permanent fact of nature and must therefore be explained. In addition, while geographic distance is definitively a sound explanation for the lack of involvement in South America until around the first two decades of the twentieth century - when the United States lacked actual power projection in the region and had to compete with a strong European presence there - it becomes less compelling after the United States became a global power. After all, geographic distance did not restrain the United States from occasionally employing imperial policies in different parts of the globe.

Finally, the third aspect of the explanations mentioned above is that, at best, they can explain a supposed lack of U.S. *interest* towards South America. Nevertheless, the explanatory power of those approaches is unequipped to account for the instances when the United States demonstrated a clear interest in South America and yet the actual outcome was relative absence. Lacking an adequate theoretical approach to explain these cases, authors frequently attempt to fit their interpretations within the usual “United States-Latin America” framework, where dissimilar events in what are actually two distinct regional subsystems are seen as equivalent. This is clearly evident and especially relevant in one case in which the United States clearly demonstrated an interest in South American events and that turned out to be definitely the most mentioned event by any scholar trying to demonstrate a supposed coherent pattern of US intervention in Latin America as a whole – the 1973 Chilean military coup. By making reference to the Chilean case along with a number of US interventions in Central America and Caribbean,

those who propose to analyze US foreign policy towards Latin America feel satisfied and relieved that he or she was able to find a case to demonstrate a consistent pattern for the whole region, and therefore are free to concentrate on aspects considered more important.

Therefore, the next chapters will attempt to address these three aspects from the regional subsystemic perspective in order to tackle their shortcomings. First, by providing a framework for the study of the international relations of South America, this research aims to bring attention to an important region of the hemisphere that is commonly neglected by the majority of the studies on United States-Latin America relations for the fact that the United States has not been as active in South America as it has historically been in other regions of Latin America. In other words, by providing explanations for the relative US absence from South America, this research seeks to overcome the relative absence of South America in US studies on Latin America. This is especially relevant given the rising interest in Brazil as an important power in the evolving configuration of the international system.³¹⁰ Second, by considering reasons beyond the mere geographic remoteness and lack of interest, this research intends to provide alternative explanations for US absence, as well as to address the question of apparent “stability” of South America as compared to the other regions of Latin America. And lastly, by focusing on particular case studies when the US policy makers demonstrated a clear interest in South America, this dissertation intends to offer explanations for the actual outcome of US initiatives. In his pioneering study on regional subsystems Binder compared extra-regional power to rays of light that were “refracted” when projected into regional

³¹⁰ Especially since the concept of “BRIC” – referring to Brazil, Russia, India, and China - was introduced in 2001 by Jim O’Neil: Jim O’Neill, “Building Better Global Economic BRICs,” in *Global Economics Paper No: 66* (London: Goldman Sachs, 2001).

subsystems.³¹¹ In the same way, the goal of this research is to help to understand how US power is “refracted” when projected into the South American subsystem.

Perhaps the major casualty brought about by the regional subsystemic perspective as applied to South America is the usual framework of US “hegemony” in Latin America as multipurpose explanation for the international politics of the Western Hemisphere. In terms of interpretation, this approach equates, for instance, the 1954 Guatemalan coup with the 1973 Chilean coup as equivalent events, both being examples of countries that “were unable to break away from U.S. dominance.”³¹² In terms of analysis, the US hegemony approach would predict, for example, that the regional integration model set by NAFTA would inevitably be extended to all Latin America “because of U.S. power.”³¹³ The traditional focus on the United States is reminiscent of the conventional global systemic approach to international relations. Nevertheless, outside the boundaries of the North American subsystem - i.e., in regional subsystems where the United States is an external power, and not an integral member – a disproportionate focus on US actions often leads to neglecting the dynamics of the regional subsystemic game that is being played simultaneously. Obviously, in some circumstances the distinction between the United States (or any other great power, for that matter) as an external power or as an integral member is blurred – the United States in Western Europe in the fifties, for example, comes to mind. Yet, even in those extreme situations, regional subsystemic pressures are at play, and geography makes sure that states will remain concerned about their neighbors and attempt to manipulate external

³¹¹ Binder, “The Middle East as a Subordinate International System,” 415.

³¹² David R. Mares, “Middle Powers under Regional Hegemony: To Challenge or Acquiesce in Hegemonic Enforcement,” *International Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (1988): 454.

³¹³ Katzenstein, *A World of Regions : Asia and Europe in the American Imperium*: 223.

powers for their own advantage in order to achieve a better position in the regional chessboard.

For the reasons aforementioned, the role of Brazil as a regional power will be emphasized in order to explain the interaction between the United States and the South American regional subsystem. This does not mean to negate the role of the United States, or to assume that Brazil has “more power” or “more influence” than the United States in South America, or that somehow there is a balance of power between Brazil and the United States in that subsystem. What it does mean, is that the supposed hegemonial role of the United States in South America has not been exercised as it could have been because of the particular dynamics of the South American subsystem in which Brazil has played a central role by manipulating the cost-benefit structure of subsystemic change. If the United States has acted occasionally as an empire in other regions of Latin America, in South America it has been an absent one, even though it has had the required capabilities to be a present one. Geographic distance obviously plays an important role, but it is far from being a sufficient explanation - the regional subsystemic perspective is thus required in order to allow us to detect alternative reasons.

BRAZIL, THE UNITED STATES, AND THE SOUTH AMERICAN SUBSYSTEM

An important assumption of this dissertation is that, as a regional subsystem develops, regionally influential states value their position in the subsystem and thus they have an incentive to maintain the integrity of the subsystem by reducing opportunities for outside penetration, which could at the limit promote subsystemic change if the regional

distribution of power was substantially affected. Because their main focus is usually regional rather than global, regional powers tend to concentrate their attention primarily on their own regional subsystems. Accordingly, at the same time these states adopt strategies to maintain their influence within the subsystem, they work either to limit influence from outside or to shape that influence in accordance to their interests. The capacity of regional powers to restrict outside penetration is obviously limited by the power relationship between them and the external powers, but they can be successful if they create conditions that reduce the incentive or the opportunity for outside penetration, thus affecting the structure of costs and benefits of subsystemic change. Correspondingly, they may also be unable or inefficient to affect the structure of costs and benefits, in which case outside penetration can lead to subsystemic change. Weaker states within the subsystem may also bargain with outside powers to improve their own positions but they generally have little to gain by completely ignoring the pressures of more powerful neighboring states.

The assumption stated above helps to explain the role of Brazil in the South American subsystem and the relative absence of the United States. Because of its privileged geographic situation in South America, Brazil has been a “quintessential status quo power,”³¹⁴ which means it has had a lot to gain by maintaining the stability of the subsystem. The argument proposed here is that Brazil, which has historically displayed “a strong vested interest in regional stability,”³¹⁵ has successfully manipulated the structure of costs and benefits of subsystemic change for the United States in two main

³¹⁴ Kacowicz, *Zones of Peace in the Third World : South America and West Africa in Comparative Perspective*: 90.

³¹⁵ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*: 314.

ways. First, it has reduced the benefits of subsystemic change by acting as a “subhegemonic state”³¹⁶ or a “hegemonic stabilizer”³¹⁷ at the regional level, thus preempting the role that could potentially be played by the United States, and consequently reducing the opportunities and incentives for US interference. Because, like Brazil, the United States has also been a status quo power when it comes to Latin America in general and to South America in particular, there has been “a congruence of US-Brazilian interest in stability in the region,”³¹⁸ in spite of occasional divergence of interests. Thus, while standard explanations for the relative stability of South America would argue that “American hegemony mutes a real conflict,”³¹⁹ this research takes a different approach. As one observer put it in the late seventies,

Not U.S. intercession, but Brazilian power diplomacy seems most responsible to date for preventing the outbreak of violence in the region. If this is true, there may exist some basis for beginning to think of South American relations in terms of a regional balance of power (in which Brazil plays the role of balancer) rather than in the more conventional framework of North American hegemony.³²⁰

Therefore, Brazil has played in South America - although essentially through other means - a similar role as the United States has played in other parts of Latin America, which explains in part why the US military interventions on behalf of a “search for stability” could be regionally restricted to the north of Panama. On the other hand, Brazil has attempted to increase the costs of subsystemic change by increasing the incentives for other states in participating in the subsystem and at the same time avoiding

³¹⁶ Michael J. Francis and Timothy J. Power, “South America,” in *Handbook of Political Science Research on Latin America: Trends from the 1960s to the 1990s*, ed. David W. Dent (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990).

³¹⁷ Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers : The Structure of International Security*: 313.

³¹⁸ Stephen M. Gorman, “Present Threats to Peace in South America: The Territorial Dimensions of Conflict,” *Inter-American Economic Affairs* 33, no. 1 (1979): 70.

³¹⁹ Cantori and Spiegel, *The International Politics of Regions*: 59-60. See also Guy E. Poitras, *The Ordeal of Hegemony: the United States and Latin America* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990).

³²⁰ Gorman, “Present Threats to Peace in South America: The Territorial Dimensions of Conflict,” 53.

openly playing the “subhegemonic” role. This is both a conscious decision by Brazilian policymakers as well as a reflection of Brazil’s limited means to be a hegemonic power. Both strategies – decreasing the benefits and increasing the costs of subsystemic change - have often been used simultaneously to affect the profitability of change, but the first was more evident during the Cold War, while the second became preeminent after the eighties. The cases selected for study in the next chapters will better explore these arguments.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the fact regional subsystems are subsets of the broader international system means that they cannot be studied in complete isolation. A complete analysis of regional subsystems can only claim to be satisfactory if it includes references to the international system that constitutes the environment of the regional subsystems. For this reason the next chapters are arranged in accordance with different configurations of the international system. The first period, which goes from the time of the independence of the American states until the first decades of the twentieth century, is considered by many analysts as being multipolar, but this multipolarity was essentially restricted to the European context. In the Western Hemisphere the United States was the major power and its foreign policy had basically a regionalist orientation, from which the Monroe Doctrine is the clearest example. The second period under study is the Cold War, when an actual international system came about, together with a bipolar configuration of power. During this period, the United States adopted a global orientation in its foreign policy, focused mainly on the European continent, at the same time it reached the peak of its influence in Latin America. The Cold War is a particularly relevant period for the purposes of this study because it was when the United States had clearly both the

incentive and the capability to become a “present empire” in South America. Finally, the last period under consideration goes from the end of the Cold War until the present days, when the disappearance of the Soviet Union left the United States as the “lonely superpower.”³²¹ For each of these configurations of the broader system, a corresponding role for Brazil in the South American subsystem is identified. For the purposes of the present study, the first period will be characterized as the “unwritten alliance” with the United States; the second will be termed as the “regional imperialist” phase; and the third as the “leader of a South American bloc.” The juxtaposition of these three factors – the configuration of the international system, the role of the United States, and the role of Brazil will be the basic framework to analyze the three periods under study. It is the expectation of this research, that this framework is a better alternative to understand US foreign policy towards South America than the ones offered by the existing literature.

³²¹ Samuel P. Huntington, "The Lonely Superpower," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 2 (1999).

CHAPTER 5

THE MONROE DOCTRINE AND THE EARLY DEVELOPMENTS OF A SOUTH
AMERICAN SUBSYSTEM

As previously mentioned, any research that aims to address patterns of interaction is inevitably fated to address historical processes. How far back in time it is necessary to reach is a choice of the analyst. In the case of the interactions among American states, this choice is comparatively easier since most of these countries have been independent for only about two hundred years, which allows the researcher to identify the beginning of their interaction processes among those nations as formal actors of international politics without great difficulty.

In fact, an appropriate year to start the analysis is 1823, when the independence of the American states was recently completed and the United States issued the doctrine that is probably the most resilient of its history: the Monroe Doctrine. Aiming specially at the European states that then constituted the Holy Alliance - composed of Russia, Prussia, Austria, and France - which entertained plans to help Spain regain their lost colonies in America, President Monroe declared that “the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers” and that if they attempted to do so, this would be interpreted “as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.”³²² The Monroe Doctrine was thus a unilateral

³²² Dexter Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine, 1867-1907*, The Albert Shaw Lectures on Diplomatic History, 1937 (Gloucester, Mass.: P. Smith, 1966), 3.

declaration by the United States instituting a separation between Europe and the Americas through the commitment to actively oppose any new European colonization attempts in the Western Hemisphere.

This chapter examines the evolution of the Monroe Doctrine beyond its original promulgation in 1823 in order to demonstrate that the development of the interactions between the countries in the hemisphere made it progressively clear that, rather than being a policy directed to be homogeneously applied in all Latin America, the Monroe Doctrine and its offshoots--such as the Roosevelt Corollary--were explicitly Caribbean or, to use the terminology employed by this dissertation, restricted to the North American subsystem. In South America, the doctrine acquired a rather different character. The chapter argues that both distance and the relative stability of key South American countries allowed for this development of an embryonic South American subsystem organized around Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. The chapter also shows that Brazil in particular considered itself as a guarantor of the Monroe Doctrine in South America and thus it pursued an "unwritten alliance" with the United States, meaning that each country would take care of its respective regional subsystem. Although this was not entirely reciprocated, the understood alliance was relatively convenient for the United States as Brazil was a friendly country and because it would allow the United States to concentrate its actions in the Caribbean. As Chile's power declined and Argentina adopted a foreign policy with a strong anti-US orientation, Brazil's position became even more relevant.

ACTION AND REACTION: DEFINING THE SCOPE OF THE MONROE DOCTRINE

Those who concentrate on the Monroe Doctrine only as it was promulgated in 1823 may conclude that no differentiation should be made between the two halves of the Americas. After all, at no point in Monroe's speech was this differentiation made. Nevertheless, the Monroe Doctrine was "not an event but a historic development,"³²³ and consequently it should be studied taking into consideration a broader historical perspective in terms of how it developed through time. In other words, what should be determined is how the process of interaction among the American states shaped the actual outcome of US policies following the 1823 declaration. When this is done, the first signs of the configuration of two different regional subsystems in the Western Hemisphere become evident, illustrates both by geography and by the way the interactions among the American countries unfolded.

Because there was no previous significant interaction among the independent countries in the Western Hemisphere, the enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine, given its presumed hemispheric reach, can be considered as equivalent to a "first social act" which "creates expectations on both sides about each other's future behavior" thus setting in motion a process of action and reaction that would lead to the creation of "intersubjective meanings,"³²⁴ which would eventually determine important aspects of the patterns of relationship in the Western Hemisphere. In fact, the first reactions when Monroe's message reached the Latin American states seems to have varied from indifference to

³²³ Albert Bushnell Hart, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Interpretation* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1916), 141.

³²⁴ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 405.

enthusiasm. The indifference aspect is explained by the fact that many governments in Latin America were still more connected to Europe than to the other countries in the Americas and tended to look to Great Britain more than to the infant United States as a source for protection,³²⁵ but the possibility of being able to rely on a second power in their own hemisphere to ward off the European powers could not be completely ignored by the newly independent Latin American states. Alejandro Alvarez notices that four countries took special interest in the doctrine: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico.³²⁶ Dexter Perkins adds that also in Chile “the message was better received than in any other part of Spanish America.”³²⁷ All of these countries, recently independent and fearful of possible attempts of reconquest by Spain or Portugal, became interested in finding out more about US intentions and indeed they “asked point-blank what means the United States intended to use for their protection.”³²⁸ The Empire of Brazil “was the first South American government to take notice of the Doctrine”³²⁹ and within two months requested a defensive-offensive alliance with the United States.³³⁰ A similar call for an alliance was made by Mexico and by Simon Bolivar’s Colombia. A few years after Monroe’s message to the US Congress, the Argentinean government called for the application of the Doctrine in a conflict against Brazil because, according to the Argentinean president at the time, of the “obvious connection between Europe and Brazil,

³²⁵ Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine, 1867-1907*: 154.

³²⁶ Alejandro Alvarez, *The Monroe Doctrine, its Importance in the International Life of the States of the New World*, Publications of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Division of International Law, Washington (New York: Oxford University Press, 1924), 10.

³²⁷ Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine, 1867-1907*: 160.

³²⁸ Hart, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Interpretation*: 92.

³²⁹ Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine, 1867-1907*: 196.

³³⁰ Hart, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Interpretation*: 87.

more especially of Portugal.”³³¹ The US response was basically the same in all cases. To the Colombian government, Secretary of State Adams replied that “the fear of intervention by the Holy Alliance in the countries of the New World had practically disappeared,”³³² and therefore there was no need for a formal alliance. In the case of Brazil, the United States government was cool towards the request for an alliance and “excused itself, believing this compact unnecessary,”³³³ and later on the two countries signed a more limited commercial treaty. The Argentinean government was informed by Secretary of State Clay in 1828 that the request for intervention against Brazil was unfounded, and that “the United States did not consider itself obliged to intervene in defense of the Monroe Doctrine at every request of interested parties.”³³⁴ To leave no doubts about his views, Clay added that “[e]ven if Portugal and Brazil had remained united, and the war had been carried out by their joint arms, against the Argentine Republic, that would have been far from presenting the case which the message contemplated.”³³⁵ Similarly, to the Mexican President, Clay explained that the Monroe Doctrine did not mean that the United States had contracted any kind of legal obligation to maintain it.³³⁶ But in contrast to the South American countries, Mexico would soon learn that the Monroe Doctrine was silent about the United States’ own ambitions.

³³¹ Watt Stewart, "Argentina and the Monroe Doctrine, 1824-1828," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 10, no. 1 (1930): 29; Alvarez, *The Monroe Doctrine, its Importance in the International Life of the States of the New World*: 11; David Y. Thomas, *One Hundred Years of the Monroe Doctrine, 1823-1923* (New York, Macmillan, 1923), 45.

³³² Alvarez, *The Monroe Doctrine, its Importance in the International Life of the States of the New World*: 10.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Ibid., 11.

³³⁵ Stewart, "Argentina and the Monroe Doctrine, 1824-1828," 31.

³³⁶ Alvarez, *The Monroe Doctrine, its Importance in the International Life of the States of the New World*: 11.

Obviously, given the fact that during the most part of the nineteenth century the European powers were more capable than the United States to project power in South America, it could hardly be conceivable that US statesmen would be willing to take any significant action in a region that was far from their borders. By the 1840s, Secretary of State Daniel Webster felt it necessary to make clear that the Monroe Doctrine “did not commit us, at all events, to take up arms at any indication of hostile feeling by the powers of Europe toward South America,” adding that it would be a “very different case” if any European power “landed on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, and commenced a war in our immediate neighborhood.”³³⁷ While in the 1860s the United States was so concerned about the French presence in Mexico as to plan to use all means necessary to force their withdrawal, when Chile went into conflict with Spain at about the same time, Secretary of State William H. Seward offered no more than “the moral support of a sincere, liberal, and, as we think it will appear, a useful friendship.”³³⁸ In summary, the actual actions of the United States made clear that, as the Monroe Doctrine acquired the contours of a policy rather than a declaration of intentions, a clear separation between the North and the South American part of the American continent was beginning to take shape.

During this process of action and reaction between the United States and the Latin American governments, the actual scope of the Monroe Doctrine became progressively more delineated. In a message to Congress in 1845, US President James Polk had already

³³⁷ Hart, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Interpretation*: 92.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 153.

“formally confirmed the geographical limitations of the Doctrine”³³⁹ when he declared that it would

apply with greatly increased force should any European power attempt to establish any new colony in North America [...] The reassertion of this principle, especially in reference to North America, is at this day but the promulgation of a policy which no European power should cherish the disposition to resist It should be distinctly announced to the world as our settled policy that no future European colony or dominion shall with our consent be planted or established in any part of the North American continent.”³⁴⁰

This explicit declaration by President Polk demonstrated categorically that instead of having a true hemispheric scope, the Monroe Doctrine was in actuality “essentially a Caribbean doctrine, affirming the vital interest of the United States in the tranquility of what it considered to be its inland sea.”³⁴¹ The repeated allusions to “North America” in lieu of hemispheric references continued to be made throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. In making the case for the annexation of Santo Domingo as “an adherence to the Monroe Doctrine,” President Grant stated in 1871 that he believed that “we should not permit any independent government within the limits of North America to pass from a condition of independence to one of ownership or protection under a European power.”³⁴²

Perhaps the only exception to this overall concentration “within the limits of North America” was during Venezuela’s boundary dispute with the British colony of Guyana, but in this case it appears that the personal characteristics of Secretary of State Richard Olney played a significant factor. The Venezuelan government had been disputing the Guyana boundary with Britain since the 1880s, but until 1895, when Olney

³³⁹ Lester D. Langley, *The Banana Wars : United States Intervention in the Caribbean, 1898-1934*, Rev. ed. (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1985), 21.

³⁴⁰ Hart, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Interpretation*: 114.

³⁴¹ Steel, *Pax Americana*: 195-96.

³⁴² Hart, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Interpretation*: 114.

succeeded Walter Gresham as Secretary of State, the United States “pursued a most cautious and circumspect course.”³⁴³ It was only after Olney became Secretary of State that the United States decided to take a firm stand on the issue by forcing Great Britain to accept US arbitration, and making reference to the Monroe Doctrine as “the accepted public law of this country.”³⁴⁴ In what appears to be an effort to extend the geographical scope of the doctrine as it had been tacitly defined until then, he added that the American states “South as well as North, by geographical proximity, by natural sympathy, by similarity of governmental constitutions, are friends and allies, commercially and politically, of the United States.”³⁴⁵ This was not only a matter of friendship, the Secretary of State observed, but also the reality of the growing American power. As Olney famously put it: “Today the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition.”³⁴⁶ It must be recalled that Monroe’s original message referred explicitly to new European colonies and not existing ones, which means that Olney’s application of the Monroe Doctrine as a justification for US intervention in a boundary dispute was a singular interpretation that led the British government to respond, in astonishment, that even though admitting that “the Monroe Doctrine in itself is sound,” the “disputed frontier with Venezuela has nothing to do with any of the questions dealt with by President Monroe. It is not a question of the colonization by a European Power of any portion of America.” The note, written by Prime Minister Lord Salisbury, concluded that Olney’s

³⁴³ George B. Young, “Intervention Under the Monroe Doctrine: The Olney Corollary,” *Political Science Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (1942): 248.

³⁴⁴ Hart, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Interpretation*: 195.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 196. One critic commented that, by mentioning “geographical proximity”, Olney “overlooked the fact that the largest cities in South America are geographically nearer to Spain and Portugal than to New York and New England”: Hiram Bingham, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Obsolete Shibboleth* (New Haven: Yale university press, 1913), 18.

³⁴⁶ Hart, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Interpretation*: 196.

interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine was a “strange development.”³⁴⁷ Albert Hart, whose book provided the aforementioned quotes, commented that “[n]o previous President or Secretary of State had ever taken such a broad and sweeping ground” and that Olney’s interpretation was “little related to the doctrine of 1823.”³⁴⁸ In fact, the Venezuela-Guiana boundary dispute seems an isolated case within an overall pattern, but while Hart concentrates on the question of the application of the Monroe Doctrine to an issue apparently unrelated to the original declaration, for the purposes of this research, the relevant aspect is the fact that the Venezuelan case was perhaps the only instance when the Doctrine was actually invoked to justify US actions south of Panama. Indeed, Secretary Olney himself declared in the following year, when the Cuban insurrections occupied the minds of American statesmen, that the United States was in fact “interested in any struggle anywhere for freer political institutions, but,” he added, “necessarily and in special measure in a struggle that is raging almost in sight of our shores.”³⁴⁹ Once again, the actual practices forced the confinement of the geographical application of the doctrine.

Evidently, as the true scope of the Monroe Doctrine became clear for Latin Americans, reactions differed radically from the almost unanimous support received right after it was first promulgated. In particular, the United States’ expansion into Mexican territory after 1848 made clear to Mexico and to the nearby Central American and Caribbean countries, that “the Monroe Doctrine was never a guarantee against ambitious

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 200.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 203.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 208.

designs of the United States itself.”³⁵⁰ When a “policy of hegemony” came to be considered as a “natural complement of the Monroe Doctrine” by US statesmen,³⁵¹ it is not a surprise that some countries, Mexico in particular, began to develop “a great aversion to the Doctrine, for they look upon it ordinarily no longer under the aspect which it had in 1823 but under the new aspect which has been given to it.”³⁵² During the Spanish-American War in 1898, when the United States took at once Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, this notion was greatly reinforced. Predictably, by the beginning of the twentieth century, a Mexican President stated publicly his opposition to the Monroe Doctrine, because, from his point of view, it “attacks the sovereignty and independence of Mexico and would set up and establish a tutelage over all the nations of America.”³⁵³ The growth in US power and the relative decline of Europe changed the initial view that a number of Latin American states initially had of the Monroe Doctrine as a guarantee against intervention. The question which now dominated several of the Pan American Conferences was how to deal with the major power in their own hemisphere. As Gordon Connell-Smith remarks, “a system which was promoted to prevent extra-continental intervention became at once concerned with the question of intervention by the promoting power.”³⁵⁴ After the Spanish-American War and a number of interventions in Central America and the Caribbean throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, it would become evident that the notion of a homogeneous US “Latin American” policy

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 72.

³⁵¹ Alvarez, *The Monroe Doctrine, its Importance in the International Life of the States of the New World*: 19.

³⁵² Ibid., 20.

³⁵³ Thomas, *One Hundred Years of the Monroe Doctrine, 1823-1923*: 395.

³⁵⁴ Connell-Smith, *The Inter-American System*: 10.

was in fact far more restricted in its geographical scope.³⁵⁵ Having defeated a decadent European empire at the turn of the century, and still living in a world of empires, the United States flirted with imperial solutions for itself.³⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the scope of this American “empire” rarely reached the countries south of Panama. As will be seen below, because of their different experiences with US power, the South American countries by and large developed a very different outlook than the one developed by the rest of Latin America, which can be clearly illustrated by the cases of Mexico and Brazil.

THE EARLY DEVELOPMENTS OF A SOUTH AMERICAN SUBSYSTEM

The strategic importance of the Caribbean area in comparison to South America is just one dimension of the explanation for the US lack of involvement further south in these first years of interaction among the independent American states. The other dimension must be found in the simultaneous development of a “continental South American system of power politics” around the core formed by Argentina, Brazil, and Chile.³⁵⁷ Geographic distance allowed this system to develop during the nineteenth century, before the United States was actually capable of effectively projecting power in the Southern Cone of South America. Therefore, when the United States eventually

³⁵⁵ Martin Sicker counts thirty-four US interventions in Central American and the Caribbean between 1890 and 1928. Martin Sicker, *The Geopolitics of Security in the Americas: Hemispheric Denial from Monroe To Clinton* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002). In contrast, as G. Pope Atkins observes, the United States “never landed its troops in the Southern Cone.” Atkins, *Latin America and the Caribbean in the International System*: 143.

³⁵⁶ See, for example: Ernest R. May, *Imperial Democracy : The Emergence of America as a Great Power* (Chicago: Imprint Publications, 1991); Richard E. Welch, *Imperialists vs. Anti-Imperialists: The Debate over Expansionism in the 1890's*, Primary Sources in American history (Itasca, Ill: F. E. Peacock Publishers, 1972); David Healy, *US Expansionism: The Imperialist Urge in the 1890s* (Madison,: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970).

³⁵⁷ Robert N. Burr, *By Reason or Force: Chile and the Balancing of Power in South America, 1830-1905* (Berkeley,: University of California Press, 1967), 3.

acquired the capabilities for transforming the Monroe Doctrine into an authentic hemispheric doctrine beyond its Caribbean scope, it had to deal with a regional subsystem that had already been reasonably advanced in a way that was considerably different than in the rest of Latin America.

In contrast to other former Spanish colonies, Argentina and Chile managed to develop early in their independence relatively stable governments. Despite some moments of political precariousness - especially in the case of Argentina - none of these two countries experienced the kind of political upheaval that prevailed in Mexico for example, in which “between 1821 and 1848, there were six or seven different governments.”³⁵⁸ Brazil was a different case in which contrary to Spanish America, it had not been fragmented into parts and experienced no great political ruptures when it achieved independence from Portugal. It is suffice to say that the first ruler of independent Brazil, Dom Pedro I, the Portuguese Prince, ruled as Emperor of Brazil for nine years. The second ruler, Emperor Dom Pedro II, was Dom Pedro I’s son and ruled for forty-eight straight years until Brazil became a Republic in 1889 – again with no bloodshed. Contrary to what his long reign may suggest, far from being a typical Latin American caudillo, Dom Pedro II was an erudite and liberal statesman who allowed freedom of press and speech, and invested heavily in education.³⁵⁹ Because of a functioning and active parliament, “with solid and competitive parties,”³⁶⁰ one author even characterized the Brazilian Empire as “a crowned democracy.”³⁶¹ After meeting

³⁵⁸ Hart, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Interpretation*: 103.

³⁵⁹ Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, *As barbas do imperador : D. Pedro II, um monarca nos trópicos* (São Paulo, Brazil: Companhia das Letras, 1998).

³⁶⁰ José Murilo de Carvalho, *A monarquia brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro: Ao Livro Técnico, 1993), 65.

³⁶¹ Manuel de Oliveira Lima, *O movimento da independência (1821-1822)*, 6. ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Topbooks, 1997), 451.

Dom Pedro II, British Prime Minister William Gladstone referred to him as “a model to all sovereigns of the world.”³⁶² When Dom Pedro II died, the *New York Times* wrote an extremely flattering obituary - which was a relatively unusual deference for any Latin American leader in the late nineteenth century – making reference to Gladstone’s remarks, adding that Dom Pedro II was “one of the most enlightened monarchs of the century [...] a liberal patron of letters, arts, and sciences,” and commenting that “Dom Pedro made Brazil as free as a monarchy can become.”³⁶³ The following day, the US newspaper referred to him as a “genial philosopher” and - what is really surprising in light of Monroe’s original idea of separation between the European and the American systems of government - questioned the wisdom of establishing a republic in Brazil, saying that “it is doubtful whether a republic meets the requirements of Brazil so well as a monarchy.”³⁶⁴ In fact, the popularity that the Brazilian Emperor enjoyed was so substantial that the most renowned statesman of the early years of the Brazilian Republic was the Baron of Rio Branco, a diplomat during the Empire and son of another prominent statesman during Dom Pedro II’s reign. Rio Branco was the Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs under four different administrations, from 1902 to 1910. Therefore, along with Brazil’s sheer size, this relative continuity of policies and stability, with no significant breaks or political upheavals, provided the country with the basis for its consolidation as a regional power in South America.

As one author observes, by the beginning of the twentieth century, Argentina, Chile, and Brazil “represented at the time literally the only group of historically mature,

³⁶² Aluizio Napoleão, *Rio-Branco e as relações entre o Brasil e os Estados Unidos*, Comissão Preparatória do Centenário do Barão do Rio-Branco. Monografias, (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 1947), 65.

³⁶³ *New York Times*, "Brazil's Old Ruler Dead," December 5, 1891.

³⁶⁴ _____, "Dom Pedro and Brazil," December 6, 1891.

constitutionally stable, traditionally peaceful, and physically secure sovereign states to be found anywhere in the world.”³⁶⁵ This unique condition allowed for a development of a regional subsystem early on in the international life of those states. Because of the existence of three countries in geographical propinquity with the potential for playing the role of regional powers as well as the relative absence of the United States during the first years of their independence, states in South America were less concerned about the overwhelming power of the North American country than about themselves, which was clearly the opposite situation in relation to the countries in the northern half of the hemisphere. Robert Burr describes the development of a system of power politics in South America throughout the nineteenth century, first with two relatively separate regions – the Plata and the Andean region – which eventually joined in a single “continental” system by the 1860s.³⁶⁶ Therefore, South American statesmen, at least since the second half of the nineteenth century, “tended to think in terms of a continent-wide balance-of-power system,”³⁶⁷ and used to make constant references to a “South American equilibrium.”³⁶⁸ As Burr argues, by the end of the nineteenth century, “the idea of a balance of power had become an accepted part of the international life of South America.”³⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the notion of a separation between South and North America was manifest in the minds of South American statesmen at least as early as 1840. For example, when internal problems in Mexico indicated that an attempt to summon a

³⁶⁵ Glen St John Barclay, *Struggle for a Continent : The Diplomatic History of South America, 1917-1945* (London,: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1971), 27.

³⁶⁶ Burr, "The Balance of Power in Nineteenth-Century South America: An Exploratory Essay."; ———, *The Stillborn Panama Congress; Power Politics and Chilean-Colombian Relations during the War of the Pacific*, University of California publications in history, (Berkeley,: University of California Press, 1962); ———, *By Reason or Force; Chile and the Balancing of Power in South America, 1830-1905*.

³⁶⁷ ———, *The Stillborn Panama Congress; Power Politics and Chilean-Colombian Relations during the War of the Pacific*: 113.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 17, 29.

³⁶⁹ ———, "The Balance of Power in Nineteenth-Century South America: An Exploratory Essay," 59.

conference among American states that year was about to fail, the Chilean government suggested that “it would perhaps be well for the South American plenipotentiaries to meet together ... without awaiting the arrival ... of their Mexican and Central American colleagues” adding categorically that “[t]he republics of South America and the Brazilian Empire form a compact system whose ties with Mexico and Central America are comparatively weak.”³⁷⁰

While their distance from the United States put the South American countries outside the actual scope of the Monroe Doctrine and made them less preoccupied about the possibility of US intervention, as the relative strength and stability of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile became clear by the end of the nineteenth century, policymakers in the United States began to entertain new possibilities for the application of the Monroe Doctrine and the maintenance of stability in the Americas. Although this is barely mentioned in the literature, it would become a key feature of the separation between the North and the South American regional subsystems in these formative years – the United States would take direct responsibility for its area of immediate strategic interest in North America, while it would seek to involve the stronger South American countries in the affairs of the South American continent. Indeed, this prospect was already mentioned by the end of the nineteenth century when President Grant considered intervening in the dispute between Chile and Peru. Leaving aside the unilateral phraseology commonly used when dealing with Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, the US President mentioned the possibility of intervention by stating that the United States “would hold itself free to appeal to the other Republics of this continent to join in an effort to avert

³⁷⁰ ———, *By Reason or Force; Chile and the Balancing of Power in South America, 1830-1905*: 62-63.

consequences which cannot be confined to Chili [sic] and Peru.”³⁷¹ Nevertheless, the notion of a possible entente between the United States and some South American countries took shape by the time the most famous extension of the Monroe Doctrine was promulgated – the “Roosevelt Corollary,” which was officially announced in 1904. Indeed, Theodore Roosevelt, who famously brandished the “big stick” to maintain order in the Caribbean area, is perhaps the first US president to explicitly consider the advantages of shared responsibilities for the enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine in the southern half of the hemisphere.

ROOSEVELT, WILSON AND THE SOUTH AMERICAN SUBSYSTEM

In a chapter of his autobiography entitled “The Monroe Doctrine and the Panama Canal,” Roosevelt starts out by acknowledging that the Spanish-American War left the United States “with peculiar relations to the Philippines, Cuba, Porto Rico, and with immensely added interest in Central America and the Caribbean Sea,”³⁷² therefore clearly establishing the boundaries of the US sphere of influence at the time, as many of his predecessors had done. A few lines later, he makes clear the differentiation in the Western Hemisphere between that area and South America, when he adds:

The great and prosperous civilized commonwealths such as the Argentine, Brazil, and Chile, in the southern half of South America have advanced so far that they no longer stand in any position of tutelage toward the United States. They occupy toward us precisely the position that Canada occupies. Their friendship is the friendship of equals for equals. My view was that as regards these nations there

³⁷¹ Hart, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Interpretation*: 180.

³⁷² Theodore Roosevelt, *An Autobiography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), 502.

was no more necessity for asserting the Monroe Doctrine than there was to assert it for Canada.³⁷³

Roosevelt concludes that if some European nation attempted to occupy one of these countries, the United States would provide assistance, but “the initiative would come from the Nation itself, and the United States would merely act as a friend whose help was invoked.” Evidently, as he immediately recognizes, the situation would be “widely different” in the case of “the states in the neighborhood of the Caribbean Sea.”³⁷⁴

Roosevelt’s reasoning for the often overlooked double standard for the enforcement of his famous corollary to the Monroe Doctrine seems to be based on two pillars. The first is strategic-military. Already by 1901, the General Board of the Navy had produced a report that clearly stated:

Whether the principle of the Monroe Doctrine, so far as it is the policy of this Government, covers all South America, including Patagonia and the Argentine, is not for the consideration of the General Board, but only the fact that the principles of strategy and the defects in our geographical position make it impracticable successfully to maintain naval control by armed force beyond the Amazon, unless present conditions are radically changed.³⁷⁵

This view was shared by the prominent strategist Captain Alfred Mahan, who believed “that United States security concerns ended at the Amazon River, making it unnecessary to apply the Monroe Doctrine south of it.”³⁷⁶

To this strategic-military aspect Roosevelt added a second pillar, based on the notion of state capacity, that is, the states requiring US intervention would be the ones that proved incapable “to do their duties to outsiders or to enforce their rights against

³⁷³ Ibid., 503.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Langley, *The Banana Wars: United States Intervention in the Caribbean, 1898-1934*: 20.

³⁷⁶ Healy, *Drive to Hegemony: the United States in the Caribbean, 1898- 1917*: 144.

outsiders.”³⁷⁷ In his original message to Congress which gave birth to the Roosevelt Corollary, Roosevelt famously mentioned that “wrongdoing or impotence” would be the causes for US intervention in the hemisphere, adding that if the countries in the Caribbean area had the same “progress in stable and just civilization [...] which so many of the republics in both Americas are constantly and brilliantly showing, all questions of interference by this Nation with their affairs would be at an end.”³⁷⁸ Later, Roosevelt explicitly singled out “Brazil, the Argentine, Chile,” which, he said,

have achieved positions of such assured ... progress, of such political stability and power and economic prosperity, ... it is safe to say that there is no further need for the United States to concern itself about asserting the Monroe Doctrine so far as these powers are concerned.³⁷⁹

In another occasion, Roosevelt remarked that

There are certain republics to the south of us which have already reached such a point of stability, order, and prosperity, that they themselves, though as yet hardly consciously, are among the guarantors of this Doctrine ... If all the republics to the south of us will only grow as those to which I allude have already grown, all need for us to be the special champions of the Doctrine will disappear, for no stable and growing American Republic wishes to see some great non-American military power acquire territory in its neighborhood.³⁸⁰

This notion that the more stable South American republics could be the guarantors of the Monroe Doctrine led one scholar to comment that Roosevelt viewed some countries like Argentina and Brazil “as junior partners that would help enforce the Corollary.”³⁸¹ Another author stated that “[i]n a burst of enthusiasm,” Roosevelt “is reported to have told Chile that, had Santo Domingo been in the Pacific, he would have

³⁷⁷ Roosevelt, *An Autobiography*: 503.

³⁷⁸ Theodore Roosevelt and Alfred Henry Lewis, *A Compilation of the Messages and Speeches of Theodore Roosevelt, 1901-1905*, vol. 2 (New York: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1906), 857-58.

³⁷⁹ Healy, *Drive to Hegemony : the United States in the Caribbean, 1898- 1917*: 144.

³⁸⁰ Hart, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Interpretation*: 322.

³⁸¹ Marc D. Weidenmier and Kris James Mitchener, *Empire, Public Goods, and the Roosevelt Corollary* (Cambridge, Mass: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2004), 11.

called her to police the island.”³⁸² When he was already out of office, Roosevelt confirmed this view of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile as partners that could enforce the corollary, in a letter to his son, when he wrote that

it would be mere folly, the silliest kind of silliness, to ask Mexico [fallen into revolution], Venezuela, Honduras, Nicaragua, to guarantee the Monroe Doctrine with us. It is eminently proper to ask Brazil, the Argentine and Chile to do it...; but to ask the other countries I have named to guarantee it would be about like asking the Apaches and Utes to guarantee it.³⁸³

What the above quotations intend to make evident is that, if Theodore Roosevelt is often associated with the pursuit of an US “empire,” his views about how South America would fit in his scheme should serve to reinforce the notion that in the Western Hemisphere this imperial urge was geographically limited.³⁸⁴

Part of this “growing recognition in the United States that not all of Latin America was disorderly or backward,”³⁸⁵ seems to be the work of Roosevelt’s Secretary of State Elihu Root, who was the first sitting Secretary of State to visit South America (or any foreign country for that matter), where he was warmly received. Like his predecessors, Root is quoted as acknowledging that “as one passes to the south and the distance from the Caribbean increases, the necessity of maintaining the rule of Monroe becomes less immediate and apparent.”³⁸⁶ Like Roosevelt, Root believed that this was so not only because of geographic distance, but because of the different level of organization that he attributed to key South American states. For Lars Schoultz, “Elihu Root's specific

³⁸² Thomas, *One Hundred Years of the Monroe Doctrine, 1823-1923*: 376.

³⁸³ Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 204.

³⁸⁴ For recent views associating Theodore Roosevelt with the notion of a U.S. “empire” see James Bradley, *The Imperial Cruise: A Secret History of Empire And War* (New York, NY: Little, Brown and Co., 2009); Evan Thomas, *The War Lovers: Roosevelt, Lodge, Hearst, and the Rush to Empire, 1898* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2010).

³⁸⁵ Healy, *Drive to Hegemony: the United States in the Caribbean, 1898- 1917*: 181.

³⁸⁶ Hart, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Interpretation*: 237.

contribution to inter-American relations was to disaggregate the nations of the region into two different classes - one the turbulent Caribbean region, the other the stable, progressive countries of southern South America and Mexico.”³⁸⁷ In one instance, Root claimed that he wanted to help Central America to go “along the road that Brazil and the Argentine and Chile and Peru and a number of other South American countries have travelled - up out of the discord and turmoil of continual revolution into a general public sense of justice and determination to maintain order.”³⁸⁸ These statements by both Roosevelt and Root plainly contradict some observations regarding the Roosevelt Corollary at that time (and since) that pointed to the fact that US statesmen “seem to be blind to actual conditions in the largest and most important parts of Latin America, such as Brazil, Argentina, and Chile.”³⁸⁹ This kind of interpretation tends to assume that the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary applied homogenously to Latin America.

The approach set forth by Roosevelt and Root was picked up by another champion of intervention in Latin America – President Woodrow Wilson. Like Roosevelt, “Wilson wanted to think that the stable states of South America might play a role in bringing order to the unstable ones around the Caribbean.”³⁹⁰ Indeed, for Wilson, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile were the centerpieces of his “Pan American” approach.³⁹¹ The instance when it became most evident was during the confrontations between the

³⁸⁷ Schoultz, *Beneath the United States : A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America*: 192.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 197.

³⁸⁹ Bingham, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Obsolete Shibboleth*: 55. As the title suggests, this pamphlet, published in 1914, presents a strong criticism of the Monroe Doctrine during the Roosevelt years. However, the author concentrates mainly on South American countries in order to demonstrate the inadequacy of the policy. At some point, Bingham suggests that a better policy for the United States would be joining forces with Argentina, Brazil, and Chile “in protecting the weaker parts of America against any imaginable aggressions by the European or Asiatic nations,” (p. 96) which in fact seemed to dovetail Roosevelt’s actual approach, as presented here.

³⁹⁰ Mark T. Gilderhus, *Pan American Visions : Woodrow Wilson in the Western Hemisphere, 1913-1921* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986), 16.

³⁹¹ *Ibid*; Healy, *Drive to Hegemony : the United States in the Caribbean, 1898- 1917*: 181.

United States and Mexico in the midst of internal instabilities in the latter country after the Mexican Revolution in 1910. The Wilson administration started considering intervention, but sought the mediation of the abovementioned South American countries in order to, in the words of a US official, “give a Pan American tone” to the issue and “gain the lasting sympathy of the rest of Latin America.”³⁹² Later, when intervention seemed imminent, the State Department considered alternatives for a “joint action” with the three South American countries aiming to “reduce the cost and divert ill will.”³⁹³ The US envoy to Argentina in 1915 suggested that if it “finally becomes necessary under the terms of the Monroe Doctrine that the United States intervene, I would suggest that we invite Argentina or Brazil or some other American country to join with us” adding that with this attitude the doctrine would “cease to be unilateral, which is today its one great defect.”³⁹⁴ In the end, the mediation did not have any significant impact, the Carranza government in Mexico was recognized by the United States and the Latin American countries in 1915, and no joint intervention occurred.³⁹⁵ Nonetheless, Wilson’s efforts to work together with the South Americans “earned acclaim as a precedent and as a useful guide for the future” on both sides.³⁹⁶

³⁹² Gilderhus, *Pan American Visions : Woodrow Wilson in the Western Hemisphere, 1913-1921*: 17.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 54.

³⁹⁴ Hart, *The Monroe Doctrine: An Interpretation*: 381.

³⁹⁵ The United States did occupy the port city of Veracruz for seven months in 1914.

³⁹⁶ Gilderhus, *Pan American Visions : Woodrow Wilson in the Western Hemisphere, 1913-1921*: 32.

BRAZIL AND THE “UNWRITTEN ALLIANCE”

As Schoultz remarks, the “disaggregation” of Latin America in two regions was not only supported by the United States, but by South American countries as well.³⁹⁷ However, there is more to this support than Schoultz’s observation that the South American countries were indeed willing to “let the United States dominate the Caribbean region.”³⁹⁸ As mentioned earlier, a system of power politics had developed in South America that had little relation to North America, so that South American countries were less concerned about Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean than they were about their own regional subsystem, whose core was then composed of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. If proximity from the United States led nearby countries to generally fear US power, geographic distance and regional power politics provided South American states with a different perspective. Contrary to the general assumption, their policy towards the United States was generally “subordinate” to their “South American policy,”³⁹⁹ which means that they tended to look to the United States mostly in terms of their own regional situation. The same was true for smaller South American countries, which were generally more concerned about their own neighbors. For example, Arthur Whitaker shows that prominent Uruguayan statesman Luis Alberto de Herrera saw US friendship as “exceptionally important to Uruguay because (and he recorded this comforting thought twice in three pages) a mere hint from 'that great power' would be enough to 'call our neighbors to order' and 'restrain Argentina's pretensions in the Plata estuary'.” For Herrera, who was the Uruguayan envoy to the United States in the early 1900s, the

³⁹⁷ Schoultz, *Beneath the United States : A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America*: 194.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁹ Burr, *By Reason or Force; Chile and the Balancing of Power in South America, 1830-1905*: 261.

United States “would continue to expand, but not south of Panama, and it would not intervene in South America 'in this century', for 'no urgent interest calls the Colossus here'.” He therefore concluded that the Monroe Doctrine “is no threat to us.”⁴⁰⁰ Around the same period, an Argentinean author observed that “in the two opportunities that called for” the application of the Monroe Doctrine in the case of Argentina, the United States did not act: during the imbroglio with Great Britain involving the Falklands Islands, and during the Anglo-French blockade of Buenos Aires.⁴⁰¹ He therefore concluded that South America was “out of reach of Monroeism” and could develop itself as an independent center of international politics.⁴⁰² As a matter of fact, one author remarked that by the early twentieth century there was in Argentina an “awareness of the fact that [Roosevelt] had distinguished between Central and South America,” and when he visited Buenos Aires as an ex-president in 1913 “he received ovations wherever he went” and reinforced once again that “the Monroe Doctrine is not intended to apply to Argentina,”⁴⁰³ implying that Argentina had the means to protect itself.

No country in South America had a more favorable view of the Monroe Doctrine and of US policies at the time than Brazil, which, after Root’s visit to the country in occasion of the third Pan American Conference, changed the name of the building where the sessions were held to “Monroe Palace.” Indeed, the interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine given by Brazil was very similar to the notion expressed by Theodore Roosevelt himself. One possible reason for this is that, contrary to Mexico, which had good reasons

⁴⁰⁰ Arthur Preston Whitaker, *The United States and the Southern Cone : Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay*, The American Foreign Policy Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 364.

⁴⁰¹ Carlos Alfredo Becú, *El "ABC" y su concepto politico y juridico* (Buenos Aires,: Libreria "La Facultad" de J. Roldán, 1915), 14.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 18.

⁴⁰³ McGann, *Argentina, the United States, and the Inter-American System, 1880-1914*: 303-04.

to be suspicious of US power, for Brazil, US interventions in the North American half of the Western Hemisphere not only did not threaten its national interests but apparently it “raised the matter of whether Brazil might be able to manifest greater influence, greater hegemony, on its borders as well.”⁴⁰⁴ This notion that Brazil would acknowledge the hegemony of the United States in North America while hoping that the United States would respect Brazilian pretensions of having its own sphere of influence in South America was the basis of what E. Bradford Burns famously called the “unwritten alliance” between the two countries.⁴⁰⁵ Brazil, which had been the “only Latin American nation sympathetic to the United States during the Spanish-American War,”⁴⁰⁶ gave its own “multilateral interpretation” of the Monroe Doctrine as a “responsibility of the hemisphere.”⁴⁰⁷ Thus, whereas other Latin American countries stressed the unilateralist aspect of the Monroe Doctrine, Brazil emphasized its “collectivist nature” instead.⁴⁰⁸

As such, the new Republic of Brazil saw the Roosevelt Corollary with very clear eyes. One example can be found in the following sentence:

If those countries do not know how to govern themselves, if they do not possess those elements necessary to avoid continual revolutions and civil wars that follow one another ceaselessly, they do not have a right to exist and ought to give up their place to a stronger, better organized, more progressive, and more virile nation.⁴⁰⁹

What sounds like a statement coming from the mouth of Theodore Roosevelt himself is actually an excerpt of an interview from Rio Branco, the renowned Brazilian

⁴⁰⁴ Frederick C. Turner, "Regional Hegemony and the Case of Brazil," *International Journal* 46, no. 3 (1991): 498.

⁴⁰⁵ E. Bradford Burns, *The Unwritten Alliance: Rio-Branco and Brazilian-American Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966).

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁴⁰⁸ Frederic William Ganzert, "The Baron do Rio-Branco, Joaquim Nabuco, and the Growth of Brazilian-American Friendship, 1900-1910," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 22, no. 3 (1942): 446.

⁴⁰⁹ Burns, *The Unwritten Alliance: Rio-Branco and Brazilian-American Relations*: 152.

Foreign Minister, to an Argentinean journalist. In fact, in stark opposition to the majority of Latin American countries, “Brazil was traditionally much less critical of forceful American diplomacy in Central America and the Caribbean region.”⁴¹⁰ While this position can be “partly explained by the fact that Brazil had little political or economic contact with the area,”⁴¹¹ it also reflected the Brazilian view of South America and North America as two distinct systems that operated with different logics. For example, when the United States intervened in Cuba in 1902, Brazil “adopted a sympathetic attitude,” but when the United States seemed to support Bolivia in a dispute with Brazil in the same year, the Brazilian government reacted by ordering the closure of the Amazon River to foreign shipping, which irritated the United States.⁴¹² Similarly, when Panama seceded from Colombia in 1903 with US backing, Brazilian official reactions “were generally favorable,” and the public opinion was “indifferent.”⁴¹³ In contrast, Rio Branco “reacted energetically” when the United States attempted to favor Peru in a territorial dispute with Brazil⁴¹⁴ and threatened to break diplomatic relations with the United States when the Taft administration, in consonance with the “Dollar Diplomacy” that was then underway, issued an ultimatum to Chile to pay reparations in an issue involving a US private company.⁴¹⁵ Commenting on the US interference in the case of the territorial dispute with Peru in a telegram to Joaquim Nabuco, the Brazilian ambassador in Washington, Rio Branco remarked that

⁴¹⁰ Joseph Smith, *Unequal Giants: Diplomatic Relations between the United States and Brazil, 1889-1930* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 97.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹² ———, *Brazil and the United States : Convergence and Divergence*, The United States and the Americas (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 52.

⁴¹³ Burns, *The Unwritten Alliance: Rio-Branco and Brazilian-American Relations*: 87.

⁴¹⁴ Bandeira, "O Brasil como potência regional e a importância estratégica da América do Sul na sua política exterior," 6.

⁴¹⁵ ———, *Brasil, Argentina e Estados Unidos - conflito e integração na América do Sul : da Tríplice Aliança ao Mercosul, 1870-2001* (Rio de Janeiro: Revan, 2003), 111.

I understand to be our right to operate in this part of the continent without asking for permission or to give explanations to this [US] government, as for the several proofs of our friendship we have the right to expect that they do not get involved to help our opponents on matters in which we are engaged.⁴¹⁶

Moniz Bandeira interprets Rio Branco's notion of a special relationship with the United States as a view of "the transformation of the continent in a sort of condominium, where Brazil would have a free hand to exert its hegemony in South America" and therefore would "preserve its independence of action" in that regional subsystem, even if that occasionally meant confronting the United States.⁴¹⁷ For Joseph Smith, Rio Branco used a "strategy combining firmness with friendliness" in the cases of border disputes with its neighbors in order to keep the United States out of South American affairs.⁴¹⁸

In the United States, for the most part, the view that Brazil could be responsible for enforcing the Monroe Doctrine in the southern part of the hemisphere seemed to find "a climate of opinion favorable to its claim of moral hegemony over South America."⁴¹⁹ One article in the newspaper *The Washington Star* about Root's tour to South America asserted that the purpose of the US government was "to arrange an informal - but none the less strong - alliance with Brazil, and to relegate to her the policy of the Monroe Doctrine in South America."⁴²⁰ Two years later, the *New York Times* commented that "The two republics [United States and Brazil] are working out on the Northern and

⁴¹⁶ ———, *Presença dos Estados Unidos no Brasil : (dois séculos de história)*, Coleção Retratos do Brasil v. 87 (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1973), 177.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 169-70.

⁴¹⁸ Smith, *Unequal Giants: Diplomatic Relations between the United States and Brazil, 1889-1930*: 41.

⁴¹⁹ Burns, *The Unwritten Alliance: Rio-Branco and Brazilian-American Relations*: 174.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, 163.

Southern Continents of America aims of substantially the same nature, by institutions and methods closely allied in principle”⁴²¹

Another aspect of Rio Branco’s strategy within the framework of an unwritten alliance with the United States was the organization of the South American space along with the other two regional powers, Chile and Argentina. If US statesmen treated the North American and the South American regional subsystems differently, this attitude was reciprocated by the South American leaders, particularly in Brazil. Like Roosevelt and Root, Rio Branco considered that Brazil, Argentina, and Chile had no reasons to be concerned about the Roosevelt Corollary, adding that “the Latin American republics that feel threatened by the US international police” should simply decide to “choose honest and provident governments.”⁴²² Thus, in order to do its part in South America, Rio Branco conceived a pact that became known as the ABC, which would give Argentina, Brazil, and Chile the responsibility for guaranteeing the maintenance of peace and order in the southern half of the Americas. For Burns, the purpose of the ABC pact was to establish a “moral policing by the large South American republics” with a purpose similar to Roosevelt’s in North America, that is, “the maintenance of stable and responsible governments.”⁴²³ One Brazilian scholar, who examined primary Brazilian sources during the initial formulation of the ABC treaty, concluded that Rio Branco’s central objective was to establish a “shared hegemony” in South America among the signatories.⁴²⁴ Nevertheless, traditional regional rivalries hindered the formalization of the ABC treaty as conceived by Rio Branco in 1909. A few years later, however, on May

⁴²¹ *New York Times*, "Brazilian Friendliness," January 16, 1908.

⁴²² Bandeira, *Presença dos Estados Unidos no Brasil : (dois séculos de história)*: 169.

⁴²³ Burns, *The Unwritten Alliance: Rio-Branco and Brazilian-American Relations*: 153.

⁴²⁴ Guilherme Frazão Conduru, "O subsistema americano, Rio Branco e o ABC," *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 41(1998): 79.

25, 1915, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile finally signed a formal treaty with a more limited scope than the original Rio Branco's conception and the aim of facilitating the solution of controversies among the three South American countries. The treaty was initially received with concern by the Wilson administration, which though it could "compete with the Pan American pact."⁴²⁵ Although it was never ratified by the governments, the ABC Treaty represented an important diplomatic effort and consolidated the view of the three countries as the key to US policies in the Southern part of the hemisphere.

FROM ABC TO B

As for the relation between the ABC countries and the United States, some noteworthy changes occurred in the first decades of the twentieth century, which contributed to giving Brazil a central role in US foreign policy towards South America. The first change was the decline of the relative power of Chile, which had been one of the most powerful countries in the hemisphere. Two factors contributed to this decline: first, there were internal disorders that eventually led to a civil war in 1891⁴²⁶ and the growth of relative power by the other two South American powers, Brazil and Argentina, which now struggled for continental predominance. The second change that affected the relations between the United States and the three countries that composed the core of the South American regional subsystem was the foreign policy that was eventually followed

⁴²⁵ Gilderhus, *Pan American Visions : Woodrow Wilson in the Western Hemisphere, 1913-1921*: 55.

⁴²⁶ In this same year the relations between the United States and Chile deteriorated because an incident involving U.S. sailors on shore leave from the warship USS Baltimore being attacked by a mob of Chileans in the port of Valparaiso, in the event known as the "Baltimore Crisis". The U.S. government strongly demanded an apology, which was later given by the new Chilean government.

by Argentina during and after the First World War. Like Chile and Mexico, Argentina was neutral during the conflict, but, after the war, the Argentinean government adopted a posture that at times was frontally opposed to the United States. In fact, during the war, the Argentinean attitude was “regarded as a fully conscious challenge to United States leadership in the hemisphere.”⁴²⁷ This posture was generally kept throughout the Second World War as well, and Argentina was one of the few countries refusing to make an open commitment to the war effort, which helped to undermine US attempts to implement the “Good Neighbor Policy” in that part of the hemisphere.⁴²⁸ When Argentina later joined the Allies in breaking relations with Germany and Japan – with WWII already practically over – its actions justified more in terms of sympathies towards Great Britain than because of any belief in hemispheric solidarity.⁴²⁹ In fact, the “Argentina problem” was a constant preoccupation for US policymakers when dealing with South America around the period of World War II.⁴³⁰ In his memoirs, Secretary of State Cordell Hull went as far as to call Argentina a “bad neighbor.”⁴³¹ This Argentinean approach to foreign policy would only change in the late eighties, when “Argentina developed a bond with the United States unlike it had ever had before.”⁴³²

In a stark contrast, Brazil’s policy was “as conciliatory and obliging as possible” towards the United States.⁴³³ Rio Branco’s conception of an unwritten alliance with the

⁴²⁷ Barclay, *Struggle for a Continent : The Diplomatic History of South America, 1917-1945*: 15.

⁴²⁸ Randall Bennett Woods, *The Roosevelt Foreign-Policy Establishment and the "Good Neighbor" : The United States and Argentina, 1941-1945* (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1979).

⁴²⁹ Barclay, *Struggle for a Continent : The Diplomatic History of South America, 1917-1945*: 111.

⁴³⁰ John Child, *Unequal Alliance : The Inter-American Military System, 1938-1979* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980), 81.

⁴³¹ Cordell Hull and Andrew Henry Thomas Berding, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, vol. 2 (New York,: Macmillan Co., 1948), 1377.

⁴³² Deborah L. Norden and Roberto Russell, *The United States and Argentina: Changing Relations in a Changing World*, Contemporary Inter-American Relations (New York: Routledge, 2002), 1.

⁴³³ Barclay, *Struggle for a Continent : The Diplomatic History of South America, 1917-1945*: 22.

United States - even if at times it was not reciprocated by the North American country - was kept with impressive constancy. For example, by the time of the sixth Pan American Conference in Havana in 1928, Brazil sided with the United States against the criticism that the latter country was receiving because of the constant interventions in the Caribbean.⁴³⁴ Most importantly, Brazil was the only Latin American country with effective participation in both world wars. During the First World War, it was the only country in the hemisphere to cooperate militarily with the United States, and in the Second World War it even contributed with an infantry division that engaged in combat on the Italian front, again the only Latin American country to do so. One explanation for this Brazilian position, which was evident since the years of Rio Branco, was that US friendship provided “a value counterweight against any potential hostility from the Spanish-American nations.”⁴³⁵ Therefore, whereas Argentina had, since the First World War, “flirted with Pan Hispanic alternatives” of integration, Brazil remained steadily supportive of US hemispheric approach, thus becoming the “pivot” of US policies in South America.⁴³⁶

For the purposes of the present study, the important thing to observe in regards both to the Argentinean and Brazilian foreign policies was that they represented two different approaches with similar ends – to achieve a privileged position in their own regional subsystem. In this sense, the two countries’ relationships with the United States

⁴³⁴ Regarding the constant criticism that the United States received from South American countries because of its activities in the Caribbean the Assistant Secretary in charge of Latin America, Francis White, commented with Secretary of State Henry Stimson in 1930 that “as soon as South America realizes that our Central American policy is not a South American one, it will cease to care what we do in Central America. True, Central America may object, but I think they simply have got to lump it.” Schoultz, *Beneath the United States : A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America*: 289. Once again, this demonstrates how U.S. officials clearly separated South America from the rest of Latin America.

⁴³⁵ Smith, *Brazil and the United States: Convergence and Divergence*: 103-04.

⁴³⁶ Gilderhus, *Pan American Visions : Woodrow Wilson in the Western Hemisphere, 1913-1921*: 81.

should be looked at beyond the mere bilateral framework, but especially within the context of their own regional subsystemic preoccupations. For example, when Argentinean officials - concerned about the military collaboration between the United States and Brazil - approached the United States during the Second World War, the Argentinean foreign minister asked his US counterpart if the United States would make a “gesture of genuine friendship” by sending armaments to Argentina in order “to restore Argentina to the position of equilibrium to which it is entitled with respect to other South American republics.”⁴³⁷ Because of Argentina’s lack of collaboration in the war, this requested was promptly rejected by the United States, but it again serves to show that the main concern of Argentina was its relation to other South American countries. Conversely, Brazil’s collaboration with the United States was intimately related to its “ambitions to be the leading power in South America,” which in fact happened with US help when Brazil “was rewarded with economic and military benefits, especially in World War II when substantial U.S. Lend-Lease aid enabled Brazil to surpass Argentina and become the leading military power in South America.”⁴³⁸ As one author puts it, Brazil’s “unwritten alliance” with the United States helped to advance Brazilian foreign policy goals such as “the neutralization of Argentine designs of regional leadership.”⁴³⁹ Indeed, Brazil saw the support of US foreign policies in regions other than South America as the better strategy to guarantee the Brazilian position in their own regional subsystem. For example, when one of the most prominent Brazilian diplomats, Oswaldo Aranha, was the ambassador in Washington, he commented to Under Secretary of State

⁴³⁷ Barclay, *Struggle for a Continent : The Diplomatic History of South America, 1917-1945*: 166.

⁴³⁸ Smith, *Brazil and the United States : Convergence and Divergence*: 3-5.

⁴³⁹ W. Michael Weis, "Pan American Shift : Oswaldo Aranha and the Demise of the Brazilian-American Alliance," in *Beyond the Ideal: Pan Americanism in Inter-American Affairs*, ed. David Sheinin (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2000), 135.

Summer Welles in 1935 that “nothing explains our support to the United States in its Central American and world issues, without a reciprocal attitude of support to Brazil in South America.”⁴⁴⁰

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The examination of the early interactions among the independent American states offers a good opportunity to detect the development of patterns of relationships between the United States and the different parts of Latin America that were functions both of geography and of the particular characteristics of some South American states. These factors reciprocally reinforced each other, as both distance and internal characteristics allowed South America to develop a system of power politics that was often just marginally connected with the United States and which evidently was not the case for Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. Nevertheless, in order to make these patterns more evident, it is necessary to reinterpret the policy that was definitely the most significant US initiative towards Latin America during these early stages – the Monroe Doctrine. While the original declaration of 1823 did not make any differentiation between the two halves of the Americas, the actual practices after 1823 increasingly made evident the Caribbean scope of the Monroe Doctrine. In fact, two of the most interventionist US presidents of the twentieth century in Latin America, Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, explicitly made a differentiation between South America and the rest of Latin America. They were able to make this differentiation

⁴⁴⁰ Moniz Bandeira, *Relações Brasil-EUA no contexto da globalização*, 2. ed., vol. 2 (São Paulo: Senac, 1997), 34.

because South America could be organized around a core of states – the ABC countries - that were relatively stable and therefore could be counted on to stabilize their own neighborhood. This meant that the Roosevelt Corollary, commonly seen as a prime example of US unilateral and imperial disposition in Latin America, actually had a multilateral component that is often neglected by the literature.

No other country in South America was more enthusiastic about the multilateral facet of the Roosevelt Corollary than Brazil. For the largest South American country, Roosevelt's approach to the Monroe Doctrine was a confirmation of Brazil's view of South America as its area of influence, which was the basis for the Brazilian policy of an "unwritten alliance" with the United States. This policy meant that while Brazil would support US designs in the North American subsystem, composed by Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, it would expect the United States to support Brazilian aspirations in South America. This became increasingly evident as Brazil was often the lonely Latin American supporter of US actions in the North American subsystem, beginning with the Spanish-American War, while it reacted strongly against a number of US attempts to meddle in affairs that affected Brazilian interests in South America. The fact that Brazil was the main supporter of the multilateral view of the Monroe Doctrine became progressively more significant as Chile decreased in power by the end of the nineteenth century and Argentina adopted a foreign policy that was often confrontational towards the United States by the early decades of the twentieth century.

Both Argentinean and Brazilian foreign policies basically sought to establish predominance in South America, but while Argentina believed it could achieve this by keeping the distance from the United States in order to show autonomy and lead the

Spanish-speaking countries, Brazil had a different perspective in which it saw the approximation with the United States as an important factor for its pretensions in South America. In other words, while one sought leadership through distancing from the United States, the other sought it through approximation. One author remarks that, in the end, both Brazil and Argentina had “the same independent policy” towards the United States, with the difference being “that Brazil publicly and privately at every turn assured the United States of its solidarity, whereas Argentina seemed to take pride in open confrontations with Washington.”⁴⁴¹

By reducing the benefits for the United States to change the subsystemic configuration in South America – or increasing the benefits for the maintenance of the status quo - the US-Brazilian unofficial entente contributed to hold the United States generally at arm’s length in the southern part of the hemisphere. This relative absence meant that the foreign policies of South American states were primarily concerned with their own neighbors, and the relationship with the United States was subordinate to their regional subsystemic considerations. This assumption was and has been valid ever since, and it should be taken into consideration when analyzing both the foreign policy of the United States towards South America as well as the foreign policies of South American countries. Nevertheless, as time goes on and as states interact and the international system changes, other regional subsystemic dynamics may be uncovered. When the Cold War transformed the United States in a global superpower with concerns beyond the Western Hemisphere, it also greatly increased the incentives for the United States to become more actively involved in South America in order to stop the advance of

⁴⁴¹ Stanley E. Hilton, *Brazil and the Great Powers, 1930-1939 : The Politics of Trade Rivalry*, Latin American Monographs no. 38 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975), 227.

Communism. Brazil would have to review the earlier “unwritten alliance” strategy in order to affect the new structures of costs and benefits for US intervention.

CHAPTER 6

THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOUTH AMERICAN SUBSYSTEM DURING
THE COLD WAR

With the end of the Second World War and the reconfiguration of the international system, the United States would take on new priorities in its foreign policy and turn its eyes mostly toward Europe, which meant that its policies in the hemisphere tended to be generally relegated to a second plan. As Whitaker remarks, after the forties, the main substance of the “Western Hemisphere Idea” with its emphasis on the separation between the American and the European continent, was basically lost since, from the point of view of US policy-makers, the world was now divided between communists and non-communists and Western Europe became a natural ally.⁴⁴² The kind of interests the United States had when it was a regional power would thus be reframed to fit the new international environment in which it occupied a key position as a global power.

The ideological aspect of the Cold War bipolar system was particularly important in US relations with Latin American countries, which meant that the central goal of US foreign policy during the Cold War – to contain the spread of communism – would strongly characterize the hemispheric approach of the United States. Even though the United States had essentially the same policy towards the whole of Latin America, the argument put forward by this dissertation is that the regional subsystemic perspective allows the analyst to uncover distinct regional dynamics of a policy that was global in

⁴⁴² Arthur Preston Whitaker, *The Western Hemisphere Idea: Its Rise and Decline* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1954), 154-77.

character. The objective of this chapter is to show that despite having now both the capabilities and the interest to shape new patterns of relationships in the hemisphere that would lead to a regional system change, regional subsystemic dynamics contributed to keep the stability of the South American subsystem. In other words, even during the Cold War, a case can be made that if the United States could now be characterized as a global empire,⁴⁴³ in the South American subsystem it remained a relatively absent one, which evidently does not mean that it was not a relevant player.

Obviously, within the North American subsystem, the United States was anything but absent, despite often-heard claims of episodes of “neglect.”⁴⁴⁴ US troops invaded the Dominican Republic in 1965, Grenada in 1983, and Panama in 1989, and although it did not send troops, the United States was actively involved in overt and covert operations to topple governments - including equipping and training armed groups - in Guatemala, in 1958, in Cuba in 1961, and in Nicaragua in the eighties. These interventions - all of them north of the Panama Canal - were carried out under different administrations, when both Republican and Democrat Presidents occupied the White House. In fact, the period of the Cold War provides perhaps the clearest evidence of the existence of two different regional subsystems in the Americas, but typical analyses based on the notion of Latin America as a homogeneous entity in international politics coupled with a perspective that

⁴⁴³ See for example: Liska, *Imperial America: The International Politics of Primacy*: 113, 21; De Riencourt, *The American Empire*; Steel, *Pax Americana*; ———, *Imperialists and other Heroes: A Chronicle of the American Empire* (New York,: Random House, 1971); Lens, *The Forging of the American Empire*; Lundestad, "Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-1952."; May, *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power*.

⁴⁴⁴ See for example: Edwin Lieuwen, *U.S. Policy in Latin America: A Short History* (New York,: Praeger, 1965), 134-35; Child, *Unequal Alliance: The Inter-American Military System, 1938-1979*: 16; Abraham F. Lowenthal, *Partners in Conflict: The United States and Latin America in the 1990s*, Rev. ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 39; Pastor, *Whirlpool : U.S. Foreign Policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean*: 35; Joseph Smith, *The United States and Latin America: A History of American Diplomacy, 1776-2000* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2005), 112.

neglects regional subsystemic pressures often overlook this reality. To help to make their case, these analysts commonly present as evidence of a pattern of relationships throughout Latin America the case of the military coup that overthrew the Salvador Allende government in Chile, in 1973.

This chapter examines US participation in the overthrow of the Chilean government in 1973 in order to demonstrate that both the Johnson and the Nixon administrations were greatly concerned about the Chilean situation, and yet they stopped short of pursuing truly imperial policies that would have had a better chance to decisively affect the outcome of events. The chapter shows that the bulk of US actions was concentrated before Allende was elected in 1970 and were aimed towards avoiding him from taking office. Allende's ascension to the presidency in Chile is thus a clear illustration of the limitations of the kind of policies the United States pursued. Additionally, this chapter asserts that while there is no clear evidence of US direct involvement in the coup that eventually overthrew Allende, there are a number of indications pointing towards a Brazilian connection, which is little explored by the literature because of the lack of available documentation, especially when compared to the abundance of documents from the US side. It is demonstrated that Brazil's military regime's involvement in Chile can be largely understood as an extension of its overall policy in South America, both before and after 1973, which permitted the United States to limit its involvement in the region. In other words, Brazil's interventionist disposition, which could be termed as a sort of "regional imperialism," increased the benefits of subsystemic stability for the United States. The chapter claims that Brazil's position was not be subordinated by the US, but rather that its interests coincided with those of the

United States. To reinforce this point, the role of the United States in the 1964 military coup in Brazil is put in perspective.

BUILDING A NARRATIVE

The case of the military coup that overthrew the Salvador Allende government in Chile fits perfectly the common narrative of an American (or Latin American) regional subsystem in which US hegemony is exercised rather homogeneously in what is, after all, typically considered to be its “backyard.” For example, in his otherwise insightful work on regions, Peter Katzenstein argues that, contrary to Asia and Europe, there are no regional powers in the American continent because the “overwhelming presence of the United States dwarfs all other states and has prevented the emergence of states both supportive of American purpose and power and central to the region's political affairs.”⁴⁴⁵ The “region” that Katzenstein has in mind is a coherent entity composed by Latin America plus Canada, both uniformly subjected to US power, since they would be “close to the center of the American imperium.”⁴⁴⁶ In the case of Latin America, this overwhelming US presence would yield a particular kind of regionalism based on “informal rule, patron-client relations, coercive diplomacy, and military interventions.”⁴⁴⁷ As evidence of this pattern of relationship, Katzenstein mentions US interventions in Central America together with the “deep U.S. involvement in the overthrow of the Salvador Allende government in Chile” as being both equally strong examples of “the

⁴⁴⁵ Katzenstein, *A World of Regions : Asia and Europe in the American Imperium*: 226.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

behavior of a traditional imperial power.”⁴⁴⁸ Similarly, David Mares mentions that, contrary to Cuba, “Guatemala (1954) and Chile (1973) were unable to break away from U.S. dominance.”⁴⁴⁹ Likewise, Cole Blasier puts US activities in Chile together with Guatemala, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic in the same level of US “interference” in Latin America.⁴⁵⁰ This narrative still remains strong. A recent book on United States relations with Latin America argues that the United States “has shaped Latin American history, intervening at key moments (Guatemala 1954; Chile 1973; Nicaragua 1979; El Salvador 1979-82).”⁴⁵¹

The examples above suggest that, by bundling together US actions toward Chile with interventions elsewhere in Latin America, an impression of cohesiveness is created. The problem with this approach is that it not only neglects fundamental differences between the US participation in the overthrow of Salvador Allende in Chile and, for example, the overthrow of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala, but also overlooks the important role played by external forces other than the United States in the South American case. One reason for these analytical simplifications may be the use of approaches that are excessively US-centered, coupled with the lack of a theoretical framework able to offer explanations for moving beyond the domestic-system/international-system dichotomy. This dissertation maintains that the regional subsystemic perspective can fill this gap and provide a distinctive narrative for the

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., 226.

⁴⁴⁹ Mares, "Middle Powers under Regional Hegemony: To Challenge or Acquiesce in Hegemonic Enforcement," 454.

⁴⁵⁰ Cole Blasier, *The Giant's Rival: the USSR and Latin America* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), 156.

⁴⁵¹ Grace Livingstone, *America's Backyard: the United States and Latin America from the Monroe Doctrine to the War on Terror* (London; New York: Zed Books, 2009), 2.

Chilean case in particular, and for South America in general. This alternative narrative would relativize the role of the United States by stressing regional subsystemic pressures.

Obviously, in the Cold War environment of the time, successive US administrations were concerned about the situation in Chile, Brazil, and elsewhere in South America where regimes that were perceived as being sympathetic to communism coming to power. This concern was indeed translated into policies that actively sought to prevent these regimes from coming to power, or to negatively affect them subsequently. To expect the United States to stay on the sidelines during the Cold War whenever there was a perception of increased Soviet influence in Latin America would be unrealistic. However, putting unilateral armed interventions in Central America and the Caribbean under the same category of the kind of actions the United States undertook in South America is confounding an imperial policy with a great power policy. The objectives of the United States were the same in all Latin America, as they were in the rest of the world during the Cold War: to contain the spread of communism. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the outcome of these policies varied according to the particular configuration of distinct regional subsystems. In the North American subsystem, both during and before the Cold War, the United States often acted as an empire, sending its own troops or training and equipping mercenary armies in order to pursue its objectives. In the South American subsystem the same measures were not taken – not necessarily because the US could not or did not want to, but mainly because, as will be shown below, it did not need to. Treating Latin America as a coherent regional subsystem where US influence is exercised homogeneously blurs this distinction and oversimplifies the analysis with detrimental consequences for policy-makers and academics alike.

THE BRAZILIAN MILITARY COUP AND US INFLUENCE

Because the role of the then Brazilian military government is central for the argument developed in this chapter, it is necessary first to address the extent of US influence in the Brazilian case. As in the case of Chile, the coinciding of the US foreign policy establishment's wishes and the actual unfolding of events is often interpreted as evidence of a causal relationship. For example, Jan Black saw US influence as a "significant contributing factor" to the 1964 military coup in Brazil⁴⁵² and interpreted this and the subsequent coups in South America as evidence of the "the consolidation of U.S. hegemony, or dominance, over the furthest reaches of the South American continent."⁴⁵³ In a study of US interventions after World War II, William Blum contends that in the case of the military coup in Brazil, the "American Embassy had been intimately involved."⁴⁵⁴ In his well-known *CIA Diary*, former CIA officer Philipp Agee wrote from Uruguay in an entry one day after the Brazilian coup that the overthrow of the civilian regime was "without doubt largely due to careful planning and consistent propaganda campaigns dating at least back to the 1962 election operation," when the US government financed opposition candidates in Brazil.⁴⁵⁵ Agee reaches this post-factum conclusion even though there is barely any mention of CIA activities in Brazil earlier in his diary, the first entry of which goes back to 1956. Therefore, as in the case of Chile, the political outcome in Brazil in 1964 is also commonly mentioned as evidence of a

⁴⁵² Jan Knippers Black, *United States Penetration of Brazil* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 2.

⁴⁵³ ———, *Sentinels of Empire: the United States and Latin American Militarism*: 4.

⁴⁵⁴ William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. military and C.I.A. Interventions since World War II*, 2nd updated ed. (Monroe, Me.: Common Courage Press, 2004), 163.

⁴⁵⁵ Philip Agee, *Inside the Company : C.I.A. Diary*, American ed. (New York: Stonehill, 1975), 362.

uniform dominance of the United States over Latin America, even though there seems to be an acknowledgment that the extent of US involvement in the Brazilian case was far less significant than in the Chilean coup of 1973.

Basically, two kinds of evidences are frequently presented to make the case for US influence on the Brazilian military takeover of 1964. The first and most recent, which was uncovered several years after the coup, is the fact that the United States government had prepared a “contingency plan” to intervene in Brazil and support the plotters in the case of a prolonged civil war. The second relates to the period before the coup, when the United States on one hand supported opposition candidates and anti-communist forces, and on the other made efforts to indoctrinate the Brazilian military. As for the first evidence, the support is usually offered through quotes from US officials and the so called “Operation Brother Sam,” which consisted of a plan for providing equipment and especially petroleum to the coup plotters. In fact, official documents declassified in 2004 show President Lyndon Johnson saying over the phone that “we ought to take every step that we can, be prepared to do everything that we need” to support the overthrow of Brazil’s civilian government. These documents also show the arrangements made for the shipment of weapons, ammunition, and oil to Brazil.⁴⁵⁶ Although then US ambassador to Brazil Lincoln Gordon later remarked that the coup plotters “knew nothing whatever about the 'Brother Sam' task force,”⁴⁵⁷ other analysts dispute this information. One recent study on the “Operation Brother Sam” by the Brazilian historian Carlos Fico, who examined a number of official US and Brazilian declassified documents, maintains that

⁴⁵⁶ Peter Kornbluh, "Brazil Marks 40th Anniversary of Military Coup," *The National Security Archive*, March 31, 2004. <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB118/index.htm#docs> (accessed December 1, 2010).

⁴⁵⁷ Lincoln Gordon, *Brazil's Second Chance: En Route toward the First World* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), 68.

Brazilians were, in fact, aware of the operation.⁴⁵⁸ Indeed, one of the most active coup plotters stated that he had actually asked the US military attaché Vernon Walters if the United States could supply petroleum in case the coup led to a prolonged fight, which in turn would have led to the “Operation Brother Sam.”⁴⁵⁹ It should be noted that this passage is the only reference made to US participation in the long interview he gave to the book editors. In fact, it is hard to find any mention of decisive US participation or influence in the memoirs published by the Brazilian officers who participated in the coup.

In any case, the best conclusion that can be reached by analyzing the currently available documentation is that it demonstrates an “interventionist disposition” of the United States.⁴⁶⁰ Johnson’s statement on being “prepared to do everything we need to do” was made on March 31, 1964, and Brazil already had a military government on the next day without a civil war or significant disorder. Likewise, preparations for “Operation Brother Sam” began in late March and, as Gordon points out, “was still ten days' sailing time away when Goulart abandoned the presidency.”⁴⁶¹ The fact of the matter is that all US planning proved unnecessary, as the coup went forth without any help from the United States. Indeed, it is clear that “Brazil’s military leaders resolved to act, with or without Washington’s approbation.”⁴⁶² As Phyllis Parker remarked, [a]ll planned U.S. support was of a marginal nature” and the United States was not involved in the coup

⁴⁵⁸ Carlos Fico, *O grande irmão : da Operação Brother Sam aos anos de chumbo* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2008), 101-02.

⁴⁵⁹ Cordeiro de Farias, Aspásia Camargo, and Walder de Góis, *Meio século de combate: diálogo com Cordeiro de Farias*, Coleção Brasil século 20 (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, 1981), 571.

⁴⁶⁰ Fico, *O grande irmão : da Operação Brother Sam aos anos de chumbo* 101.

⁴⁶¹ Gordon, *Brazil's Second Chance: En Route toward the First World*: 67.

⁴⁶² Lester D. Langley, *America and the Americas : the United States in the Western Hemisphere*, 2nd ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 220.

“because there was no need to be.”⁴⁶³ When the Johnson administration decided it should help the coup to come about, it was already too late. Although occasionally underplaying the extent of US knowledge about the coup, the evidences to date seem to corroborate Ambassador Gordon’s confirmation “that we welcomed the overthrow of Goulart is well known. But there was no American participation in his removal by military force.”⁴⁶⁴ What would have happened had the fight been prolonged and a civil war ensued is a matter for speculation, but the obvious fact is that actual intervention should not be confused with potential or desired intervention. “Operation Brother Sam” is a clear example of US willingness, interest, and capability to intervene in South America. Its outcome is a clear example of its needlessness.

The second argument presented for making the case for US influence on the 1964 military coup in Brazil asserts that the United States was actually not too late because it had helped to create the conditions for the coup through earlier covert operations designed to strengthen anti-communist forces and through its supposed indoctrination of Brazilian military officers. This is the line with the argument made by Agee immediately after the coup, when he attributed it to US “careful planning and consistent propaganda campaigns.”⁴⁶⁵ Likewise, Jan Black and Ruth Leacock mention US assistance to opposition candidates in the Brazilian 1962 elections as having played a central role.⁴⁶⁶ Leacock points out that the United States funded “some of the anticommunist literature” in Brazil and provided an opposition candidate for governor in the Northeast state of

⁴⁶³ Phyllis R. Parker, *Brazil and the Quiet Intervention, 1964*, Texas Pan American series (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), 104.

⁴⁶⁴ Gordon, *Brazil's Second Chance : En Route toward the First World*: 64.

⁴⁶⁵ Agee, *Inside the Company : C.I.A Diary*: 362.

⁴⁶⁶ Black, *United States Penetration of Brazil*: 66-67; Ruth Leacock, *Requiem for Revolution: The United States and Brazil, 1961-1969*, American Diplomatic History (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1990), 119.

Pernambuco with “anticommunist films, comic books, and pamphlets.”⁴⁶⁷ The author regards such activities as examples of “extensive American interference.”⁴⁶⁸

Nevertheless, the results of aforesaid US support were virtually fruitless since the US-funded opposition gubernatorial candidate mentioned by Leacock lost the election to an openly pro-communist candidate and the general outcome of US support to the opposition 1962 was extraordinarily unimpressive as it did little to alter the balance of political forces prevailing before the 1962 election. In fact, in that election, leftist forces gained more space in the Brazilian political landscape.⁴⁶⁹ Moniz Bandeira remarks that the money spent to influence Brazilian elections “were not good for the CIA.”⁴⁷⁰ As Robert Wesson notices, “[t]he concrete actions taken [by the United States] seem to have been trivial in their effects.”⁴⁷¹

If the support for opposition candidates was anything but effective, on the other hand there is the argument that at least the United States was successful in indoctrinating the Brazilian military into anti-communist ideology and teaching them the intricacies of counterinsurgency tactics. Here, the role of the Brazilian ESG - *Escola Superior de Guerra* (commonly translated to English as Superior School of War) is regarded as central, since many of the coup plotters attended that institution, which was inspired by the National War College in the United States. For Leacock, “under American guidance,” the ESG “stressed anticommunism and the American view of the Cold War.”⁴⁷² Black also emphasizes the US influence in that institute and thus over the coup plotters and

⁴⁶⁷ ———, *Requiem for Revolution: The United States and Brazil, 1961-1969*: 113; 21.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁴⁶⁹ Bandeira, *Presença dos Estados Unidos no Brasil : (dois séculos de história)*: 430.

⁴⁷⁰ ———, *Formula para o caos : a derrubada de Salvador Allende (1970-1973)* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilizacao Brasileira, 2008), 86.

⁴⁷¹ Robert G. Wesson, *The United States and Brazil: Limits of Influence*, Studies of Influence in International Relations (New York: Praeger, 1981), 48.

⁴⁷² Leacock, *Requiem for Revolution: The United States and Brazil, 1961-1969*: 183.

concludes that “support of, association with, and training by the U.S. military reinforced the anti-democratic biases of the Brazilian military elite.”⁴⁷³ A more careful examination would demonstrate that such allegations seem exaggerated at best. Besides the fact that Black presents no evidence that association with the US military would reinforce the supposedly “anti-democratic biases of the Brazilian military elite,” which sounds somewhat counterintuitive, a more important question is whether the Brazilian military needed to be educated by the United States as to the alleged perils of communism. After all, the army in Brazil was concerned about communism even before the Cold War. One Brazilian diplomat argues that anticommunism in the Brazilian army dates back at least to 1935, when military officials linked to the Brazilian Communist Party staged a revolt in order to overthrow the president and establish a communist government.⁴⁷⁴ This episode led to the persecution of individuals associated with communism in Brazil, and was used as a justification for giving dictatorial powers to President Getulio Vargas in 1937. By 1939, the Chief of Staff of the Brazilian army exteriorized concerns with the “Bolshevik menace.”⁴⁷⁵ Interestingly enough, in view of what later happened in the United States in the fifties, US ambassador to Brazil Adolf Berle Jr. asked in 1945 for an end to the persecution of communists in Brazil.⁴⁷⁶ Against the advice of US Secretary of State George Marshall, Brazil was the first country in the western world to break relations with Moscow, and a Brazilian General is reported to have criticized the Truman administration for its “excessive tolerance” of communism.⁴⁷⁷ When Truman visited Brazil, it was Brazilian President Dutra who asked him to put anti-communism at the top

⁴⁷³ Black, *United States Penetration of Brazil*: 178.

⁴⁷⁴ M. Pío Corrêa, *O mundo em que vivi* (Rio de Janeiro, RJ: Expressão e Cultura, 1995), 812.

⁴⁷⁵ Esteves, *Documentos históricos do Estado-Maior do Exército*: 228.

⁴⁷⁶ Elio Gaspari, *A ditadura derrotada* (São Paulo, Brazil: Companhia das Letras, 2003), 124-25.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 126-27.

of his agenda.⁴⁷⁸ By 1951, the Brazilian army had produced a report entitled “Communism in Brazil” in which it expressed special worries about communist infiltration in the army.⁴⁷⁹ Hence, when the United States became concerned with the advancement of communism in Latin America in the early sixties, after the Cuban Revolution, the Brazilian Generals needed no indoctrination. In fact, the Brazilian Army’s annual report in 1961 already expressed concern with Cuba and its “subversive ideas” as well as with communist activities in Brazil.⁴⁸⁰ As had been the case with Truman years earlier, when the Nixon administration developed the policy of détente, some in the Brazilian military criticized the US President for being too “soft” on communism.⁴⁸¹

However, it could be argued that even if there was no need to teach anti-communism to the Brazilian army, “American guidance” and “training,” particularly through the ESG, would constitute central factors in the development of the counterinsurgency strategy that was employed to fight domestic subversion. Here again, closer examination of domestic dynamics put these allegations under perspective. Brazilian General Cordeiro de Farias, who was responsible for the organization of the ESG during its initial years – in the late forties, it should be noted – recounts the episode when the US government sent three military officers to provide advising for the establishment of the school, which was, after all, inspired by the National War College. According to Farias, the US officers

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 127.

⁴⁷⁹ Esteves, *Documentos históricos do Estado-Maior do Exército*: 325-26.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 353-54.

⁴⁸¹ Paulo R. Schilling, *O expansionismo brasileiro : a geopolítica do general Golbery e a diplomacia do Itamarati* (São Paulo: Global, 1981), 81.

came in with the statute of the National War College and tried to make us adopt it without restrictions, claiming that what had worked in the United States would work for Brazil. I fought against them but I could not convince them. I defended the proposition that the ESG, as a center of studies, could not be disconnected from our national concerns.⁴⁸²

General Farias concludes that after he took the US officers on a trip throughout Brazil, they were finally convinced of the need to adapt the school to the particularities of the country. In fact, as Alfred Stepan remarks, the Brazilian institution had two fundamental differences in relation to its US model. The first was that, because of Brazil's condition as a developing country, "the question of a strong armed force could not be separated from the question of economic development" and therefore there was the need to put greater "emphasis on internal aspects of development and security."⁴⁸³ It should be noted that the United States would only incorporate the notion of development in the concept of security by the sixties. Hence, when the Kennedy administration came up with the Alliance for Progress linking instability with poverty, it was not launching a revolutionary new idea but answering to a demand that existed previously. The second difference between the National War College and the *Escola Superior de Guerra* relates to the first. Because of the central focus on development, in contrast to the largely military-oriented National War College, civilian participation would be a key aspect in the Brazilian institution.⁴⁸⁴

As for US training of Brazilian officers in counterinsurgency strategies, this is also an argument that loses some of its appeal when the researcher is curious enough to investigate its actual validity. When one examines the origins of the so called

⁴⁸² Farias, Camargo, and Góis, *Meio século de combate: diálogo com Cordeiro de Farias*: 416-17.

⁴⁸³ Alfred C. Stepan, *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil* (Princeton,: Princeton University Press, 1971), 175.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 175-76.

“counterrevolutionary theory,” the original contributions of the French become evident. While in the United States the notion of “counterinsurgency” acquired relevance only with the war in Vietnam, the French, who had already fought and been defeated in Indochina, had by then developed the notion of “*guerre révolutionnaire*,” and were applying it in the Algerian war during the fifties.⁴⁸⁵ It is revealing that when US Lieutenant-Colonel Donn A. Starry drew attention in 1967 to the fact that the United States had only been giving serious consideration to the problem of “wars of liberation” since 1961, he entitled his article as “*La Guerre Révolutionnaire*.”⁴⁸⁶ In comparison to the French approach, John Shy and Thomas Collier regard the US counterinsurgency strategy developed during the Vietnam War as “shallow” with an inadequate “almost purely military approach.”⁴⁸⁷ Armand Mattelart remarks that although the US military had to deal with counterinsurgency strategies before, it had not been translated into a formal doctrine, since the “strategic consciousness” in the United States

was totally absorbed in deterrence and the debate between partisans of ‘massive retaliation’ and those who favored ‘flexible response’ [...] There was a prevailing belief in technological determinism, conducive to viewing the future from the perspective of nuclear apocalypse.⁴⁸⁸

This is the basic reason why the Brazilian army did not look for inspiration in the US strategy in Vietnam, which did not fit the domestic reality in Brazil, but to the French experience in Algeria. The libraries of the Brazilian army were indeed filled with French

⁴⁸⁵ John Shy and Thomas W. Collier, “Revolutionary War,” in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret, Gordon Alexander Craig, and Felix Gilbert (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

⁴⁸⁶ Armand Mattelart, *The Globalization of Surveillance*, trans. Suzan Taponier and James A. Cohen (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 86.

⁴⁸⁷ Shy and Collier, “Revolutionary War,” 856.

⁴⁸⁸ Mattelart, *The Globalization of Surveillance*: 80.

literature on the Algerian War.⁴⁸⁹ Commenting on the development of counterinsurgency strategies in ESG, a Brazilian General singles out the “French military literature” as a decisive influence.⁴⁹⁰ Certainly, Brazilians Generals had no problems reading in French, as many of them attended schools in France, including the first president of the military regime, Castelo Branco. The inauguration speech of General Gois Monteiro as Chief of Staff of the Brazilian army in 1937 is permeated with quotes from French Generals, all in the original French.⁴⁹¹ A Brazilian military officer commented that “the boasted American influence” in the doctrines adopted by the Brazilian army was “practically null” and adds that “the future historian, in a serene examination of this episode, will certainly find a certain French influence.”⁴⁹²

The French influence was not only restricted to Brazil. Ernesto López demonstrates that the biggest foreign influence in the development of the Argentinean National Security Doctrine also came from France.⁴⁹³ Several translations to Spanish from books written by French generals were published in Buenos Aires,⁴⁹⁴ and the French Colonel Patrice de Naurois wrote several articles for the magazine of the Argentinean *Escuela Superior de Guerra*.⁴⁹⁵ Thus, the problem of revolutionary war and the strategies to fight it were in the minds of Brazilian as well as Argentinean militaries before the Kennedy administration shaped its counterinsurgency doctrine in the sixties. While

⁴⁸⁹ Elio Gaspari, *A ditadura escancarada*, As ilusões armadas (São Paulo, Brazil: Companhia das Letras, 2002), 31.

⁴⁹⁰ Maria Celina Soares de Araújo, Gláucio Ary Dillon Soares, and Celso Castro, *Os Anos de chumbo : a memória militar sobre a repressão* (Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 1994), 77-78.

⁴⁹¹ Esteves, *Documentos históricos do Estado-Maior do Exército*: 186-93.

⁴⁹² Joaquim Xavier da Silveira, *A FEB por um soldado* (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1989), 264.

⁴⁹³ Ernesto López, *Seguridad nacional y sedición militar* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Legasa, 1987).

⁴⁹⁴ Joseph Comblin, *A Ideologia da segurança nacional : o poder militar na america latina* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1978), 14.

⁴⁹⁵ López, *Seguridad nacional y sedición militar*: 187.

López points out that by 1958 the Argentinean military was already in the final stages of the development of its counterrevolutionary doctrine,⁴⁹⁶ Stepan observes that “[e]ven before the emphasis in the cold war shifted in the United States from atomic to revolutionary warfare, the ESG became the center of ideological thought concerning counterrevolutionary strategy in Brazil.”⁴⁹⁷

Although the CIA collaborated with Brazilian intelligence services, there is no evidence of any US official who participated in torture sessions in Brazil. Indeed, the most noteworthy case of a relationship between foreign torturers and the Brazilian dictatorship was during 1973 when the French government sent to Brazil General Paul Aussaresses, a prominent leader of the repression and torture operations in Algeria.⁴⁹⁸ By that year, the School of the Americas, regarded by many as a center for indoctrination of Latin American military coup plotters,⁴⁹⁹ had received about 30,000 students, with just a little over 300 from Brazil.⁵⁰⁰ Obviously, as Stepan observes, “the United States, as the major anti-Communist country, was viewed as a natural ally,”⁵⁰¹ and Brazil sought as much collaboration as it could – and the United States was willing to provide it, particularly after the Cuban Revolution. This was true only to the extent that it was understood by the Brazilian military government to serve Brazilian interests - when the Carter administration in 1977 required a report on human rights performance by the recipients of military assistance, the Brazilian government interpreted it as constituting interference in its domestic affairs, and it simply revoked a military assistance agreement

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., 145-46.

⁴⁹⁷ Stepan, *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil*: 179.

⁴⁹⁸ Gaspari, *A ditadura escancarada*: 304.

⁴⁹⁹ For example, Lesley Gill, *The School of the Americas: Military Training and Political Violence in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

⁵⁰⁰ Mattelart, *The Globalization of Surveillance*: 100.

⁵⁰¹ Stepan, *The Military in Politics: Changing Patterns in Brazil*: 179.

that it had with the United States since 1952, virtually ending any formal military collaboration between the two countries.⁵⁰² Brazil and United States would only sign another military agreement in 2010.⁵⁰³

BRAZIL'S "REGIONAL IMPERIALISM" IN THE COLD WAR

The above discussion is pertinent because it helps to understand a reality that is repeatedly overlooked by those who neglect the regional subsystemic perspective and interpret every episode of the Cold War from the point of view of Washington or Moscow. This reality is that the advancement of communism in the world – or what was perceived as such - threatened the interests of the United States as a global power, but the advancement of communism in South America also threatened the interests of Brazil as a regional power, and this had been true even before the inauguration of the military regime in 1964, as suggested above. Even President Janio Quadros, whose resignation in 1961 originated the crises that led to the overthrow of his vice-president Joao Goulart in 1964, is described as being “viscerally anticommunist.”⁵⁰⁴ In 1961, Quadros considered the possibility of annexing Guyana because of what he saw as communist infiltration in that country.⁵⁰⁵ The fact that Quadros famously received Che Guevara in Brazil and bestowed a medal of honor on him has equivocally been interpreted as a signal of sympathy for communism by those who tend to reason in binary terms, thus failing to understand Brazilian political intricacies. These and other symbolic gestures became part

⁵⁰² *Jornal do Brasil*, "Brasil denuncia acordo militar com EUA," March 12, 1977, 1;19-22.

⁵⁰³ *Reuters*, "U.S and Brazil Sign Defense Pact, no Decision on Jets," April 12, 2010. <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE63B5YV20100412> (accessed December 19, 2010).

⁵⁰⁴ Corrêa, *O mundo em que vivi*: 741.

⁵⁰⁵ Gaspari, *A ditadura derrotada*: 71-72.

of Quadros' foreign policy, which was termed "independent" and it was seen in many ways an alibi for his "reactionary" domestic policy.⁵⁰⁶ In summary, understanding the role of Brazil in the South American subsystem during the Cold War begins by deconstructing the myth that anticommunism was exclusively a US cause that was somehow incorporated by its "client" states through diligent work from Washington.

Because the typical analyses of the relationship between the United States and South America neglect the fact that - for economic, security, and political reasons - the advancement of governments that were seen as identifying with communism in South America were perceived as a threat to Brazilian interests, the existence of overlapping interests is confounded with mere subordination. This interpretation is undoubtedly reinforced by the fact that the majority of the declassified documents available for research comes from US sources, since much of the Brazilian and South American sources remain classified or are simply unavailable because, for example, not many South American presidents kept records of their conversations. Without this discernment between subordination and overlapping interests, it becomes difficult to understand how regional dynamics influenced the extent of US involvement in South America, in comparison to elsewhere in Latin America and other parts of the world, beyond the argument that it was somehow a matter of lack of interest or neglect. If there is anything that the official declassified documents and the sheer amount of money spent in trying to influence the political landscape in South America show is that lack of interest is a weak explanation. The United States did try to help a coup succeed in Brazil and, as will be shown below, actively planned a coup in Chile, but the fact was that the planning was never translated into decisive action, that is, the kind of action that the United States as a

⁵⁰⁶ Corrêa, *O mundo em que vivi*: 741.

global power could easily have taken, as it did so many times in Central America, the Caribbean, and other parts of the world during the Cold War. The United States did send money and equipment, provided training, moral support, and helped anti-communist forces throughout South America in order to defend its interests, but it was just supplying an existent demand and never went beyond that relatively modest role of supplier, which is a far cry from an imperial policy, particularly in its own “backyard.” This chapter’s argument is that one reason for this imperial absence during the Cold War is that the United States did not need to adopt a costly imperial policy in South America because its major interests coincided with those of Brazil, a country which was willing to actively prevent the emergence of governments associated with communism in the South American subsystem.

The reasons for this Brazilian willingness can be found in a combination of rapid economic growth with the authoritarian character of the military regime. According to Bandeira, this combination allowed Brazil to take an “offensive, imperialist” posture in South America.⁵⁰⁷ Similarly, Wesson notices that Brazilian “economic muscle” in the seventies “permitted Brazil to indulge in a little imperialism of its own.”⁵⁰⁸ Indeed, the Brazilian military regime was heavily influenced by a geopolitical view that stressed the role of Brazil in South America. The role of the United States was described by the most prominent geopolitical theorist of the Brazilian military regime as being part of a “*barganha leal*” or “fair bargain” with Brazil: Brazil would support the United States in the global East-West conflict and the United States would support Brazil to fulfill its own

⁵⁰⁷ Moniz Bandeira, *Estado nacional e política internacional na América Latina : o continente nas relações Argentina-Brasil, 1930-1992* (São Paulo, SP: Ensaio, 1993), 228.

⁵⁰⁸ Wesson, *The United States and Brazil: Limits of Influence*: 67.

“manifest destiny” in South America.⁵⁰⁹ This geopolitical perspective, not very different from the old idea of an “unwritten alliance,” led to the development of the notion of “ideological frontiers” and the “encirclement theory.” Together, these conceptions meant that the advancement of communist regimes in South America would isolate Brazil, and thus the challenge should be to “reverse the wave of international subversion” on its borders.⁵¹⁰ In 1971 Bolivia “got the first stab”⁵¹¹ after leftist General Juan Jose Torres took power in 1970, the same year Salvador Allende became president in Chile and the Brazilian consul in Uruguay was kidnapped by the *Tupamaros*, a Marxist guerrilla organization that operated in that country.

The coup that toppled Torres in Bolivia counted with “logistical, political, and ideological support from Brazil, both in the planning stage as well as in the process of execution.”⁵¹² Brazil helped the coup plotting with “money, arms, aircrafts, and even mercenaries” as well as by providing “open logistical support” for the coup itself.⁵¹³ Brazilian airplanes landed in Bolivian airports to bring equipments without concern of concealing its identification. As James Dunkerley observes, “Brazil’s intervention was scarcely discreet.”⁵¹⁴ In case the coup failed, the Brazilian government is thought to have considered the possibility of direct military intervention.⁵¹⁵ The Bolivian coup was also supported by the United States and, to a lesser degree, by the Argentine military

⁵⁰⁹ Golbery do Couto e Silva, *Geopolítica do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria J. Olympio, 1967), 50-52.

⁵¹⁰ Leonel Itaussu Almeida Mello, *Argentina e Brasil : a balança de poder no Cone Sul*, 1a. ed. (São Paulo, SP, Brasil: Annablume, 1996), 124.

⁵¹¹ Bandeira, *Estado nacional e política internacional na América Latina : o continente nas relações Argentina-Brasil, 1930-1992*: 124.

⁵¹² Mello, *Argentina e Brasil : a balança de poder no Cone Sul*: 128.

⁵¹³ Bandeira, *Brasil, Argentina e Estados Unidos - conflito e integração na América do Sul : da Tríplice Aliança ao Mercosul, 1870-2001*: 416-17.

⁵¹⁴ James Dunkerley, *Rebellion in the Veins: Political Struggle in Bolivia, 1952-82* (London: Verso, 1984), 198.

⁵¹⁵ Schilling, *O expansionismo brasileiro : a geopolítica do general Golbery e a diplomacia do Itamarati*: 65-66.

government.⁵¹⁶ The Bolivian Minister of Interior during the Torres government refers to Argentina and Brazil as the “two proimperialist partners,” but focuses mostly on the US and Brazilian participation, which he defines as a “dark organization of the political police in Brazil and the CIA.”⁵¹⁷ A few days after the coup, the Brazilian government granted Bolivia ten million dollars in credit and an average of forty-six million for the following years.⁵¹⁸ To Brazil, the successful coup in Bolivia represented “the end of its regional isolation” and led to a “reverse Domino Theory” in South America - Uruguay and Chile would come next.⁵¹⁹

In Uruguay, US and Brazilian concerns with the guerilla groups in that country became more salient after the head of the US Public Safety program in Uruguay, Dan Mitrione, and the Brazilian Consul Aloisio Gomide were kidnapped by the *Tupamaros* in the early seventies. While Gomide was released after seven months, Mitrione was executed after the US and Uruguayan government refused to comply with the guerilla’s demands. Therefore, when the leftist coalition *Frente Amplio* gained ground in the 1971 elections, both countries were apprehensive, especially in the view of the victory of the *Unidad Popular* in Chile a year earlier. For the United States a victory of the *Frente Amplio* would represent a dangerous trend in South America, while for Brazil it would confirm the view of the “encirclement theory,” in addition to representing more immediate threats of subversion along its strategic southern border. US documents declassified in 2002 make clear the concern of US officials with the situation in Uruguay, but do not show any direct involvement or plans to intervene in that country in order to

⁵¹⁶ J. Patrice McSherry, *Predatory States : Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 55.

⁵¹⁷ Jorge Gallardo Lozada, *De Torres a Banzer* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Periferia, 1972), 403,15.

⁵¹⁸ Dunkerley, *Rebellion in the Veins: Political Struggle in Bolivia, 1952-82*: 205.

⁵¹⁹ Mello, *Argentina e Brasil: a balança de poder no Cone Sul*: 128.

avoid a victory of the *Frente Amplio*. One of the documents is a secret telegram of the State Department to US embassies in Brazil and Argentina asking for their likely reaction to a strong showing of the *Frente Amplio* and mentioning speculations of the Latin American press about the “possible Brazilian plan for action in Uruguay to frustrate the *Frente* from taking over, including use of armed force.”⁵²⁰ Another relevant document is a “Preliminary Analysis and Strategy Paper” on Uruguay recommending US action in five areas: psychological, economic assistance, political, labor and security. However, this paper was explicitly written for the subsequent 1972-1976 period, “based on the premise that the *Frente Amplio* will not win the 1971 elections.” The major concern of the paper was how the United States should proceed to work with the new government and to “increase support for the democratic political parties in Uruguay and lessen the threat of a political takeover by the *Frente*.” In the security area, the analysis suggested that it would be “especially desirable that such neighboring countries as Argentina and Brazil collaborate effectively with the Uruguayan security forces and where possible we should encourage such cooperation.”⁵²¹

The US documents released to date thus show a combination of concern with the situation in Uruguay, and hope that Brazil, or perhaps Argentina, would ultimately take action. These US concerns are in line with the expectation of this chapter that the role played by Brazil allowed the United States to limit its involvement in South America during the Cold War. In fact, the most notorious document released on this issue show President Nixon at a meeting with British Prime Minister Edward Heath commenting that

⁵²⁰ U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "Secret Department of State telegram to U.S. Embassies in Brazil and Argentina " (Subject-Numeric Files 1970-73. August 20, 1971).

⁵²¹ U.S. State Department. Reading Room., "Secret U.S.Embassy Preliminary Analysis and Strategy Paper - Uruguay " (Microfiche on Human Rights in Uruguay 1971-1983. August 25, 1971).

“[t]he Brazilians helped rig the Uruguayan election,” in a reference to the supposed fraud that would have happened in the 1971 election, won by the incumbent party.⁵²² The Brazilian government was clearly satisfied with the outcome of the elections and the then recently elected president of Uruguay immediately declared that he had “ideological affinities” with Brazil.⁵²³

What the Nixon administration did not know, besides speculations in the South American press, was that the Brazilian army had in place a plan to invade Uruguay in case the *Frente Amplio* won the elections. This plan was called “*Operação Trinta Horas*” (“Operation Thirty Hours”) in reference to the time frame estimated by the Brazilian military to take over the country.⁵²⁴ As noted above, the unavailability of declassified documentation pertaining to the Brazilian military period complicates the task of the investigator. Therefore, the evidences must generally be sought in testimonies by people involved in the operation or through researchers who had access to them.⁵²⁵ Perhaps the most explicit testimony from someone directly involved in the plans to invade Uruguay came from Brazilian Colonel Dickson Grael, who was a supporter of the 1964 coup but later became disillusioned with the course of the military regime. Grael participated in the formulation of the plans to invade Uruguay and he makes clear how closely the Brazilian

⁵²² U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "Top Secret Memorandum from Henry Kissinger on a meeting between the U.S. President and British Prime Minister Edward Heath " (VIP Visits boxes 910-954, Nixon National Security Council Materials. December 20, 1971).

⁵²³ Bandeira, *Formula para o caos : a derrubada de Salvador Allende (1970-1973)*: 247.

⁵²⁴ Schilling, *O expansionismo brasileiro : a geopolítica do general Golbery e a diplomacia do Itamarati.*; Bandeira, *Estado nacional e política internacional na América Latina : o continente nas relações Argentina-Brasil, 1930-1992*: 226-27; ———, *Brasil, Argentina e Estados Unidos - conflito e integração na América do Sul : da Tríplice Aliança ao Mercosul, 1870-2001*: 417; Leonel Itaussu Almeida Mello, *A geopolítica do Brasil e a Bacia do Prata* (Manaus: Editora da Universidade do Amazonas, 1997), 194-202; Enrique Serra Padros, "A ditadura brasileira de Segurança Nacional e a Operação 30 horas: intervencionismo ou neocisplatinação do Uruguai?," *Ciências&Letras [Porto Alegre]* jan/jun, no. 37 (2005); McSherry, *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America*: 56.

⁵²⁵ For example, Helio Contreiras, *Militares confissões : historias secretas do brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad, 1998), 59; Gaspari, *A ditadura derrotada*: 194; Marco Antônio Villalobos, *Tiranos tremei! ditadura e resistência popular no Uruguai (1968-1985)* (Porto Alegre: EDIPUCRS, 2006), 100-08.

army was from actually intervening. He further claims that Brazilian military units were mobilized and put in alert, just waiting for the result of the Uruguayan elections “to execute the plan”.⁵²⁶ It is noteworthy that while Brazil explicitly took into consideration the Argentinean reaction to a possible invasion of Uruguay, it apparently made no mention to the United States’.⁵²⁷ Indeed, a report from the State Department expressed that the major concern for the United States in relation to the situation in Uruguay “may well not be the outcome of Uruguayan election” but the deterioration of relations between Brazil and Argentina or a major change in the regional balance of power in the case of a unilateral action from any of them in Uruguayan affairs.⁵²⁸

CHILE AND THE “BRAZILIAN CONNECTION”

It is within the context exposed above that Brazilian attitudes toward Chile should be understood. Brazil’s clear disposition to intervene in Uruguay and Bolivia denoted a low level of tolerance for regimes that were identified with communism, both for reasons of ideological incompatibility as well as because of a spillover of the domestic repressive apparatus. The coincidence in goals with those expressed by US foreign policy during the Cold War meant this Brazilian “regional imperialism” allowed the United States to exert what one could call a sort of “soft imperialism” in South America.⁵²⁹ Although it is

⁵²⁶ Dickson M. Grael, *Aventura, corrupção e terrorismo : à sombra da impunidade* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 1985), 18-19.

⁵²⁷ Schilling, *O expansionismo brasileiro : a geopolítica do general Golbery e a diplomacia do Itamarati*: 63.

⁵²⁸ U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, "Secret Department of State Memorandum from Theodore Eliot Jr. to Henry Kissinger," (Department of State Subject-Numeric Files 1970-73, National Archives. November 27, 1971).

⁵²⁹ Some authors have employed the term “subimperialism” to characterize Brazilian policies in South America during the military regime. Nevertheless, the concept of subimperialism is connected with the

commonly ignored in many studies, the United States was not the only country in the hemisphere concerned with Allende's ascension to power in Chile, and Brazilian involvement may provide an important part of the explanation when it comes to assessing the role of foreign influences in the 1973 coup. Here again, the problem of insufficient records on the Brazilian side contrasted with abundant documentation on the US side may create the impression of a monologue when there may be in fact more voices present. While circumstantial evidence already strongly suggested a "Brazilian connection" in the military coup that overthrew Allende,⁵³⁰ documents declassified in 2009 present the clearest evidences to date corroborating these suspicions. But before analyzing these documents, a brief overview of US actions in Chile is needed.

Undoubtedly, the best account of US involvement in Chile up until the 1973 coup is the 1975 US Senate "Staff Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities," also known as the "Church Report" since it was chaired by Senator Frank Church of Idaho.⁵³¹ Although it was produced only two years after the fall of Allende, no new information since then has significantly changed the assessments of the Church Report, which remains as the main source of information for the majority of the analyses of US activities in Chile. A more recent report by the CIA produced in 2000, known as the "Hinchey Report," after US

concept of imperialism, which, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, is distinct from the argument made here. Moreover, the notion of subimperialism implies a condition of subordination, which is also not the argument made here. For the notion of Brazilian subimperialism see: Ruy Mauro Marini, "Brazilian subimperialism" *Monthly Review* 23, no. 9 (1972); Gustavo V. Dans and North American Congress on Latin America., *NACLA's Brasil a la ofensiva : la estrategia continental del imperialismo*, Cuadernos de política mundial no. 1 (Lima: Editorial Dipsa, 1975); Daniel Zirker, "Brazilian Foreign Policy and Subimperialism During the Political Transition of the 1980s: A Review and Reapplication of Marini's Theory," *Latin American Perspectives* 21, no. 1 (1994).

⁵³⁰ Marlise Simons, "The Brazilian Connection," *The Washington Post*, January 6, 1974.

⁵³¹ U.S. Congress. Senate. Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities., "Covert Action in Chile, 1963-1973 : Staff Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, United States Senate," (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1975).

Congressman Maurice Hinchey of New York, basically corroborates and complements the findings of the 1975 Senate report, adding little new information that would drastically transform what is currently known about the actual extent of US involvement in Chile in the events leading to the downfall of Allende.⁵³² These two reports offer a detailed and comprehensive account of US activities in Chile and will thus be used as the basic sources for the analysis that follows.

There are at least two aspects of the US actions in Chile that deserve careful consideration in order to produce an accurate analysis. The first is the fact that the overwhelming majority of the money spent in covert action in Chile – more than ninety percent - was in propaganda, including support for mass media and for political parties. From the analyst's point of view, the problem with this kind of strategy is that, in spite of some assumptions equating investment in propaganda with actual influence, it is obviously complicated to assess its real impact on the overall political process. Nevertheless, while it is hard to infer a perfect causal relationship when there is a coincidence between the political outcome and the objectives of propaganda action, if the first differs from the latter it seems reasonable to assume that the latter was unproductive. As mentioned earlier, CIA support for opposition candidates in Brazil's 1963 elections was largely fruitless, which made evident the limits of such kind of assistance. Likewise, the CIA spent more money in Chile in the period between 1964 and 1969, during the Johnson administration, and despite this support the Chilean left gained ground during

⁵³² To produce the report, the authors "reviewed relevant CIA records of the period predominantly from recent document searches; studied extensive Congressional reports regarding US activities in Chile in the 1960s and 1970s; read the memoirs of key figures, including Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger; reviewed CIA's oral history collection at the Center for the Study of Intelligence; and consulted with retired intelligence officers who were directly involved." U.S. CIA. General Reports., "C.I.A Activities in Chile," September 18, 2000. <http://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/chile/index.html#1> (accessed December 1, 2010).

these years. One could argue that had the United States not helped with money, the left would have made even more gains, but, aside from this speculation, the reality shows that the actual results could hardly be considered a case of success, as will be further explored below. The second aspect of US actions in Chile that deserves special attention is the fact that the bulk of CIA activities in Chile, including an attempt to encourage a military coup, was concentrated in the period before Allende became president in 1970 and were thus aimed to prevent him from taking office. Consequently, the eventual inauguration of Allende as the President of Chile is another indication of the actual effectiveness of the operations undertaken by the United States in the South American country.

As noted above, the peak of US propaganda actions in Chile was during the period between 1964 and 1969. In spite of the high investment, it is hard to conclude that the results were satisfactory. The Church Report remarks that CIA help in 1964 “enabled Eduardo Frei to win a clear majority in the 1964 election, instead of merely a plurality,” but adds that it is not clear “why it was necessary to assure a majority, instead of accepting the victory a plurality would have assured.”⁵³³ The same report also notices that, in the years between 1965 and 1969, the portion of the vote of the CIA-backed Christian Democrats fell from forty-three to thirty-one percent. CIA efforts were not only concentrated on political parties, but also on influencing Chilean institutions, particularly those related to labor and peasants. The CIA evaluation of these projects, according to the Church Report, concluded that they were “rather unsuccessful in countering the growth of strong leftist sentiment and organization among workers, peasants and slum

⁵³³ U.S. Congress. Senate. Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities., "Covert Action in Chile, 1963-1973."

dwellers.”⁵³⁴ All in all, the most optimistic definition would characterize the outcome of CIA covert operations in Chile during the period between 1964 and 1969 as a limited success, but a case could also be made that the outcome was largely ineffective.

In 1970, the CIA spent around one million dollars to affect the outcome of that year’s election by “undermining communist efforts to bring about a coalition of leftist forces which could gain control of the presidency” and “strengthening non-Marxist political leaders and forces in Chile in order to develop an effective alternative to the Popular Unity coalition in preparation for the 1970 presidential election.”⁵³⁵ On the other hand, the Church Report indicated that “the Cubans provided about \$350,000 to Allende’s campaign, with the Soviets adding an additional, undetermined amount.”⁵³⁶ The Soviet figures were later disclosed by KGB senior archivist Vasili Mitrokhin, who had access to extensive documentation in the USSR that reveals a close and regular association between Allende and the Soviets, picturing him as “the most important of the KGB’s confidential contacts in South America.”⁵³⁷ The documents, which are part of the so called “Mitrokhin Archive,” show that “Allende made a personal appeal [...] for Soviet funds” and that the KGB provided the Chilean Communist Party with \$400,000 plus a “personal subsidy of \$50,000 to be handed directly to Allende” and \$18,000 to persuade a left-wing senator to remain within Allende’s coalition and not to stand as presidential candidate in order to prevent splitting the leftist vote. Additional funding, including money handed directly to Allende, continued to be sent throughout his term in office.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ Christopher M. Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 69.

⁵³⁸ Ibid., 72, 75, 80, 81.

The fact that Allende won a plurality - though a very narrow one - of the 1970 election made obvious that US efforts to prevent a leftist coalition from gaining a plurality of the votes “did not succeed.”⁵³⁹ Indeed, if one seeks to attribute every political outcome of 1970 Chile as a result of foreign influence, the conclusion should be that it was the KGB who was successful, and in fact, “[i]n its report to the Central Committee, the KGB claimed some credit for Allende’s victory.”⁵⁴⁰ By the time Allende was elected, “little was left of the CIA-funded propaganda apparatus.”⁵⁴¹ Yet, Allende’s victory was a significant blow to US foreign policy in an age of Cold War and President Nixon decided not to let him come to power. Nixon informed the CIA that “an Allende regime in Chile would not be acceptable to the United States,”⁵⁴² and it was decided that “a more aggressive covert action initiative” was necessary, which included a plan to form a coup to prevent Allende from actually taking office.⁵⁴³ In order to block Allende’s accession to the presidency, the Nixon administration considered taking action in two different “tracks.” “Track I” included political, economic, and propaganda activities “designed to induce Allende’s opponents in Chile to prevent his assumption of power,” while “Track II” went a step further and included actions “directed toward actively promoting and encouraging the Chilean military to move against Allende.”⁵⁴⁴ Because Allende had won a plurality, but not a majority, of the votes, the Chilean constitution required that he should be confirmed as president by the Congress. “Track I” failed to gather support from

⁵³⁹ U.S. Congress. Senate. Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities., "Covert Action in Chile, 1963-1973."

⁵⁴⁰ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World*: 72.

⁵⁴¹ U.S. Congress. Senate. Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities., "Covert Action in Chile, 1963-1973."

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*

⁵⁴³ U.S. CIA. General Reports., "C.I.A Activities in Chile."

⁵⁴⁴ U.S. Congress. Senate. Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities., "Covert Action in Chile, 1963-1973"

opposition forces to intervene in the Chilean political process in order to challenge Allende and also failed to generate an economic crisis strong enough to impact the votes in the Congress. Allende's victory was not only approved by the Congress, but was approved by such a wide margin – 153 to 35 – that labeling “Track I” as a complete failure may be an understatement.

When it became clear that “Track I” was shipwrecking, “Track II” was intensified. The CIA made several contacts with the Chilean military in order “to convince them to carry out a coup” and met Chilean officers “who were actively involved in coup plotting.”⁵⁴⁵ According to the Hinchey Report, the CIA met with three different groups of coup plotters and all of them indicated that the success of the coup required the kidnapping of Chilean Army Commander Rene Schneider, who favored Allende's confirmation as president. The CIA therefore provided arms and ammunition to one of the groups in order to abduct Schneider. However, the group that eventually kidnapped Schneider did not have the CIA's support and acted “independently of the CIA,” which had concluded a few days before the operation that that particular group of plotters could not successfully carry out the coup.⁵⁴⁶ The weapons that the CIA had provided to its preferred group “were later returned unused to the Station.”⁵⁴⁷ Schneider was mortally wounded during the attack and his death “provoked a strong reaction in Chile,”⁵⁴⁸ ruining the prospects for the execution of a coup against Allende, and making “Track II” as unsuccessful as “Track I.” On November 3, 1970, Salvador Allende was inaugurated as

⁵⁴⁵ U.S. CIA. General Reports., "C.I.A Activities in Chile."

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

the President of Chile, making it plainly obvious that “U.S. efforts, both overt and covert, to prevent his assumption of office had failed.”⁵⁴⁹

Hence, if the ultimate outcome of the 1970 Chilean elections demonstrates anything, it is the limits of US influence in certain areas of Latin America. Had a coup in Chile succeeded with significant CIA assistance, it would have represented an important challenge to the argument of this dissertation characterizing the United States as an absent empire in South America. However, the way things actually developed provides a clear demonstration of the limits of US influence in that regional subsystem, especially when compared to similar events in the North American regional subsystem. Despite the explicit orders by a US President to carry out plans to overthrow a Latin American leader seen as an important threat to US interests, Allende was inaugurated in accordance with the precepts of the Chilean Constitution. Perhaps the closest instance of a comparable failure is the 1961 Bay of Pigs Invasion in Cuba, but if in the case of Chile the US imperial toolbox included relatively “soft” measures such as propaganda actions and “encouragement” within the existent Chilean institutions for a military coup, the Cuban case could hardly be classified under the category of “soft imperialism.” The Bay of Pigs was indeed an outright case of intervention through invasion, including the use of US aircraft and US trained and equipped mercenary army to invade Cuba and topple the government. While both are equivalent instances of failure, the Chilean case differs from the Cuban case in the relative timidity of the actions undertaken in order to fulfill similar objectives. If historians and political scientists want to classify both events under the same category of “US intervention in Latin America” to make the case for US imperial

⁵⁴⁹ U.S. Congress. Senate. Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities., "Covert Action in Chile, 1963-1973."

thrust in the region, they may not be conceptually wrong depending on the definitions used for “intervention,” but they surely miss distinctions that are not negligible. This dissertation expects to make these distinctions more discernible.

When Allende was finally overthrown by a military coup, it was not the CIA who brought him down. There is a reasonable consensus that domestic factors played the biggest role in the fall of Allende, and he would probably have been overthrown at about the same time even “without the slightest encouragement from the United States.”⁵⁵⁰ When it comes to foreign influences leading to the 1973 coup, there seems to be strong indication that Brazilian actions played an important role, as will be explored later. Obviously, having actively tried to prevent Allende from taking office, it would be surprising if the Nixon administration made his life any easier, especially considering events during his first twelve months in office such as the expropriation of US copper companies with no compensation (in fact, these companies were told that they actually owned Chile money due to “excess profits”) and Fidel Castro’s highly publicized month-long visit to Chile. Although covert operations continued to be undertaken after 1970, the major official action to influence the course of Chilean politics in that period was economic pressure. Nevertheless, Washington’s actions to affect the Chilean economy after Allende was inaugurated president, in spite of claims of intervention, can be interpreted as being perfectly legitimate. Withholding support for loans, reducing investments, commercial credits and bilateral aid to a government identified as opposed to US interests and had actually taken steps in an anti-American direction could only be considered as intervention under the most vague of the definitions of the term. After the United States had badly lost the bet to prevent Allende from coming to power in Chile, it

⁵⁵⁰ Whitaker, *The United States and the Southern Cone : Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay*: 415.

would be unrealistic to expect it to finance the so called “Chilean path to socialism,” which was the political platform of the coalition that supported Allende.

In fact, Allende’s term as president was characterized by enormous economic and political difficulties. However, attributing which part of the difficulties was the direct result of US policies and which part lies within domestic factors and other international conditions is a challenging endeavor. It is beyond the scope of this research to conduct an extensive examination of Allende’s management of the economy in order to assess its effectiveness, but, when it comes to international factors, it should come as no surprise that the socialist reforms carried out by Allende would scare some of the international investors, particularly in the United States. In addition, in terms of international conditions, perhaps more important than any individual US action was the drop in the price of copper in 1971, which has historically represented a significant share of Chilean exports. In terms of access to international credit, Paul Sigmund comments that Chile “had surprising success in securing loans from countries other than the United States-and these were by no means restricted to the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China.”⁵⁵¹ Sigmund maintains that loans from communist countries, plus Canada, Argentina, Mexico, Australia and Western Europe “more than counterbalanced reductions from U.S. and U.S.-influenced sources” and that by August of 1973, “Allende had more short-term credits available to him (\$574 million) than at the time of his election to office (\$310 million).”⁵⁵² Likewise, Whitaker observes that cuts in loans and credits by the United

⁵⁵¹ Paul E. Sigmund, "The "Invisible Blockade" and the Overthrow of Allende," *Foreign Affairs* 52, no. 2 (1974): 336.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, 336-37.

States were counterbalanced by alternative sources from other parts of the world.⁵⁵³ Juan Batista Yofre informs that, from Argentina alone, Chile had secured a line of credit of one hundred million dollars.⁵⁵⁴ Commenting on the US strategy of economic pressure, the Church Report noticed that while it could work on the long term, in the short term Chile “was not immediately vulnerable to investment, trade or monetary sanctions imposed by the United States.”⁵⁵⁵ Indeed, the Foreign Minister of the Allende administration, Clodomiro Almeyda, commented that even though US economic actions may have contributed to the deterioration of the economic situation in Chile, “it cannot be said that they were the primary cause of these difficulties.”⁵⁵⁶ These statements help to put into perspective the notion that the United States was responsible for all misfortunes of the Chilean economy during the presidency of Salvador Allende. In any case, the important theoretical question remains as to the effectiveness of external economic pressure, especially if exerted unilaterally, in order to bring about political change.⁵⁵⁷ The example of Castro’s Cuba, which was even more economically dependent on the United States than Allende’s Chile, seems to demonstrate the limits of such influence.

But the state of the economy tells only part of the story, as Allende’s political situation was not any better. Elected by a margin of around just one percent in relation to the candidate that came in second place, Allende presided over a divided country, and

⁵⁵³ Whitaker, *The United States and the Southern Cone: Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay*: 415. Also, William F. Sater, *Chile and the United States : Empires in Conflict* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 184-85.

⁵⁵⁴ Juan Bautista Yofre, *Misión argentina en Chile, 1970-1973* (Providencia Chile: Editorial Sudamericana, 2000), 297.

⁵⁵⁵ U.S. Congress. Senate. Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities., "Covert Action in Chile, 1963-1973."

⁵⁵⁶ Clodomiro Almeyda, "The Foreign Policy of the Unidad Popular Government," in *Chile 1970-1973 : Economic Development and its International Setting ; Self-Criticism of the Unidad Popular Government's Policies*, ed. Sandro Sideri (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1979), 127.

⁵⁵⁷ On this issue, see, for example, R. Harrison Wagner, "Economic Interdependence, Bargaining Power, and Political Influence," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988).

Chilean political life became increasingly polarized as the economy floundered. His own coalition quickly came apart as the left and the “ultra-left” split, the latter reproaching Allende for being “more reformist than revolutionary.”⁵⁵⁸ The economic problems, including shortages and growing inflation, exacerbated the political problems and brought unrest to several sectors of the country.⁵⁵⁹ As time went by, there was a growing notion that Allende was losing control of the situation and it was a common say in Chile that “the President does not govern.”⁵⁶⁰ US covert support to the opposition – combined, incidentally, with the far less researched Soviet covert support to the other side - may have contributed to aggravating political tensions but it is implausible to assume they were the major factor in creating them. This assessment is identical to the one made by Allende’s Foreign Minister, who remarked that “U.S. activities designed to destabilize the UP [*Unidad Popular*] Government - activities which the U.S. authorities have cynically acknowledged - did not create the factors which caused the UP Government to fall but rather increased and intensified the impact of those factors.”⁵⁶¹ The Chilean forest was burning and, while the United States threw in a few gallons of fuel, it definitely did not start the fire.

As for direct US involvement in the military coup that eventually overthrew Allende, the evidences to date seem to be conclusive in indicating that there was no such participation. After extensive investigation, the Church Report found “no hard evidence of direct U.S. assistance to the coup, despite frequent allegations of such aid.”⁵⁶²

⁵⁵⁸ Yofre, *Misión argentina en Chile, 1970-1973*: 257.

⁵⁵⁹ A detailed account of economic and political problems faced by Allende is provided by the US ambassador to Chile during the Allende years: Davis, *The Last Two Years of Salvador Allende*.

⁵⁶⁰ Yofre, *Misión argentina en Chile, 1970-1973*: 162.

⁵⁶¹ Almeyda, "The Foreign Policy of the Unidad Popular Government," 129.

⁵⁶² U.S. Congress. Senate. Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities., "Covert Action in Chile, 1963-1973."

Likewise, the Hinchey Report concluded that the CIA “was aware of coup-plotting by the military” but that it “did not instigate the coup that ended Allende’s government on 11 September 1973,” given that “the consensus within the US government was that the military intended to launch a coup at some point, that it did not need US support for a successful coup, and that US intervention or assistance in a coup should be avoided.” In fact, continues the report, after Allende was inaugurated president, “the US government’s long term objective” was not a military coup but “to keep the opposition active in the hope that it could defeat Allende in the 1976 election.”⁵⁶³ These conclusions corroborate US ambassador to Chile Nathaniel Davis’ allegation that he “did not engage in coup plotting” and that he was “unaware of any of my U.S. colleagues having done so, including the personnel of the CIA station, the attaché offices, and the Military Advisory Group.”⁵⁶⁴ As Whitaker observed, the responsibility of the United States in the coup that overthrew Allende seems to be very limited “to the disappointment, no doubt, of the makers of U.S. policy towards Allende who flattered themselves on their success.”⁵⁶⁵

But if it is true Davis did not engage in coup plotting, there are strong evidences that his Brazilian colleague in Chile apparently did not share the same behavior. While refuting the notion that the United States helped in coup plotting, Davis remarked that “there is no real doubt in my mind that allegations of a Brazilian connection are true.”⁵⁶⁶ Davis’ predecessor in Santiago, Edward Korry, who served as ambassador from 1967 to 1971, was even more explicit when he stated in 1981 that “[t]he CIA did not overthrow Allende [...] It played almost no role. The actual technical and psychological support

⁵⁶³ U.S. CIA. General Reports., "C.I.A Activities in Chile."

⁵⁶⁴ Davis, *The Last Two Years of Salvador Allende*: 348.

⁵⁶⁵ Whitaker, *The United States and the Southern Cone: Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay*: 415.

⁵⁶⁶ Davis, *The Last Two Years of Salvador Allende*: 332.

came from the military government of Brazil.”⁵⁶⁷ Earlier, Korry had mentioned that the Brazilian support for the coup was a “well-kept secret” in Washington.⁵⁶⁸ Davis recounts an episode of March 1973, six months before the military coup, when the Brazilian ambassador to Chile met him and “made a series of leading suggestions (which I turned aside), trying to draw me into cooperative planning, interembassy coordination, and joint efforts toward the Allende government's demise.”⁵⁶⁹ Indeed, there are several indications that “Brazil’s complicity was, actually, more extensive than it appeared”⁵⁷⁰ and that Brazilian ambassador to Chile, Camara Canto, was in fact actively involved in coup plotting. Yofre, who conducted extensive research on the Argentinean ambassador to Santiago during the Allende years, recounts the episode of a meeting between the Argentinean and the Brazilian ambassador in 1969 when they discussed the possibility of a coup in Chile in the case of an Allende victory in the following year. Yofre emphasizes that this meeting made evident the close connections between Camara Canto and the Chilean military.⁵⁷¹ Likewise, Bandeira comments that Canto was “intimately related with those who conspired against Allende's ascension to the presidency of Chile.”⁵⁷² Before Allende’s election, Camara Canto was informed by Santiago that the army would not accept him as president, and when a coup failed to materialize, he attributed that to “the lack of a leader.”⁵⁷³ The Argentinean ambassador reported to Buenos Aires that Brazil saw Allende’s election as a “headache” and “a source of disturbances to all

⁵⁶⁷ Edward Korry, "Confronting our Past in Chile," *Los Angeles Times*, March 8 1981.

⁵⁶⁸ ———, "The Sell-Out of Chile and the American Taxpayer," *Penthouse*, March 1978, 116.

⁵⁶⁹ Davis, *The Last Two Years of Salvador Allende*: 363.

⁵⁷⁰ Bandeira, *Estado nacional e política internacional na América Latina : o continente nas relações Argentina-Brasil, 1930-1992*: 227; ———, *Brasil, Argentina e Estados Unidos - conflito e integração na América do Sul : da Tríplice Aliança ao Mercosul, 1870-2001*: 418.

⁵⁷¹ Yofre, *Misión argentina en Chile, 1970-1973*: 33.

⁵⁷² Bandeira, *Formula para o caos : a derrubada de Salvador Allende (1970-1973)*: 172.

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*, 177.

countries in the Southern Cone.”⁵⁷⁴ During a busy reception hosted by the Brazilian embassy in Santiago a couple of days before the decision for the coup was made, the main topic was the military coup that was about to happen.⁵⁷⁵ In fact, a week before the coup, the Brazilian Minister of War told the Paraguayan ambassador to Brazil that Chile was “already in military hands.”⁵⁷⁶ A Brazilian Congressman close to Allende said that the Chilean president had told him two days before the coup that “the Brazilian embassy in Santiago was one of the main focuses of subversion against his administration, having a more ostensive activity than the US embassy” and that a week before the coup, Allende was actually preparing to denounce the “Brazilian connection” internationally.⁵⁷⁷

Besides official governmental participation, there is also evidence that private sectors in Brazil helped with the coup. Marlise Simons, who interviewed Brazilian businessmen and politicians, reports that “private business and interests” in Brazil “gave money, arms and advice on political tactics” to coup plotters. Simons points out that the Brazilian businessmen helped to plot the 1964 military coup in Brazil “were the same people who advised the Chilean right on how to deal with Marxist President Allende,” and that Chilean businessmen met with Brazilian businessmen to learn how “to prepare the ground for the military to move.”⁵⁷⁸ Brazilian political advice included instructions on how to create chaos and mobilization, particularly in exploring the role of women in mobilizing society and marching through the streets. A Brazilian politician reportedly said that “we taught the Chileans how to use their women against the Marxists. Once we

⁵⁷⁴ Yofre, *Misión argentina en Chile, 1970-1973*: 77.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 413.

⁵⁷⁶ Simons, "The Brazilian Connection."

⁵⁷⁷ *Veja*, "Página negra: As tenebrosas transações do Itamarati no Chile," November 13 1985.

⁵⁷⁸ Simons, "The Brazilian Connection."

saw Chilean women were marching, we knew that Allende's days were numbered."⁵⁷⁹ A member of Brazil's Anti-Communist Movement claimed that he took money to anti-communist organizations in Chile and that the money came "from Sao Paulo and there was a lot of it."⁵⁸⁰ In addition, there is strong indication that the experience of the 1964 coup in Brazil was used as a model for civilian and military sectors in Chile.⁵⁸¹ One Brazilian historian interviewed by Simons commented that "[t]he first two days I felt I was living a Xerox copy of Brazil 1964. The language of Chile's military communiqués justifying the coup [...] was so scandalously identical to ours, one almost presumes they had the same author."⁵⁸² In sum, although far less documented than the US participation, these evidences indicate that Brazilian participation in the events in Chile also contributed fuel to the fire that was consuming the Chilean political forest.

Furthermore, while Argentina was "passive" during the coup,⁵⁸³ and there is no evidence that the United States was informed of the date beforehand,⁵⁸⁴ Brazil knew about the beginning of the coup with "several hours of antecedence."⁵⁸⁵ A representative of the Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs said that "Allende's overthrow was not a surprise" for the Brazilian government.⁵⁸⁶ Five days after the coup, the first trip abroad of a Chilean official was to Brazil.⁵⁸⁷ General Augusto Pinochet, the chief of the military junta who substituted Allende in the presidency, is reported to have said that "[w]e were

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid; Bandeira, *Formula para o caos : a derrubada de Salvador Allende (1970-1973)*: 484.

⁵⁸² Simons, "The Brazilian Connection."

⁵⁸³ Yofre, *Misión argentina en Chile, 1970-1973*: 424.

⁵⁸⁴ Davis, *The Last Two Years of Salvador Allende*: 363.

⁵⁸⁵ Yofre, *Misión argentina en Chile, 1970-1973*: 426.

⁵⁸⁶ *Brazilian Information Bulletin*., "Chilean Coup: Brazil Goes Over the Andes," Fall 1973.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

still shooting when the [Brazilian] ambassador communicated the recognition.”⁵⁸⁸ Indeed, Brazil was the first country to recognize the new government and Ambassador Camara Canto was apparently so pleased that he is reported to have answered the phone on the day of the coup with the phrase: “We won.”⁵⁸⁹ Soon after the coup, Camara Canto “coordinated measures of support to the new authorities”⁵⁹⁰ and Brazil sent food and medication in addition to political and military help and a credit of \$200 million to Chile.⁵⁹¹ During the first year after the coup, Brazil provided \$150 million in direct economic aid to Chile, more than the United States.⁵⁹² When the Pinochet regime captured people accused of subversion, several accounts indicate that a number of the captors spoke Portuguese.⁵⁹³ One of the Brazilians tortured by the Chilean military regime reports that Brazilian agents wrote the questions, and the medicine he took had a label that stated “donated by the Brazilian Navy.”⁵⁹⁴

In regional subsystemic terms, the Chilean coup d'état, combined with the previous coups in Uruguay and Bolivia, meant an end to the feeling of isolation and “encirclement” in Brazil and indicated in fact “an enlargement of Brazilian regional influence.”⁵⁹⁵ Undoubtedly, the Brazilian military government “was pleased with the shift to the right in the Southern Cone” since “it would remove many of the political obstacles

⁵⁸⁸ Gaspari, *A ditadura derrotada*: 355.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid; *Veja*, “Pagina negra: As tenebrosas transações do Itamarati no Chile.”

⁵⁹⁰ Bandeira, *Estado nacional e política internacional na América Latina : o continente nas relações Argentina-Brasil, 1930-1992*: 228.

⁵⁹¹ ———, *Formula para o caos : a derrubada de Salvador Allende (1970-1973)*: 558-59.

⁵⁹² Mello, *Argentina e Brasil : a balança de poder no Cone Sul*: 131.

⁵⁹³ Gaspari, *A ditadura derrotada*: 356.

⁵⁹⁴ Bandeira, *Formula para o caos : a derrubada de Salvador Allende (1970-1973)*: 560.

⁵⁹⁵ Mello, *Argentina e Brasil : a balança de poder no Cone Sul*: 130.

to Brazil's goals" in the region.⁵⁹⁶ On the other hand, Argentina, Brazil's main competitor for regional influence, became increasingly isolated, which was one of the contributing factors for the 1976 military coup in that country.⁵⁹⁷ In fact, after Allende was overthrown, Argentinean official communication reported that Brazil was "the biggest beneficiary" from the coup and expressed concerns about the balance of power in the region.⁵⁹⁸

All the above evidence was already fairly well known and was by and large based on interviews, testimonies, and foreign governments' official communication. As has been suggested, the student interested in exploring the role of Brazil in Chile in detail will have to wait until Brazil makes available a larger part of the classified documentation related to its military period. Nevertheless, recently declassified documents in the United States present perhaps the strongest evidence to date of Brazil's official involvement in Chile. These documents, declassified in July 2009, refer to a meeting between US President Richard Nixon and Brazilian President Emilio Garrastazú Médici in December 1971. The records of the meeting show that Nixon and Médici got along really well, shared basically the same views about hemispheric issues, and overall the meeting took place in a particularly friendly atmosphere. General Vernon Walters, who was then the US military attaché in Paris and spoke several languages, served as interpreter for the meeting. Walters reports twice in the same memorandum that Nixon "was greatly impressed with Medici." He adds that the US president was "delighted at the personal

⁵⁹⁶ Robert D. Bond, "Brazil's Relations with the Northern Tier Countries of South America," in *Brazil in the International System: The Rise of a Middle Power*, ed. Wayne A. Selcher (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1981), 165.

⁵⁹⁷ Bandeira, *Estado nacional e política internacional na América Latina: o continente nas relações Argentina-Brasil, 1930-1992*: 229; Mello, *Argentina e Brasil: a balança de poder no Cone Sul*: 131-32.

⁵⁹⁸ Yofre, *Misión argentina en Chile, 1970-1973*: 435.

rapport they had established and the closeness of their views. With only very few chiefs of state had he developed so quickly a close relationship.”⁵⁹⁹ The record of the meeting states that since Nixon had felt that he and Médici “had gotten along so well and found that their views were so close together, [...] it was important that they maintain close contact and have a means of communicating directly outside of normal diplomatic channels when this might be necessary.”⁶⁰⁰ While Nixon appointed National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger as the representative for such private channels, Médici appointed Brazilian Foreign Minister Gibson Barboza. More importantly, and what is certain to make the life of the future researcher of the subject even more difficult, is the fact that, according to Médici, Barboza kept a “special file in which all items were handwritten, instructions or questions from the President and Gibson Barboza's replies all handwritten, so that not even typists had knowledge of them.”⁶⁰¹ In his memories, Barboza made no reference to this episode,⁶⁰² and asked years later about Brazilian involvement in Chile, he denied the file's existence.⁶⁰³

Nixon and Médici discussed several topics and basically agreed on all of them, topics ranging from the policy towards Cuba to the difficulty, expressed by Médici, in “dealing with and understanding the Spanish-American mentality.”⁶⁰⁴ Subsequently, when Nixon asked Médici about the situation in Chile, the Brazilian president replied categorically that “Allende would be overthrown for very much the same reasons that

⁵⁹⁹ U.S. State Department. Foreign Relations of the United States., "Memorandum From the Senior Department of Defense Attaché in France (Walters) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)," (Washington: Undated. Volume E-10, Documents On American Republics, 1969-1972, Document 144, 1971).

⁶⁰⁰ ———, "Memorandum for the President's File," Foreign Relations of the United States (Washington: December 9. Volume E-10, Documents On American Republics, 1969-1972, Document 143, 1971).

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

⁶⁰² Mario Gibson Barboza, *Na diplomacia, o traço todo da vida* (Rio de Janeiro: Record, 1992).

⁶⁰³ *Veja*, "Pagina negra: As tenebrosas transações do Itamarati no Chile."

⁶⁰⁴ U.S. State Department. Foreign Relations of the United States., "Memorandum for the President's File."

Goulart had been overthrown in Brazil.” But the most relevant passage for the purposes of the argument made in this chapter came after Nixon asked Médici about his assessment of the capability of the Chilean armed forces to overthrow Allende. Médici replied to Nixon that not only did he think the Chilean forces were capable, but also that “Brazil was exchanging many officers with the Chileans.” More significantly, Médici acknowledged that “Brazil was working towards this end.”⁶⁰⁵ This passage is of great importance because it is perhaps the first document to show an official confirmation that the Brazilian government was actively working to help Allende’s fall. Nixon’s response is also germane, since he remarked that “it was very important that Brazil and the United States work closely in this field” but added that the United States “could not take direction.” Nixon continued, saying that “if the Brazilians felt that there was something we could do to be helpful in this area, he would like President Médici to let him know. If money were required or other discreet aid, we might be able to make it available.” The Brazilian president expressed satisfaction in seeing “that the Brazilian and American positions and views were so close.”⁶⁰⁶ This exchange is a perfect illustration of another major argument of this chapter – that the coincidence in US and Brazilian views coupled with Brazilian willingness to prevent the spread of governments associated with communism in South America altered the structure of costs and benefits of US involvement in that region and made it possible for the United States to “not take direction” and exercise a “soft imperialism” of, in the words of Nixon, “discreet aid” in South America. Had Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Chile fallen into the hands of

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

communist governments, it is very unlikely, given the international environment of the Cold War, that the United States would remain so discreet.

Further passages of the meeting report and other associated documentation reinforces the notion of Brazil's "regional imperialism" as a South American surrogate for US "imperialism" during the Cold War. The conclusion of the report on the White House meeting suggested that Médici "hoped that we could cooperate closely, as there were many things that Brazil as a South American country could do that the U.S. could not."⁶⁰⁷ In his memorandum to Kissinger, Walters noticed that "Médici wanted to do everything he could to lighten the President's burden"⁶⁰⁸ A CIA memorandum on the four-day visit of the Brazilian president to the United States mentioned that Médici "personally believes the Brazilian government must assume a greater role in defending neighboring, friendly governments" and that he had "proposed that the United States and Brazil cooperate in helping other democratic countries in Latin America counter the trend of Marxist/leftist expansion." The memorandum adds that Nixon "took great interest in this proposal and promised to assist Brazil when and wherever possible."⁶⁰⁹ A few months after Médici's visit to the United States, a National Intelligence Estimate entitled "The New Course in Brazil" concluded that

Brazil will be playing a bigger role in hemispheric affairs and seeking to fill whatever vacuum the US leaves behind. It is unlikely that Brazil will intervene openly in its neighbors' internal affairs, but the regime will not be above using the threat of intervention or tools of diplomacy and covert action to oppose leftist regimes, to keep friendly governments in office, or to help place them there in countries such as Bolivia and Uruguay. While some countries may seek Brazil's

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁸ _____, "Memorandum From the Senior Department of Defense Attaché in France (Walters) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)."

⁶⁰⁹ _____, "Memorandum From the Acting Director of Central Intelligence (Cushman) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)," (Washington: December 29. Volume E-10, Documents On American Republics, 1969-1972, Document 145, 1971).

protection, others may work together to withstand pressures from the emerging giant.⁶¹⁰

Given the tone of these documents, it is somewhat astonishing that much of the repercussion in the media at the time of their declassification interpreted them as an attempt by the part of Nixon to “enlist Brazil in a coup”⁶¹¹ in view of the fact that “cultivation of Medici fits Nixon and Kissinger's pattern of recruiting conservative heads of state to the U.S. Cold War cause.”⁶¹² However, these views should not be especially surprising since they merely reflect the traditional approach to the study of US-Latin America relationship during and beyond the Cold War. Without an alternative framework to interpret the relationship between the United States and South America, these analysts tend to shape the facts according to their preconceived notions in which the United States has virtually complete and homogenous control over the weaker countries south of the Rio Grande. Therefore, even though the aforementioned documents indicate that it was actually the Brazilian President who was “enlisting” or “recruiting” a very hospitable Nixon to the cause of fighting “the trend of Marxist/leftist expansion” in South America, the conventional international-system approach centered on the great powers hinders a more accurate analysis of those primary documents, thus reinforcing a cycle that affects the perception of researches who only had access to secondary sources.

⁶¹⁰ ———, “National Intelligence Estimate 93–72,” (Washington: January 13. Volume E–10, Documents On American Republics, 1969–1972, Document 146, 1972).

⁶¹¹ Andrew Zajac, “Nixon Offered Brazil Money to Undermine Allende, Records Show,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 2009.

⁶¹² Alexei Barrionuevo, “Memos Show Nixon’s Bid to Enlist Brazil in a Coup,” *New York Times*, August 16, 2009.

SURINAME: A FORGOTTEN EPISODE

On October 25, 1983, the United States conducted its first major military operation since the Vietnam War when eight thousand US troops invaded the Caribbean island of Grenada under the traditional Cold War rationale of preventing the spread of communism. Due to the nature of this operation – an open and armed intervention – the case of Grenada is thoroughly studied and mentioned in the literature as an example of US interventionist disposition in the Western Hemisphere. Nevertheless, a very similar case at about the same point in time and in a country only a few hundred miles from Grenada had a very different outcome, and because of that outcome it is virtually ignored by the literature. Like Grenada, Suriname was also a country governed by a dictator with *affinities with the Castro government in Cuba*. Like Grenada, Suriname was also regarded as in a strategic position due to its geographic location near the Caribbean Sea. Consequently, like Grenada, Suriname was also an important concern for the Reagan administration in the hemisphere. Unlike Grenada, Suriname shared a border with Brazil, and by the eighties it could be considered part of the South American regional subsystem. Examining how the case of Suriname unfolded in contrast to the case of Grenada provides a good illustration of how subsystemic factors contributed to avoiding a US military intervention in the South America subsystem, thus keeping the US absent.

After 1980, when a military coup under the leadership of Dési Bouterse overthrew the government of Suriname and declared the country to be a Socialist Republic, the CIA started closely monitoring the situation in that country. In December 1982, fifteen people who identified with the opposition were arrested and executed,

which drew world attention to Suriname and led the CIA to develop plans to invade the country. These plans and the events that followed were kept in secrecy by all the participants until recently. Perhaps the best source to date on this issue is Paul Kengor and Pat Clark Doerner's book *The Judge: William P. Clark, Ronald Reagan's Top Hand*.⁶¹³ Kengor and Doerner describe the events in Suriname as "the best kept secret in Washington" at the time.⁶¹⁴ They add that the participants "took almost no notes and kept few written records of their involvement."⁶¹⁵ Therefore, in order to write the chapter on Suriname, Kengor and Doerner interviewed several of the participants in that event, but most importantly William P. Clark, who was one of the central figures in the first Reagan administration, serving as Deputy Secretary of State from 1981 to 1982, National Security Advisor from 1982 to 1983, and Secretary of the Interior from 1983 to 1985. Clark was a key participant in the Suriname case; he indicates that he was sent on a secret trip to Brazil and Venezuela in 1983 to develop, as Ronald Reagan recorded in his diaries, a plan to "oust the dictator" of Suriname which "required their [Brazil and Venezuela] cooperation."⁶¹⁶

The case of Suriname illustrates the notion developed throughout this chapter that the role of Brazil in the South American subsystem affected the structure of costs and benefits of US action. The option to count on Brazil to deal with the situation allowed the United States to limit its participation in that subsystem, which is made even clearer when contrasted with the outcome in Grenada. As Kengor and Doerner point out, the main hope of Clark's secret trip to South America "was that the Venezuelans and

⁶¹³ Paul Kengor and Patricia Clark Doerner, *The Judge : William P. Clark, Ronald Reagan's Top Hand* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007).

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 203.

⁶¹⁶ Ronald Reagan and Douglas Brinkley, *The Reagan Diaries* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 141, 43.

Brazilians could be encouraged to clean up their own neighborhood rather than face some form of U.S. military intervention.”⁶¹⁷ The first stop of Clark’s trip was in Caracas, where the US plan to count on their cooperation was turned down. On the other hand, Clark’s meeting with Brazilian President Figueiredo yielded very different results. While the Venezuelans were unwilling to help, in Brasilia Clark found “an extremely helpful and unheralded Brazil.”⁶¹⁸ With Venezuela out of the equation, Clark’s main goal in Brasilia “was to persuade the Brazilians to take care of the Bouterse problem on their own, to make it unnecessary for the United States to organize and orchestrate a major deployment,”⁶¹⁹ and he presented the Brazilians with detailed scenarios for the invasion of Suriname. As Kengor and Doerner comment, the presentation of the plan had an important effect on the Brazilian Generals as “Brazil's brass was taken aback at the specter of U.S. forces crashing into South America.”⁶²⁰ Following Clark’s presentation of the issue, the Brazilians came up with a plan that did not include an invasion force, since Figueiredo “did not want a military operation, either Brazilian or American. Yet, he and his colleagues also dreaded a Soviet presence next door.”⁶²¹ The Brazilian strategy included a package of assistance and cooperation, including military aid, in order to substitute Cuban and Soviet presence by Brazilian influence. The Reagan administration called this operation “Operation Giminich,” in reference to the name of a horse that Figueiredo had given to Reagan after a meeting between them. As it turned out, the Brazilian proposal was “enough to keep Suriname from going Marxist and becoming a

⁶¹⁷ Kengor and Doerner, *The Judge : William P. Clark, Ronald Reagan's Top Hand*: 211.

⁶¹⁸ Paul Kengor, "Secrets of Suriname," *National Review Online*, April 30, 2008.

<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/224326/secrets-suriname/paul-kengor> (accessed January 15, 2011).

⁶¹⁹ Kengor and Doerner, *The Judge : William P. Clark, Ronald Reagan's Top Hand*: 216.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶²¹ *Ibid.*, 217.

Soviet-Cuban base of operation in the Atlantic.”⁶²² As Bandeira argues, while Brazil developed its northern region during the seventies and the eighties, it sought to avoid the penetration of foreign powers in the Amazon region.⁶²³ Therefore, concludes Bandeira, “once it could not simply negate collaborating with the United States, the Figueiredo administration, in order to avoid the invasion of Suriname, which was already decided by Washington, took the responsibility to solve peacefully the issue.”⁶²⁴ The whole deal was kept secret and both sides promised to maintain its confidentiality, which explains why this event is largely unaccounted for.

One of the main participants in the Brazilian mission sent to Suriname to offer the package was diplomat Luiz Felipe Lampreia, who later became ambassador to that country under Figueiredo and eventually Foreign Minister between 1995 and 2001 throughout the Cardoso administration. In 2010, Lampreia published his memoirs, which helped to bring additional information to the events in Suriname. Lampreia recalls that during the meeting between Clark and Figueiredo, the Brazilian President “refused the invitation” to participate in the invasion of Suriname, “but said that, since it was a neighboring country, Brazil considered that the situation in Suriname required an adequate and exclusively Brazilian reaction,” because the Brazilian government “considered the issue to be their own responsibility.”⁶²⁵ Thus, the plan to offer technical, economic, and material support in exchange for removing the Cubans – which, according to Lampreia, totaled fifty million dollars - was born. For Lampreia, Bouterse and the

⁶²² Kengor, "Secrets of Suriname."

⁶²³ Bandeira, "O Brasil como potência regional e a importância estratégica da América do Sul na sua política exterior," 7.

⁶²⁴ ———, *Brasil, Argentina e Estados Unidos - conflito e integração na América do Sul : da Tríplice Aliança ao Mercosul, 1870-2001*: 458.

⁶²⁵ Luiz Felipe Lampreia, *O Brasil e os ventos do mundo : memórias de cinco décadas na cena internacional* (Rio de Janeiro: Objetiva, 2010), 110-11.

Surinamese military were more opportunistic than ideological, and therefore the plan had a high chance of succeeding without the need for a military intervention. Indeed, even though Reagan was skeptical about the Brazilian proposal and offered US help “if you wish, and whenever you ask for it,” he acquiesced to the Brazilian proposal and wished Figueredo luck.⁶²⁶ Fearing the possibility of a Brazilian invasion, Bouterse gladly accepted the plan, the Cuban presence in Suriname was greatly reduced, and the operation was deemed a success. “Not a shot was fired!” celebrated Clark in a memorandum to Reagan.⁶²⁷ As the Brazilian package was implemented in Suriname, the United States was ready to send troops to Grenada.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The period of the Cold War provides perhaps the better opportunity to test the hypothesis of this research that the specific dynamics of the South American subsystem contributed to keeping the United States an absent empire in that part of the hemisphere. Because of the particular characteristics of the bipolar period, the incentives for the United States to intervene in countries in faraway places like Korea or Vietnam were much higher. Within this context, it is unlikely to expect that any US administration would tolerate countries in Latin America to fall in the hands of communist governments, especially given the symbolism that it would represent. Therefore, usual justifications for US relative lack of involvement or interest in South America, such as geographic distance or strategic irrelevance, have perhaps their weakest explanatory power during this period,

⁶²⁶ Ibid., 111.

⁶²⁷ Kengor and Doerner, *The Judge : William P. Clark, Ronald Reagan's Top Hand*: 218.

which was strongly characterized by an ideological confrontation that did not necessarily followed pure strategic calculations. Indeed, successive US administrations demonstrated great concern with the progress of events in South America, and at least two presidents came close to intervening and toppling South American governments that were perceived as being associated with communism. Such actions would come as no surprise, since they would replicate a pattern of behavior that had been pretty clear in Central America and the Caribbean. Nevertheless, in spite of the interest in South America and the disposition to intervene and resort to imperial solutions, the best the United States could do was to exert a kind of “soft imperialism.” This difference between intentions and outcomes must be explained, and this chapter intended to offer an explanation by employing the regional subsystemic perspective

Hence, following the theoretical framework laid out in chapters three and four, this chapter explains the United States’ relative absence from South America during the Cold War by looking at how Brazil affected the structure of costs and benefits of subsystemic change for the United States in that period. In other words, Brazil’s foreign policy objectives in the South American subsystem basically coincided with US objectives, thus raising the benefits for the United States for the maintenance of the status quo and likewise decreasing the incentives for resorting to imperial solutions, such as an invasion to topple particular governments. Brazil’s economic growth at the time, combined with the authoritarian character of the military regime, created the conditions for a Brazilian “regional imperialism” that worked actively to contain the spread of governments associated with communism in South America. As this chapter intended to demonstrate, this policy was a result of Brazil’s view of its national interests and was not

directed from Washington. An important part of the argument made here was the deconstruction of the myth that anti-communism was a US prerogative that should somehow be incorporated by South American countries through the diligent work of indoctrination designed from offices in Washington. Obviously, the United States was willing to take action, but the actions taken did not go beyond supplying an existing demand for things like money, equipment and armaments. Because of Brazil's willingness to play a regional imperial role during the period under study in this chapter, as clearly demonstrated by the cases of Bolivia, Uruguay, and Suriname, there was no need for an imperial policy from the part of the United States in South America. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Brazil has considered South America to be its area of influence, and this perception continued to be very much present during the period under study here.

It is within this context that the case of the 1973 military coup in Chile should be understood. The Chilean coup is an especially hard case to test the hypothesis presented here because it is widely mentioned in the literature as following the same pattern of US interventions elsewhere in Latin America. To make a counterpoint to this view, this chapter examined the extension of US involvement in Chile. Because the United States worked to avoid Salvador Allende's ascension to power, and because he was eventually toppled by a military coup, the temptation to connect the dots and establish a causal relationship is high. This kind of temptation is helped by the usual framework of US hegemony in Latin America and, although it can explain with reasonable adequacy similar cases in Central America and the Caribbean during the Cold War, it does not provide a satisfactory explanation for the case of Chile. The puzzle presented by Chile is

why the United States stopped short of an imperial solution, in contrast to what it had done in other places in the world. As this chapter proposed to show, every step taken by the United States - during both Democratic and Republican administrations - to prevent Allende from being elected and later to prevent him from taking office failed miserably. Given the outcome in 1970, if one wishes to offer an interpretation attributing it to the works of foreign intelligence agencies, the merit should probably go to the KGB and not to the CIA. The remaining explanation to link Allende's fall to actions taken by the United States, since there is no clear evidence of US direct involvement in the coup that eventually overthrew him, is the fact that the United States attempted to destabilize Allende's government through economic measures. This explanation has at least two main weaknesses: one is that it tends to attribute to the United States all misfortunes of the Chilean economy, which is debatable, and the other that it makes a direct connection between US economic actions and the political outcome in Chile, which is unclear.

The overemphasis of US actions, which is greatly helped by the abundance of documentation available from US sources, blurs the focus on other countries that also may have played a role in Chile. Because of Brazilian foreign policy at the time, which was illustrated by its actions in Bolivia and Uruguay, one would suspect that Chile would also be a concern for the Brazilian military regime. Indeed, there are a number of circumstantial evidences - confirmed by two US ambassadors to Santiago - that states Brazil was actively working with coup plotters in Chile. The lack of documentation from Brazilian sources of Brazil's involvement in Chile, though, complicates the life of the researcher interested in demonstrating its extension. Nevertheless, recently declassified documents in the United States seem to provide the clearest evidence that Brazil was in

fact taking actions in order to help the overthrow of Allende. These documents refer to a meeting between Brazilian President Médici and US President Nixon which shows Médici acknowledging that Brazil was working to overthrow Allende, and Nixon demonstrating satisfaction that he could count on Brazil to limit US involvement in Chile. To put in terms of the theoretical framework developed here, the Nixon-Médici interchange is a clear demonstration of how Brazil successfully affected US cost-benefit calculations, which made the US less likely to resort to an imperial strategy in the South American subsystem.

CHAPTER 7

NEGOTIATING THE FTAA: THE SOUTH AMERICAN SUBSYSTEM AFTER THE
COLD WAR

The disintegration of the USSR and the end of the bipolar system that characterized the Cold War combined with the proliferation of democratically elected regimes in South America would once again create new opportunities for the development of new patterns of relationships in the Western Hemisphere, which could eventually lead to subsystemic change. With the United States as the sole remaining superpower in a reconfigured international system, and with the fears of a Soviet-influenced communist takeover in Latin America out of policy makers' calculations, economic issues tended to eclipse the earlier predominance of security issues. Hence, the main prospects for the development of comparatively new patterns of relationships in the Americas in the immediate post-Cold War was through the establishment of an all-encompassing trading regional bloc which would be relevant enough to create new patterns of trade and interdependence among the countries in the hemisphere and possibly spill over to other arenas including political and security ones.⁶²⁸

Indeed, the nineties began with such promise, after the completion of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the beginning of the negotiations for a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in 1994. But after many years of debate, the

⁶²⁸ For the politico-security implications of the FTAA see, for example, Georges A. Fauriol and William Perry, *Thinking Strategically about 2005 : the United States and South America* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1999).; and Patrice M. Franko, *Toward a New Security Architecture in the Americas: The Strategic Implications of the FTAA* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2000).

FTAA never came into existence and, instead of the creation of radically new patterns of relationships, what actually happened was the reinforcement and deepening of previous patterns along regional subsystemic lines. In fact, the analysis of the process leading to the rise and fall of the negotiations over the FTAA presents yet another opportunity to observe the functioning of regional subsystemic pressures contributing to affect the outcome of US foreign policies toward South America.

This chapter's choice in focusing on the FTAA negotiations as a case study does not mean that the political perspective that characterized the previous chapters will be abandoned in favor of a more economic approach based on trade analysis. Instead, in order to preserve a certain level of homogeneity across the chapters, this section will focus on the political dimension of processes of regional integration based on trade liberalization.⁶²⁹ Therefore, the analysis will move away from the specific effects that the FTAA would have on patterns of trade in order to explore the political aspect of an increased economic interdependence that such agreement would likely generate, or, at least the policymakers' perception of such increased interdependence. The underlying assumption is that the conclusion of a free trade area in the Western Hemisphere would conceivably strengthen US political leverage, particularly in South America, since Mexico, the Caribbean states and Central America are by and large already dependent on the US market to a much higher degree than is the case in the rest of Latin America. In other words, the establishment of a Free Trade Area of the Americas could represent an

⁶²⁹ The relationship between economic interdependence and political influence is explored in Albert Hirschman's pioneering work "National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade": Albert O. Hirschman, *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California press, 1945). Later, this notion was famously taken up by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye in Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence : World Politics in Transition*.

important step in merging the North and South American subsystems through the creation of new patterns of interaction.

The main argument of this section is that the outcome of the negotiations concerning the establishment of a Free Trade of the Americas replicates the historical pattern exposed in the previous chapters in which the role of Brazil was key to understanding the relative absence of the United States in the South American regional subsystem. Although keeping with the overall theme of the United States as an “absent empire” in South America, there is no suggestion in this chapter that the institution of a free trade area in the Western Hemisphere should necessarily correspond to an “imperial offensive” by the part of the United States.⁶³⁰ As a matter of fact, both NAFTA and the FTAA could be understood more as push from Latin American states than as an exclusive US idea, since the first began as a Mexican initiative (and was approved by the US House of Representatives by a relatively narrow margin of 234-200) and the proposal for the latter was met with enthusiasm in most of the Latin American capitals. This caveat is important because it marks a difference in tone from the previous chapters, and the notion of absence becomes now more salient than the notion of empire as defined in the introduction of this dissertation. What matters for the purposes of the present chapter is the fact that the developments of the negotiations for a Free Trade Area in the Americas offer a good opportunity to investigate yet another instance when US policy makers demonstrated a clear interest in expanding its presence in South America – now in a completely different international environment from both of the periods analyzed earlier - but again the outcome ended up being the same relative absence.

⁶³⁰ An example of this perspective can be found in James Petras, "U.S. Offensive in Latin America: Coups, Retreats, and Radicalization," *Monthly Review* 54, no. 1 (2002). This viewpoint is usually connected to the notion of imperialism rather than to the notion of empire as explained in the introductory chapter.

This chapter examines the origins of the FTAA proposal, showing that the idea of a hemispheric free trade area was launched at the same time that each of the regional subsystems in the hemisphere were consolidating their own regional institutions around core regional states: NAFTA in North America, and Mercosur in South America. It shows that the United States saw a hemispheric free trade agreement as an extension of NAFTA and consequently Mercosur was soon perceived as a nuisance by US policymakers. Likewise, Brazil demonstrated clear reservations regarding the establishment of a free trade area in the Americas since the beginning, a feeling that was not initially shared by its neighbors. Therefore, contrary to earlier periods examined by this research, the interests of Brazil and the United States now clashed, and given the disparities in power between the two countries, it would be reasonable to expect that the final outcome would favor the latter's view. Brazil's strategy was to lead the formation of a South American bloc, thus raising the costs for the United States to push for an agreement that could have the potential to affect the status quo in South America. This chapter argues that Brazil's strategy of leadership was facilitated by the United States' lack thereof. The chapter also shows that one economic crisis in each of regional subsystems in the Americas – Mexico in North America, and Argentina in South America – acted as catalysts that reinforced subsystemic dynamics and made it even more evident the separation between these two regional subsystems. The combination of these factors led to the eventual demise of the FTAA, with Brazil increasingly seeking to institutionalize the South American subsystem and the United States resorting to bilateral agreements with like-minded countries in that regional subsystem.

NAFTA AND MERCOSUR

A few months after the United States signed a free trade agreement with Canada in the late eighties, Mexican President Carlos Salinas approached his US counterpart George Bush in the beginning of 1990 with the idea of a free trade agreement between the two countries. Initially, this proposal “came as a surprise” to the Bush administration,⁶³¹ since its top trade policy priority was the conclusion of the so called Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which would eventually lead to the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO). In spite of the initial hesitation, the Bush administration soon embraced the idea, as an agreement with Mexico was seen from Washington’s point of view as “part of an overall strategy of building” a “continental base” centered on the United States.⁶³² Therefore, in August of 1990, President Salinas “formally requested a free trade agreement with the United States.”⁶³³ The Canadians, who had just fought a fierce domestic battle over the conclusion of their own free trade agreement with the United States, did not initially want to get involved, but realizing that it had little to gain by staying on the sidelines, the Canadian government later decided that it would be better to participate and consequently they joined the negotiation in early 1991. Hence, what was initially a bilateral negotiation became a trilateral one, and thus was created the basis for the treaty known as North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). More than just a free trade agreement, at the political level NAFTA allowed the US government to reaffirm the principles of

⁶³¹ Frederick Mayer, *Interpreting NAFTA: The Science and Art of Political Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 41.

⁶³² *Ibid.*, 42.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, 46.

international free trade “as a symbol and a reality of a new economic order ushered by the United States as part of its victory in the Cold War.”⁶³⁴ Indeed, in the midst of the negotiations with Mexico, the Bush administration unveiled its Enterprise for the Americas Initiative (EAI), a hemispheric program of which one of the central aims was the extension of free trade to the whole of the Americas. Within the framework of a “new world order,” NAFTA would thus be just a strategic “continental base” from which the United States would lead the post-Cold War world, beginning by reaffirming its leadership in the Western Hemisphere. Therefore, US interest in hemispheric integration could be interpreted as going beyond the notion of economic benefits given the “possibilities it offers for the reinforcement of the structural and ideological foundations of US hegemony, consistent with its parallel global strategies.”⁶³⁵

The vision of a hemispheric free trade area put forth by President Bush was embraced by subsequent US administrations until its demise in the mid-2000s during the second President Bush administration. While the first President Bush launched the overall idea and initiated NAFTA, the Clinton administration wrapped up NAFTA and made the FTAA one of its top foreign policy priorities in Latin America, an approach that was followed by his successor. According to one of the participants in the initial stages of FTAA, there was a growing feeling in the Clinton administration in 1992 that a hemispheric summit “would be a logical follow-up to NAFTA.”⁶³⁶ President Clinton had the expectation that the conclusion of NAFTA would enable the United States to “use the

⁶³⁴ Jorge I. Domínguez and Rafael Fernández de Castro, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 26.

⁶³⁵ Nicola Phillips, “Hemispheric Integration and Subregionalism in the Americas,” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 79, no. 2 (2003): 331.

⁶³⁶ Richard E. Feinberg, *Summitry in the Americas: A Progress Report* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics, 1997), 58.

Mexican precedent to go into the whole rest of Latin America.”⁶³⁷ Accordingly, in 1993, the Clinton administration announced that a summit would take place in Miami in December 1994 to discuss a number of hemispheric issues. During the Miami Summit, which was attended by all countries in the hemisphere except Cuba, the participating countries announced the goal of a hemispheric free trade area to be established by the year 2005, thus marking the beginning of the negotiations of the FTAA.

The year the Miami Summit convened was particularly relevant for matters of hemispheric integration. In January of 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement, which had been approved by the US Congress in late 1993, came into force. In December of that year, a few days after the Miami Summit, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay signed in Brazil the Protocol of Ouro Preto, which complemented the 1991 Treaty of Asunción and established the institutional basis of the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) thus giving Mercosur legal personality of international law and providing it with effective actor capabilities in the international arena.⁶³⁸ On the first day of 1995, the four countries of Mercosur introduced a common external tariff covering about eight-five percent of the goods traded within the bloc, thus transforming Mercosur into a customs union, although an imperfect one given the fact that some of the goods were outside the scope of the tariff. From an economic standpoint, Mercosur has been the second largest trading bloc in the hemisphere after NAFTA in terms of combined GDP, and the fourth in the world behind the European Union, NAFTA, and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Therefore, any meaningful regional integration in

⁶³⁷ Ibid., 66.

⁶³⁸ Even though the personal preferences of the author of this dissertation would advise him to use the Portuguese term “Mercosul,” the use of the Spanish form “Mercosur” is more widely employed in the literature in English.

the Western Hemisphere would have to accommodate the reality of Mercosur – to deal with it or to do away with it. From the point of view of the United States, hemispheric integration meant the absorption of Mercosur into an enlarged NAFTA with the United States at the center. In fact, members of the Clinton administration expressed a number of times that Mercosur was seen as “harmful” to the FTAA and “a threat to hemispheric regionalism.”⁶³⁹ As pointed out above, the ideal design for the Clinton administration would be basically to extend the NAFTA model southward. Given US economic weight, such an arrangement could have the potential to eventually absorb the South American regional subsystem if it ended up creating new patterns of relationship in the hemisphere relevant enough to bring about a relative homogenization of a Latin American periphery arranged around a US center.

Because of the prospects of altering the status quo in the South American subsystem, this scenario was feared by Brazil, which held suspicions regarding the establishment of free trade in the Americas since the beginning and saw it as an “obstacle to the designs of Brazilian leadership within the regional order” in South America.⁶⁴⁰ In fact, the Brazilian Foreign Minister during the Cardoso administration described the FTAA as a tool to consolidate US “economic preponderance in the continent” and as a “potential threat” to Brazil, therefore mirroring verbatim the Clinton administration’s view of Mercosur.⁶⁴¹ When the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative was unveiled in

⁶³⁹ Bernier and Roy, “NAFTA and Mercosur: Two Competing Models?,” 69; Mario E. Carranza, *South American Free Trade Area or Free Trade Area of the Americas? : Open Regionalism and the Future of Regional Economic Integration in South America*, Political Economy of Latin America (Aldershot, England ; Burlington, USA: Ashgate, 2000), 124; Moniz Bandeira, *As relações perigosas : Brasil-Estados Unidos (de Collor a Lula, 1990-2004)* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2004), 133-35; Smith, *Brazil and the United States : Convergence and Divergence*: 189.

⁶⁴⁰ Amado Luiz Cervo and Clodoaldo Bueno, *História da política exterior do Brasil*, 3rd ed. (Brasília: Editora UnB, 2008), 488.

⁶⁴¹ Lampreia, *O Brasil e os ventos do mundo : memórias de cinco décadas na cena internacional*: 183, 89.

1991, Brazil was clearly “the least enthusiastic among the participating countries to move forward on hemispheric integration.”⁶⁴² In fact, Brazilian official position towards hemispheric free trade has been, like the US official position, considerably consistent through time, permeating four different administrations from different political outlooks. Basically, Brazil’s strategy has been one of securing and reinforcing its position within the South American subsystem in order to avoid its absorption by an all-encompassing hemispheric subsystem. Within this context, the establishment of Mercosur with the Treaty of Asuncion in 1991 was a key strategic component. As soon as George Bush announced his Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, the administration of Collor de Mello in Brazil responded that it would only negotiate a hemispheric agreement within the 4+1 framework, that is, the four countries of the recently created Mercosur would take a joint position when negotiating with the United States.⁶⁴³ In 1993, the same year that NAFTA was approved by the US Congress, the administration of Itamar Franco made a proposal for a SAFTA – South American Free Trade Area.⁶⁴⁴ These early efforts demonstrate the Brazilian concern in securing a “continental base” for itself in order to counter the prospects of a US commercial offensive in South America. In fact, when Cardoso was the Brazilian Foreign Minister, he spoke about the notion of a “South

⁶⁴² Jan van Rompay, "Brazil's Strategy towards the FTAA," in *Free Trade for the Americas?: the United States' Push for the FTAA Agreement*, ed. Paulo Gilberto Fagundes Vizentini and Marianne Wiesebron (London ; New York: Zed Books, 2004), 120.

⁶⁴³ Bandeira, *As relações perigosas : Brasil-Estados Unidos (de Collor a Lula, 1990-2004)*: 62.

⁶⁴⁴ Carranza, *South American Free Trade Area or Free Trade Area of The Americas?: Open Regionalism and the Future of Regional Economic Integration in South America*: 1, 84; Paulo Gilberto Fagundes Vizentini, "The FTAA and US Strategy: A Southern Point of View," in *Free Trade for the Americas?: The United States' Push for the FTAA Agreement*, ed. Paulo Gilberto Fagundes Vizentini and Marianne Wiesebron (London ; New York: Zed Books, 2004), 17; Cervo and Bueno, *História da política exterior do Brasil*: 487.

American platform,”⁶⁴⁵ and later, as president, Cardoso referred to Mercosur as “a pole from which we will organize the South American space.”⁶⁴⁶ Mercosur was thus seen as a hub from which Brazil would build an alternative pole of attraction in the hemisphere, and as a result would attempt to create obstacles for greater US penetration in the South American subsystem. As will be shown below, these efforts were continued and then deepened in subsequent Brazilian administrations.

Brazilian official strategy towards hemispheric free trade was, not surprisingly, far from enjoying unanimity in South America. As a matter of fact, two of the biggest powers in the region, Argentina and Chile, were very enthusiastic about the possibility of coming to an agreement with the United States as early as possible, ideally before the 2005 deadline. In a complete reversal of its historically contentious stance towards the United States, the Argentine government became one of its most fervent supporters during the greater part of the nineties. Distant and often confrontational towards US foreign policy initiatives during most of its history, Argentina undertook a complete shift in that historical position under the administration of Carlos Menen and sought to establish, in the now legendary words of Menen’s Foreign Minister, “carnal relations” with the United States.⁶⁴⁷ Perhaps the best indication of this renewed relationship is the fact that Argentina dispatched naval vessels to the 1991 Gulf War, the only Latin American country to do so. In 1998, the United States reciprocated Argentinean cooperation by designating Argentina as a “major non-NATO ally,” also the only Latin

⁶⁴⁵ Fernando Henrique Cardoso, *Política externa em tempos de mudança : a gestão do ministro Fernando Henrique Cardoso no Itamaraty (5 de outubro de 1992 a 21 de maio de 1993) : discursos, artigos e entrevistas* (Brasília: Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão, 1994), 185.

⁶⁴⁶ Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Roberto Pompeu de Toledo, *O presidente segundo o sociólogo : entrevista de Fernando Henrique Cardoso a Roberto Pompeu de Toledo* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1998), 127.

⁶⁴⁷ Ronaldo Munck, "The Democratic Decade: Argentina Since Malvinas," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 11, no. 2 (1992): 210.

American country to have this distinction.⁶⁴⁸ Within this context, a trade agreement with the United States was a logical extension of Argentinean foreign policy, which even entertained the possibility of an accession to NAFTA.⁶⁴⁹ However, Argentina could not freely sign a bilateral agreement with the United States without leading to the demise of Mercosur as a customs union and creating problems with Brazil, which was a more important market for Argentina than the United States: in 1994, the year before the Ouro Preto Protocol took effect, Argentina exported twice as much in value to Brazil than to the United States.⁶⁵⁰ Therefore, by locking in Argentina through Mercosur, Brazil could with reasonable success contain Argentinean initial enthusiasm during the early stages of the FTAA negotiations. On the other hand, Argentinean and other South American countries' eagerness for such an agreement was an important reason why Brazil could not simply negate to negotiate the US-proposed FTAA, as it would leave Brazil isolated in the region it aspired to influence.⁶⁵¹

Conversely, the constraints that applied to Argentina were not valid for Chile. Chile was not part of Mercosur and the United States was a much more important market for Chilean exports than Brazil. Moreover, Chile has had a relatively open economy and international trade has been a key component of its development strategy. In fact, Chile had been seeking a free trade agreement with the United States since the early nineties, and after Mexico it was next in line to negotiate such an agreement. During the Miami

⁶⁴⁸ Brazil, "wary of Washington's potentially overbearing influence" in South America, had a "notably negative" reaction: Fauriol and Perry, *Thinking Strategically about 2005 : the United States and South America*: 33.

⁶⁴⁹ Feinberg, *Summitry in the Americas: A Progress Report*: 108-09.

⁶⁵⁰ By 2009, Argentina exported to Brazil four times more than to the United States. Data from: Interamerican Development Bank, "Dataintal - Comercio Bilateral," <http://www.iadb.org/dataintal/> (accessed February 1, 2011).

⁶⁵¹ Bandeira, *As relações perigosas : Brasil-Estados Unidos (de Collor a Lula, 1990-2004)*: 115; Rompay, "Brazil's Strategy towards the FTAA," 122.

Summit in 1994, Chile was officially invited to join NAFTA and was hailed by the Canadian Prime Minister as the fourth “amigo” in the North American agreement.⁶⁵² Following the official invitation, negotiations for Chilean accession to NAFTA were formally initiated in 1995. Nevertheless, the Clinton administration had one important domestic obstacle after 1994 – the lack of the so called “fast track” authority to negotiate free trade agreements. This bureaucratic detail that, up until then, was little known outside the circle of trade experts, turned out to be the centerpiece of the problems facing the United States during the negotiations of the FTAA, and made it considerably easier for Brazil to enforce its agenda in South America.

According to the US Constitution, it is the responsibility of the Congress to regulate matters of foreign trade. Because of the possibility that Congress may change an agreement previously signed by the executive to the point that it becomes entirely distinct from what was originally agreed upon by the parts, Congress may grant the President a special authority that became known as “fast track,” which gives greater autonomy to the executive to sign free trade agreements, leaving Congress the possibility to either accept or reject it without amendments. Additionally, fast track rules require the Congress to vote within ninety days after the bill is submitted by the president. NAFTA was approved by the US Congress under fast track provisions, but that expired in 1994. For the remainder of his administration, President Clinton unsuccessfully tried to reinstate fast track authority after 1994 in order to promote the FTAA agenda. As it became clear the difficulty that the Clinton administration had in obtaining fast track, the agreement with Chile lost momentum and by 1996 Chile had all but abandoned any hopes of joining

⁶⁵² “We have been the Three Amigos. Now we will be the Four Amigos,” proclaimed Canadian Foreign Minister Jean Chretien: Larry Rohter, “Free Trade Goes South With or Without U.S.,” *New York Times*, January 6, 1997.

NAFTA. The Chilean President Eduardo Frei was reported to have “considered the United States an unreliable ally.”⁶⁵³ As the difficulties in joining NAFTA became clear, “Chilean advocates of expanding ties with the Southern Cone gained ground.”⁶⁵⁴ Indeed, in October of 1996, Chile joined Mercosur as an associated member, as it became, in the words of Henry Kissinger, “tired of waiting for the long-promised access to NAFTA.”⁶⁵⁵ By 1997, after Chile had already signed free trade agreements with both Mexico and Canada, as well as with Mercosur and other South American countries, the Chilean Foreign Minister declared that NAFTA ascension no longer had “either the urgency or the importance it had in 1994.”⁶⁵⁶

Therefore, whereas Brazilian leadership was an important factor to explain the lack of an early agreement in the case of Argentina, in the case of Chile the main explanation should lie with US lack of leadership; not so much because of an unwillingness to lead, but more because of incapacity to do so due to domestic dynamics. It is this combination of Brazilian obstructionism and US inability to provide the necessary leadership that provides the better explanation for the failure of the FTAA. In other words, Brazilian strategy of leading a South American bloc was greatly facilitated by US lack of leadership in the process. The cases of Argentina and Chile during the first couple of years of FTAA negotiations provide a clear illustration of this claim.

⁶⁵³ Feinberg, *Summitry in the Americas: A Progress Report*: 177.

⁶⁵⁴ Stephan Haggard, "The Political Economy of Regionalism in the Western Hemisphere," in *The Post-NAFTA Political Economy: Mexico and the Western Hemisphere*, ed. Carol Wise (University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 318.

⁶⁵⁵ Henry Kissinger, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?: Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 96.

⁶⁵⁶ Rohter, "Free Trade Goes South With or Without U.S.."

LAUNCHING THE FTAA

As indicated above, since the very beginning of the negotiations for the establishment of a Free Trade Area of the Americas two major views regarding the character of hemispheric integration clashed. These two views were represented by the two biggest economies in the hemisphere and the two major powers within their respective regional subsystems: the United States and Brazil. These different perspectives were rooted in the fact that the US view of the international system after the Cold War clashed with the Brazilian view of preserving its role in the South American regional subsystem. As noted above, while for the United States an expansion of NAFTA to the whole hemisphere formed the basis of its approach to hemispheric integration and was seen as part of the broader US view of a new world order, the Brazilian priority was to consolidate its position in the South American subsystem which, from the point of view of Brazilian policy-makers, would be jeopardized by a hemispheric free trade area.

Brazil's concern about regional leadership was unsurprisingly not shared by the other South American countries, which, as exemplified by the cases of Argentina and Chile mentioned above, generally greeted the 1994 Miami Summit with great enthusiasm. In contrast, the Brazilian Foreign Minister signaled Brazilian skepticism regarding the Miami meeting and "warned that the region had overly high expectations of the summit."⁶⁵⁷ These dynamics were already patently clear when US Vice-President Al Gore made a trip to Argentina, Bolivia, and Brazil in 1994 to promote the Miami Summit, scheduled for the end of that year. Like Argentina, Bolivia also demonstrated great interest in the proposal for a hemispheric free trade area and even suggested that it

⁶⁵⁷ Feinberg, *Summitry in the Americas: A Progress Report*: 115.

should be reached by the year 2000 instead of by the original 2005 goal. On the other hand, Gore's meeting with Brazilian representatives revolved around recognizing Brazil's "stature in hemispheric affairs" and "little discussion of the summit agenda as such."⁶⁵⁸ The themes that Gore discussed in Brazil evidently reflected what the true Brazilian concerns were at the time.

As the preparations for the Miami Summit went forward, it became increasingly clear that accommodating the different views of the United States and Brazil would be a central issue in the negotiations for a free trade area in the hemisphere. Because it could not simply block the negotiations as it was in a relatively isolated position, Brazilian strategy was to "render the plan of action more modest in its ambitions, less exact in its objectives, less specific in its timetables, and less accountable in its implementation."⁶⁵⁹ In fact, not only did Brazil actively participate in the negotiations, its delegation in Miami was second in number only to the United States, which is an indication of the interest that the Brazilian government had in the issue.⁶⁶⁰ According to one US negotiator, "the heart of the drama of Miami was Brazil's struggle to establish itself as the interlocutor for South America,"⁶⁶¹ and a major concern of Brazil was to introduce changes in the final text "aimed at lessening future US influence and leaving the integration process less carefully scripted."⁶⁶² Contrary to most of the other countries, Brazil wanted to gain time in order to consolidate and enlarge Mercosur, in order to strengthen its own position vis-a-vis the United States, and only then attempt to strike a "grand bargain between NAFTA

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid., 108-109.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., 146.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid., 142.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid., 195.

⁶⁶² Ibid., 134.

and Mercosur (that is, between the United States and Brazil).”⁶⁶³ In spite of Brazilian efforts to bypass the mention of a date certain, the Miami Declaration stuck with the 2005 goal of hemispheric free trade, reflecting the view of the majority of the countries in Latin America.

Therefore, by the end of the Miami Summit, even though the differences between Brazil and the United States were clear, it was the latter that got the upper hand and dictated the pace of the negotiations at the onset. This could obviously be understood as a logical corollary of the overwhelming disparities in all dimensions of power between the two countries, which seemed to offer support for the conventional analysis of US hegemony in Latin America predicting that “[b]ecause of US power, NAFTA is probably a closer approximation to the evolving FTAA than is Mercosur.”⁶⁶⁴ In fact, many studies that attempted to forecast the “economic and business outcomes of the FTAA” commonly accepted the apparently obvious premise that the FTAA “is going to build on the basic principles of NAFTA.”⁶⁶⁵ As soon as it was established, NAFTA was quickly presented even as a theoretical model of “hemispheric regionalism” as opposed to a “Latin American regionalism.”⁶⁶⁶ However, the actual facts do not corroborate the assumption that US power would inevitably bring into being the US view of hemispheric integration. This gap between a proposed US policy and the actual outcome begs for an explanation. Evidently, one could once again concentrate only on domestic factors and conclude that this gap can be adequately explained by the troubles that the Clinton administration had

⁶⁶³ Ibid., 180.

⁶⁶⁴ Katzenstein, *A World of Regions : Asia and Europe in the American Imperium*: 233.

⁶⁶⁵ Alan M. Rugman, "Economic Integration in North America: Implications for the Americas," in *Free Trade in the Americas: Economic and Political Issues for Governments and Firms*, ed. Sidney Weintraub, Alan M. Rugman, and Gavin Boyd (Cheltenham, UK ; Northampton, Mass.: Edward Elgar, 2004), 90.

⁶⁶⁶ Hurrell, "Regionalism in the Americas"; Atkins, *Latin America and the Caribbean in the International System*: 203.

in obtaining fast track authority from Congress. Although one can be satisfied with this explanation - and domestic factors were certainly critical - it can also be argued that it is an incomplete one. Indeed, even when the Bush administration finally got the fast track – then renamed “Trade Promotion Authority” (TPA) – between 2002 and 2007, thus including the 2005 deadline for the completion of the FTAA, still no hemispheric NAFTA came into being. Instead, the Bush administration used the TPA to negotiate a series of bilateral trade agreements with countries in the region, hence outside the scope of a comprehensive hemispheric framework. This dissertation argues that taking into consideration the regional subsystemic level can help explain this outcome. In order to do that, it is necessary to understand how interactions at the regional subsystemic level contributed to the developments of the FTAA negotiations after the Miami Summit.

MEXICO AND ARGENTINA: THE TALE OF TWO CRISES

A few days after the Miami Summit, on December 20, 1994, and following a series of political shocks during that year that “bruised public confidence in Mexico’s political and economic stability,” a sudden devaluation of the Mexican peso caused a profound economic crisis in that country, with impacts all over Latin America.⁶⁶⁷ Having just signed a free trade agreement with Mexico and with high stakes in its financial stability, the United States acted swiftly in leading the elaboration of an international rescue plan for its southern neighbor. The final package totaled about fifty billion dollars, with the United States and the International Monetary Fund (where the United States has the largest share of votes) contributing with more than two-thirds of

⁶⁶⁷ Joseph A. Whitt Jr, “The Mexican Peso Crisis,” *Economic Review* 81, no. 1 (1996): 4.

this value.⁶⁶⁸ Although the rescue package ended up being successful and the Mexican economy recovered from the crisis by 1996, the costs of rescuing Mexico reduced much of the enthusiasm in Washington for further agreements with other Latin American countries, which greatly contributed to the difficulties of the Clinton administration in obtaining fast track authority after 1994. Indeed, according to some analyses, the Mexican crisis represented a “lethal blow” for the FTAA.⁶⁶⁹ This US paralysis offered an opportunity for Brazil to push its agenda in South America, and while “U.S. congressional approval of any post-NAFTA trade agreements had been put in jeopardy by the Mexican crisis, Mercosur initiated negotiations with Bolivia, Venezuela, and Chile.”⁶⁷⁰ By 1997, both Chile and Bolivia - which were two of the most enthusiast countries regarding the FTAA - had been added to Mercosur as associate members, thus starting a process of regional institutionalization that, as will be shown below, would eventually lead to something resembling the original Brazilian scheme of a South American Free Trade Area.

Therefore, by the time of the Second Summit of the Americas in 1998, in Santiago, Chile, which officially launched the negotiations of the FTAA, there was a clear change in the mood from four years earlier. While in North America the United States had been intimately involved in rescuing Mexico from financial collapse, in South America, Brazil, as President Cardoso had remarked, was actively seeking to “organize the South American space” by using Mercosur as “the pole of attraction for a future South American Free Trade Area.” As the United States, for better or for worse, became

⁶⁶⁸ *New York Times*, "Aid for Mexico Gives Economy Shot in the Arm," February 2, 1995.

⁶⁶⁹ Riordan Roett, "U.S. Policy Toward Mercosur: From Miami to Santiago," in *Mercosur: Regional Integration, World Markets*, ed. Riordan Roett (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 112.

⁶⁷⁰ Mônica Hirst, "Mercosur's Complex Political Agenda," in *Mercosur: Regional Integration, World Markets*, ed. Riordan Roett (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 40.

more involved in Mexican affairs and faced the domestic consequences of such involvement, a “leadership vacuum” was created in South America which “was quickly filled by Brazil reaching out to other South American countries so as to establish SAFTA to accumulate negotiating power” in order to deal with the United States. A clear illustration of this change in mood that facilitated Brazilian strategy is the fact that Chile was aligned with Mercosur at the negotiating table in Santiago.⁶⁷¹

Consequently, at the Santiago Summit in 1998, the scenario was much more favorable to Brazil in comparison to Miami in 1994, as Brazil had achieved its key objective of negotiating the FTAA not in a country-by-country basis but “between a South American bloc, led by Brazil, and a North American bloc, led by the United States.”⁶⁷² This notion of the FTAA as following the principle of “building blocs,” that is, integration within the existent regional blocs, had been a key component of the Brazilian strategy, which was clearly much more focused on first securing its position in South America before reaching any agreement that included the United States. Hence, as the negotiations were formally launched in Santiago, what initially seemed as a process of hemispheric integration centered on NAFTA increasingly became a process of hemispheric integration with two poles of attraction, one in North America and the other in South America. In a matter of just four years, “the roles of US and Brazil in the FTAA negotiations had been reversed.”⁶⁷³ According to one US analyst at the time, “[t]he balance of hemispheric power shifted at the Santiago summit” as “the United States had lost the initiative in the FTAA negotiations” and had “become a mere bystander in a

⁶⁷¹ Carranza, *South American Free Trade Area or Free Trade Area of the Americas? : Open Regionalism and the Future of Regional Economic Integration in South America*: 106.

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*, 127.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*, 131.

hemispheric process of trade liberalization in which Brazil now is setting the pace and direction of negotiations."⁶⁷⁴

Another financial crisis would soon have an impact on the negotiations of hemispheric integration in the Americas. Similarly to what had happened to Mexico after the Miami Summit, a few months after the Santiago Summit, Brazil would also be forced to abruptly devalue its currency at the beginning of 1999. Argentina, which at the time had a currency regime fixed by law to the value of the US dollar, soon suffered the consequences of the Brazilian devaluation and, after a brutal economic, political, and social crisis, was also eventually forced to abandon its fixed exchange rate in January 2002. Therefore, between 1999 and 2001 while Brazil had a flexible exchange rate, Argentina stuck to a fixed exchange rate, which created significant macroeconomic imbalances between the two major Mercosur members. These events had dreadful economic effects on Mercosur and created "a series of noisy trade disputes" between Brazil and Argentina, with Argentina resorting to a number of protectionist measures incompatible with Mercosur rules in order to compensate for the disparities in the exchange rates between the two countries, which had made Argentinean exports to Brazil less competitive.⁶⁷⁵ Intra-Mercosur exports, which had quadrupled between 1994 and 1998, from around six to twenty billion dollars, dropped to ten billion dollars in 2002.⁶⁷⁶ Thus, while Mercosur was seen as a great success by the time of the Santiago Summit in 1998, at the next gathering of the heads of state and government of the Americas, which was held in Quebec, Canada, in 2001, the South American bloc had effectively lost much

⁶⁷⁴ John Sweeney, "Clinton's Latin America Policy: A Legacy of Missed Opportunities," *The Heritage Foundation*, July 6, 1998 <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/1998/07/clintons-latin-america-policy> (accessed February 8, 2011).

⁶⁷⁵ Larry Rohter, "South American Trade Bloc Under Siege," *New York Times*, March 24, 2001.

⁶⁷⁶ Interamerican Development Bank, "Dataintal - Comercio Bilateral."

of its economic rationale and faced its darkest period, with many analysts proclaiming its imminent demise.⁶⁷⁷ However, while the 1999-2001 crises underlined the economic limitations of Mercosur, the eventual survival of the bloc and the subsequent events underscored the importance of its political dimension, particularly to Brazil.

But before examining the factors behind the survival of Mercosur even after it seemed to have collapsed, it is crucial to investigate how the Argentinean crisis made evident pressures at the regional subsystemic level. Similarly to the Mexican crisis, which brought Mexico and the United States closer together and at the same time decreased US eagerness for hemispheric integration, the Argentinean crisis ended up having comparable political effects in respect to the South American subsystem – as Argentina recovered from its economic crisis, it became closer to Brazil and far less enthusiastic about the FTAA. In other words, both the Mexican and the Argentine crises worked as catalysts for reinforcing patterns of relationships within their respective regional subsystems, thus demonstrating the difficulties of overcoming such patterns based on regular interactions and geography and, consequently, in bringing about subsystemic change. This assessment becomes even more apparent when one considers that both Mexico and Argentina had similar foreign policy trajectories in their relations with the United States – from a generally cool and sometimes confrontational policy during most of their history, to an abrupt shift in the late eighties and early nineties as both sought to develop a closest-as-possible policy. While this shift may be explained both by domestic

⁶⁷⁷ See, for example: *Stratfor*, "Members' Policies Spell Mercosur's Demise," October 10, 2001 http://www.stratfor.com/memberships/3653/analysis/members_policies_spell_mercosurs_demise (accessed February 9, 2011); Mario E. Carranza, "Can Mercosur Survive? Domestic and International Constraints on Mercosur," *Latin American Politics and Society* 45, no. 2 (2003); Heinz G. Preusse, "The Future of Mercosur," in *Free trade in the Americas: Economic and Political Issues for Governments and Firms*, ed. Sidney Weintraub, Alan M. Rugman, and Gavin Boyd (Cheltenham, UK ; Northampton, Mass.: Edward Elgar, 2004).

factors as well as a response to the changes in the international system, the regional subsystemic approach can help explain the differences in outcome of these two similar policies. Examining the distinct interactions that followed the Argentinean economic crisis in contrast to the Mexican economic crisis a few years earlier uncovers how subsystemic dynamics were at play.

At least two factors can be pointed out to explain why the Argentinean crisis had the effect of bringing Brazil and Argentina closer together instead of further apart, as seemed to be the trend during the several trade disputes between Argentina and Brazil after 1999. One factor was that the economic crisis led Argentinean policy makers to the realization that the policy of “carnal relations” with the United States announced in the early nineties seemed to have produced few tangible results. In contrast to its behavior during the Mexican crisis a few years earlier, when the United States quickly acted to bail out its southern neighbor, Argentina was treated with “indifference and lack of assistance” by Washington.⁶⁷⁸ This evident dissimilarity in US attitudes accelerated a process of reorientation in Argentina’s foreign policy towards a gradual distancing from Washington, which had in fact been taking place since 1997, by the end of the Menem administration.⁶⁷⁹ With the short-lived era of automatic alignment with the United States over, Brazil emerged as the “principal beneficiary” of US unresponsiveness to Argentina’s economic debacle, as Argentina openly refocused its foreign policy in improving relations with its most important neighbor.⁶⁸⁰ Realizing an opportunity to reinforce its position in South America, Brazil, “in stark contrast to the perceived callous

⁶⁷⁸ Larry Rohter, "Argentina and the U.S. Grow Apart Over a Crisis," *New York Times*, January 20, 2002.

⁶⁷⁹ Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, "Politica exterior argentina de Menem a de la Rúa: la diplomacia del ajuste," *Escenarios Alternativos* 4, no. 9 (2000).

⁶⁸⁰ Rohter, "Argentina and the U.S. Grow Apart Over a Crisis."

indifference of the United States to Argentina's plight," took a series of unilateral measures beginning in 2002 in order to facilitate Argentinean exports.⁶⁸¹ In addition, all the Mercosur countries, including the associated members Chile and Bolivia, convened an extraordinary meeting in Buenos Aires to offer their support and request financial assistance to Argentina from international institutions. Therefore, as Mario Carranza asserts, in spite of the negative effects of the Argentinean crisis on Mercosur, it "had a positive political impact" since the "absence of US leadership to deal with the crisis strengthened political solidarity among the Mercosur partners."⁶⁸²

The second factor accounting for why the Argentinean crisis ultimately had the effect of bringing Argentina closer to Brazil while it simultaneously became far less enthusiastic about the need for a FTAA is, in a sense, intimately related to the first: the fact that the extension and depth of the crisis that hit Argentina led to a "significant reassessment of the country's power position in the regional, hemispheric and multilateral systems." The immediate effect of this "downward revision of Argentina's power potential" was that it increased the "incentives for bandwagoning with its stronger neighbour in order to increase its leverage in external negotiations."⁶⁸³ In other words, the Argentinean crisis had such a psychological impact on policy makers and civil society alike as to remove Argentinean pretensions of joining the developed North - as symbolized by its inconsequential granting as a "major non-NATO ally" during the early nineties - and to "South-Americanize" Argentinean foreign policy. This reorientation

⁶⁸¹ Thomas Andrew O'Keefe, *Latin American and Caribbean Trade Agreements : Keys to a Prosperous Community of the Americas* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009), 96-97.

⁶⁸² Mario E. Carranza, "Mercosur and the End Game of the FTAA Negotiations: Challenges and Prospects after the Argentine Crisis," *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (2004): 326.

⁶⁸³ Laura Gomez Mera, "Explaining Mercosur's Survival: Strategic Sources of Argentine-Brazilian Convergence," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 37, no. 1 (2005): 134.

meant that Argentina's foreign policy had become closer to Brazil's, which had been constantly seeking to establish a united South American front to negotiate the FTAA.

The above discussion helps to understand Mercosur's endurance in spite of its near collapse. The basic reason seems to be the fact that Mercosur "has always been about more than free trade," with important political and also military dimensions.⁶⁸⁴ While Argentina, as well as Paraguay and Uruguay, initially saw the commercial aspects of Mercosur as the major factor for joining the regional trading bloc, for Brazil, whose economic benefits from Mercosur are less significant, the main motivation "would appear to be its ambition to be a regional power."⁶⁸⁵ Successive Brazilian administrations have consistently valued Mercosur not merely for its potential economic benefits, but as a "potent symbol of Brazil's ambition to be a leader of South American unity."⁶⁸⁶ Before the Quebec meeting in 2001, at the height of the crisis between Brazil and Argentina, President Cardoso set the tone of Brazil's position declaring that "Mercosur is a destiny for us, while the FTAA is an option."⁶⁸⁷ Without accounting for the strategic considerations behind Brazilian support for Mercosur, in terms of the consolidation of a sphere of influence in South America, it becomes definitely problematic to explain its resilience. In fact, the survival of Mercosur after bitter trade disputes between Brazil and Argentina following their financial crises can only be understood in the context of the political approximation that they contributed to bring about, even as it accelerated the shift in Argentinean foreign policy away from Washington and closer to Brasilia. In other

⁶⁸⁴ Carranza, "Mercosur and the End Game of the FTAA Negotiations: Challenges and Prospects after the Argentine Crisis," 325-26.

⁶⁸⁵ Sidney Weintraub, *Development and Democracy in the Southern Cone: Imperatives for U.S. Policy in South America*, Significant Issues Series v. 22, no. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2000), 28.

⁶⁸⁶ Stephen Handelman, "Special Report: Summit of the Americas," *Time*, April 19, 2001.

⁶⁸⁷ Rohter, "South American Trade Bloc Under Siege."

words, Mercosur's survival "reflected a convergence of foreign policy or 'strategic' incentives between the governments of Argentina and Brazil" that had been initiated in the late nineties.⁶⁸⁸ Also important is the fact that after both countries were forced to adopt a fluctuating exchange rate, this "strategic convergence" was followed by a gradual macroeconomic convergence, which removed much of the rationale behind their trade disputes. Indeed, intra-Mercosur exports grew every single year after hitting the bottom in 2002, from ten billion dollars to a record forty-one billion dollars in 2008.⁶⁸⁹

In regional subsystemic terms, the resilience of Mercosur is explained because it is not an artificial arrangement with no basis on actual interactions but an institutional translation of a regional subsystemic reality – the same way that NAFTA is.⁶⁹⁰ A putative FTAA, on the other hand, would have to either reflect or create new patterns of relationships in order to overcome subsystemic pressures and be an effective and enduring institution. Because the FTAA did not reflect actual patterns of interactions between the North and South American regional subsystems, it would have probably required a combination of specific political circumstances in order to bear the necessary costs to make it happen. Another possibility was that an unexpected disturbance in the regional subsystems in the hemisphere – such as a financial crisis in a key regional state – could set in motion potentially self-reinforcing subsystemic dynamics, making it even more difficult or costly to create new patterns of relationship necessary for the establishment of an enduring hemispheric arrangement.

⁶⁸⁸ Mera, "Explaining Mercosur's Survival: Strategic Sources of Argentine-Brazilian Convergence," 129.

⁶⁸⁹ Interamerican Development Bank, "Dataintal - Comercio Bilateral."

⁶⁹⁰ As Jeffrey Schott remarks: "When US-Mexico free trade talks were first broached in 1990, few realized how closely integrated the two economies already were, or how closely US interests coincided with the promotion of economic growth and political stability in the region." Schott, *Prospects for Free Trade in the Americas*: 93-94.

BRAZIL AS THE LEADER OF A SOUTH AMERICAN BLOC

Therefore, during the course of their interactions following the goals enunciated at the Miami Summit in 1994, it became clear that neither US power nor the enthusiasm with which the FTAA proposal was initially received in Latin America would necessarily translate into a comprehensive hemispheric integration scheme centered on the United States. The difficulties in obtaining fast track authority and the discrepancies in behavior between the Mexican and Argentinean crises seemed to signal that the United States was either unwilling or unable to bear the costs of subsystemic change through the establishment of fundamentally new patterns of interactions. On the other hand, contrary to its past strategies aimed at preventing the United States to undertake such change and preserving the stability of the South American subsystem - when Brazil raised the benefits of subsystemic stability for the United States - now the Brazilian strategy was basically one of increasing the costs of subsystemic change through the consolidation of a South American bloc centered on Mercosur.

By the time of the Third Summit of the Americas in April of 2001 in Quebec, in spite of the apparent collapse of Mercosur at the time, the Brazilian strategy, in great part because of the context explained above, was reasonably secured. As a new administration was inaugurated in the United States that openly proclaimed its commitment to free trade and to the establishment of the FTAA, the process of consolidation of a South American space had already been set in motion.⁶⁹¹ As the preparations for the Quebec meeting began in 2000, Brazil launched a historic initiative: it brought all of South America's

⁶⁹¹ Indeed, the George W. Bush administration came to Quebec willing to move up the deadline for the FTAA to 2003 from 2005: Handelman, "Special Report: Summit of the Americas."

leaders together for the first time to a conference in Brasilia in order to discuss a variety of issues pertaining to that regional subsystem. The significance of this event was that it was the first exclusive meeting of all South American presidents. The Mexican President, like every other Latin American leader outside South America, was not invited for the summit and declared that he “would like to have been invited,” adding that “our geographical situation in North America in any way impedes us from having an intense relationship with Latin America.”⁶⁹² This was not to be another “Latin American” meeting, but explicitly a South American one. It was a concrete symbol of the realization that South America was in fact a distinct regional subsystem, one in which Brazil played a central role. As Sean Burges commented, the 2000 meeting was “the first exclusive gathering of South American presidents, giving symbolic gravitas to South America as a viable geopolitical entity” and its outcome suggested “an implicit acceptance of the consensual leadership role that Brazil had been accruing over the previous six years.”⁶⁹³

For Burges, who places particular emphasis on the abovementioned concept of “consensual leadership,” this kind of leadership is based not on “coercion or imposition” but on “coordination, consultation, and discussion.”⁶⁹⁴ Since it requires fewer resources than relying on coercion, it is particularly fitted for a country that occupies a key position in its region but at the same time has limited power resources, as is the case of Brazil. The concept alluded to by Burges is based on the notion of “co-operative hegemony” developed by Thomas Pedersen. In contrast to the hegemonic stability theory, which

⁶⁹² *Veja*, “O Brasil diz não,” September 6, 2000, 49.

⁶⁹³ Sean W. Burges, *Brazilian Foreign Policy after the Cold War* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009), 59.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

focuses only on powerful states,⁶⁹⁵ the co-operative hegemony approach “centres around the proposition that major states which are militarily weak or weakened may seek to maximise or stabilise their influence through non coercive means by pursuing a strategy of co-operative hegemony within a multilateral structure.”⁶⁹⁶ Thus, Pedersen’s theory of co-operative hegemony seeks to explain the formative processes of regional institutionalization based on the long term strategies of major regional powers, while at the same time it highlights the importance of geopolitical and security elements, rather than economic factors, leading to regional institutionalization. A key element of the grand strategy of co-operative hegemony is what Pedersen denominates “power aggregation capacity,” which “refers to the capacity of a regional big power to make a number of neighbouring states rally around its political project.” The author adds that even though “this capacity is constrained by external structural factors at the regional and global level, it also depends upon psychological factors and leadership skills.”⁶⁹⁷ Pedersen’s co-operative hegemony approach provides a particularly appropriate framework to understand the role of Brazil during the FTAA negotiations, which became especially evident after the year 2000.

By bringing together all twelve presidents of South America to Brasilia, the Brazilian government officially signaled its attempt to rally the South American states around Brazil’s political project of organizing a South American space as a means of inserting the region in the post-Cold War international system. President Cardoso described the 2000 summit as a “moment of reaffirmation of South America’s identity as

⁶⁹⁵ For the hegemonic stability theory see Keohane, *After Hegemony : Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*; Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*.

⁶⁹⁶ Thomas Pedersen, "Cooperative Hegemony: Power, Ideas and Institutions in Regional Integration," *Review of International Studies* 28, no. 4 (2002): 696.

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 689.

a region” adding that a “free trade agreement between Mercosur and the Andean Community will be the dorsal spine of South America as an extended economic space.” Therefore, he concluded, “it should be seen as a political objective of immediate concern.”⁶⁹⁸ These statements make plainly clear the goal as well as the means to accomplish it. The immediate goal was the construction of South America as a distinct economic and political space. In order to achieve it, it was necessary to act in two dimensions – at the ideational level, it was essential to affirm a South American identity, while at the practical level it was necessary to merge Mercosur and the Andean Community, which was the second major trading bloc in South America and at the time included Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela. This Brazilian proposal - which was clearly an upshot of the original scheme of a South American Free Trade Area unveiled almost a decade before - is especially significant if considered within the context of the acute crisis that Mercosur was going through at the time, as pointed out above.

The principle behind this policy was consistently supported by the administrations that preceded Cardoso as well as by the administrations that have succeeded him. In fact, the administration of Lula da Silva, which was inaugurated in 2003, saw the integration of South America as a top foreign policy priority⁶⁹⁹ and in 2004, during the third meeting of South American presidents in Peru, Mercosur and the Andean Community formalized a cooperation agreement thus creating the “South America Community of Nations,” which later became the “Union of South American Nations,” or Unasur. In May 2008, the Unasur countries met in Brasilia to sign its constitutive treaty, establishing its juridical

⁶⁹⁸ Fernando Henrique Cardoso, "O Brasil e uma nova América do Sul," *Valor Economico*, August 30, 2000.

⁶⁹⁹ Bandeira, *As relações perigosas : Brasil-Estados Unidos (de Collor a Lula, 1990-2004)*: 289.

and political components and including the Brazilian proposal of a South American Defense Council. The Brazilian Defense Minister, when asked on a visit to Washington how the United States could help, said that the best way the United States could collaborate would be to “watch from the outside and keep its distance.”⁷⁰⁰ Colombia, which has had strong military ties with the United States and was then in the middle of an acute diplomatic crisis with Venezuela and Ecuador, was the only country not to sign the pact that created the Defense Council. However, after intense negotiations led by Brazil and a growing fear of political isolation in the region, Colombia decided to join the Council a couple of months later.⁷⁰¹ In 2009, the South American Defense Council held its first meeting in Santiago, Chile, and was attended by all Defense Ministers of the region. The main significance of this body is that it excludes the United States and overlaps with functions that were previously performed by hemispheric bodies such as the Organization of American States (OAS). In particular, it represents a challenge to the security counterpart of the FTAA launched at the 1994 Miami Summit: the Defense Ministerial of the Americas, which assembled for the first time in 1995, in Williamsburg, Virginia and have met roughly every two years since then in different countries.⁷⁰²

By explicitly articulating the concept of a South America as a distinct regional subsystem, successive Brazilian administrations after the end of the Cold War were basically recuperating a recurrent theme of Brazil’s foreign policy that, as indicated in chapter 5, was present since the early days of independence: the notion that in contrast to

⁷⁰⁰ Eliane Catanhede, “EUA ajudam quando ficam longe, diz Jobim,” *Folha de Sao Paulo*, March 22, 2008.

⁷⁰¹ Claudia Jardim, “Colômbia adere a Conselho de Defesa Sul-americano,” *BBC Brasil*, July 19, 2008 http://www.bbc.co.uk/portuguese/reporterbbc/story/2008/07/080719_lulauribeconselho_cj_cg.shtml (accessed February 13, 2011).

⁷⁰² After Williamsburg, the Defense Ministerial of the Americas met in Bariloche, Argentina (1996); Cartagena, Colombia (1998); Manaus, Brazil (2000); Santiago, Chile (2002); Quito, Ecuador (2004); Managua, Nicaragua (2006); Banff, Canada (2008); and Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia (2010). Uruguay will host the tenth meeting, in 2012.

rest of Latin America, where Brazil would seek not to get involved and would - sometimes tacitly, sometimes explicitly - recognize US preeminence, South America was understood by Brazilian policy makers as being a Brazilian sphere of influence where US interference should be kept at arm's length since it could easily overtake Brazil as the predominant player in the region. The meeting of South American Presidents in 2000 made explicit the concept of South America once again as a key component of Brazilian diplomacy, a reality that turned out to be even more salient during the Lula da Silva administration.⁷⁰³ One noteworthy change that was marked by the 2000 meeting was that, while initially the Brazilian view of South America had been mostly restricted to the Southern Cone, now it unequivocally incorporated the northern tier countries of South America, including Guiana and Suriname.⁷⁰⁴ This reflected a process that had begun since at least the late seventies, and had become apparent by the Brazilian behavior during the case of Suriname in the eighties recounted in the previous chapter. The agreements between Mercosur and the Andean Community and the successive meetings of South American presidents that led to the creation of a Union of South America Nations are thus the institutional translation of these earlier interactions.

Consequently, by the time the Bush administration finally got fast track authority from Congress in 2002, the Brazilian strategy was already clearly underway. Between 1994 and 2002, the years that US administrations had no fast track and therefore could not provide clear leadership to the FTAA process, Brazil had achieved its goal of forging a South American bloc by using Mercosur as an alternative hub to NAFTA with reasonable success, and was also in the process of bringing Argentina closer to the

⁷⁰³ Luís Cláudio Villafañe G. Santos, "A América do Sul no discurso diplomático brasileiro," *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 48, no. 2 (2005).

⁷⁰⁴ Cardoso, "O Brasil e uma nova América do Sul."

Brazilian camp. With this basic framework in place, Brazil could shift the focus away from the US lack of fast track and concentrate on more substantive issues such as agriculture liberalization, particularly regarding non-tariff barriers, which had been a focal point of disagreement between the United States and Brazil throughout the negotiations. Again, the United States helped the Brazilian case by providing the necessary ammunition when the US Congress passed a one-hundred-billion-dollar farm bill that significantly increased agricultural subsidies in the same year that President Bush got fast track authority, in 2002.⁷⁰⁵ The passing of the 2002 farm bill signaled the US unwillingness to liberalize a sector that was central to Brazilian interests in the FTAA and allowed President Cardoso to frame the United States, and not Brazil, as the real problem for the establishment of hemispheric free trade.⁷⁰⁶ In addition, the Bush administration after September 2001 was primarily focused on the Middle East, which dominated the US domestic political debate at the time.

Within this context, the results of a ministerial meeting in Miami in 2003, at the final phase of the FTAA negotiations, was considered a Brazilian victory – the final outcome of Miami was termed as a “FTAA à la carte” or a “FTAA-light,” that is, a non-comprehensive FTAA with different levels of commitment.⁷⁰⁷ The Ministerial Declaration of Miami stated that the “Ministers recognize that countries may assume different levels of commitments” and that the “negotiations should allow for countries that so choose, within the FTAA, to agree to additional obligations and benefits.”⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰⁵ Elizabeth Becker, "Accord Reached on a Bill Raising Farm Subsidies," *New York Times*, April 27, 2002.

⁷⁰⁶ Rompay, "Brazil's Strategy towards the FTAA," 128.

⁷⁰⁷ Simon Romero, "Hemisphere Trade Talks in Miami Are Reported to Hit a Bump," *New York Times*, November 17, 2003.

⁷⁰⁸ Ministerial Declaration: Free Trade Area of the Americas. Miami., "F.T.A.A. Eighth Ministerial Meeting," November 20, 2003. http://www.ftaa-alca.org/ministerials/miami/Miami_e.asp (accessed February 10, 2011).

These statements meant that the notion that the FTAA should be negotiated as a comprehensive “single undertaking,” which was a basic principle until then, had come to an end. Each country was free to negotiate which areas to put in a FTAA agreement and with the interests of the United States and Brazil “very much at opposite ends of the spectrum,” (since the first was interested mainly on liberalization on services and investments and the latter on the agricultural sector) they did not have any incentives to compromise.⁷⁰⁹ It was the beginning of the end of the FTAA.

As the American heads of state convened for the Fourth Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in 2005, the long process of FTAA agony that had become evident by the Miami Ministerial Declaration two years earlier came to an end. Since 2005 marked the original deadline for a final agreement on the FTAA and no agreement was eventually reached, the ailing FTAA was virtually buried in Mar del Plata. The 2005 summit was a perfect illustration of how Mercosur was efficiently used by Brazil as the core of its strategy to fend off the establishment of a hemispheric free trade area. Among the thirty-four participants of the summit, twenty-nine were in favor of moving forward on the FTAA negotiations.⁷¹⁰ The five dissenting nations were composed by the four full members of Mercosur plus Venezuela, which a month later was officially invited to join Mercosur as a full member. It is noteworthy that these five nations together represent about seventy-five percent of the total GDP of South America. With the possibility of a comprehensive hemispheric agreement out of the table, and with the Trade Promotion Authority in hand, the Bush administration sought to establish bilateral free trade

⁷⁰⁹ Sherry M. Stephenson, "New Trade Strategies in the Americas," in *Economic Integration in the Americas*, ed. Joseph A. McKinney and H. Stephen Gardner (London ; New York: Routledge, 2008), 29.

⁷¹⁰ *New York Times*, "Negotiators Fail to Agree on Free Trade Proposal at Americas Summit," November 6, 2005.

agreements with individual countries, including Chile, Peru, Colombia, and Ecuador, at the same time that Brazil sought to establish South America as an “extended economic space,” as President Cardoso had declared at the beginning of the decade. The biggest difference between the two strategies seems to be that while the United States relies on specific and detailed agreements with individual countries, Brazil seeks a higher degree of multilateral institutionalization through a regional framework coupled with the attempt to construct a South American identity. These two approaches seem to be “on a collision course”⁷¹¹ and point toward a situation of what Henry Kissinger had termed at the beginning of the last decade as a “tacit competition” between Brazil and the United States in South America since the end of the Cold War.⁷¹²

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The process involving the rise and fall of the FTAA negotiations is a clear illustration of Brazil’s main regional strategy of keeping the United States at arm’s length in the South American subsystem. However, while earlier periods were characterized by a general coinciding of core goals between the two biggest countries in the hemisphere - which made Brazilian strategy less apparent and often confounded with subordination to US policies - the reorganization of hemispheric relations brought about by the end of the Cold War created the conditions for a clash in views and objectives between the United States and Brazil. This made evident that the generally cooperative attitudes of earlier times were contingent on US support to Brazilian broader regional goals. As Brazil

⁷¹¹ Stephenson, “New Trade Strategies in the Americas,” 41.

⁷¹² Kissinger, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?: Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century*: 98.

perceived the United States as competing with its goal of keeping the status quo in the South American regional subsystem, Brazilian strategy adapted to this perception. Therefore, if earlier strategies were aimed at increasing the benefits of regional subsystemic stability for the United States, now Brazil sought to increase the costs of subsystemic change. This was done through intense participation in the FTAA process, even though Brazil had clearly no enthusiasm for it, while in parallel leading the formation of a South American bloc by creating political and economic incentives that in many ways competed with the FTAA goals. Whereas the United States sought to use an extended NAFTA as a continental base from which it would lead the post Cold War world, Brazil sought to build a South American platform organized around Mercosur. Because these two objectives tended to collide, both the United States and Brazil saw each other's project as a threat to their own policies from the beginning.

As it turned out, in spite of the disparities in power between the United States and Brazil, time was on the latter's side. Domestic and regional subsystemic pressures tended to favor the maintenance of the status quo, and all Brazil had to do was work to delay the conclusion of the FTAA in order to give time for these pressures to make themselves felt. Whereas the launching of the FTAA negotiations reflected the weight of US power in the hemisphere, the actual interactions among the American states following the Miami Summit in 1994 reinforced subsystemic dynamics and made power discrepancies less relevant to the outcome of the negotiations. In fact, in a matter of four years, between the Miami Summit in 1994 and the Santiago Summit in 1998, it became clear that two poles of attraction were being constituted in the hemisphere – one centered on the United States-NAFTA core and the other centered on Brazil-Mercosur. Focusing on the

international system and on power imbalances would be of little help to explain this configuration. In order to provide an effective explanation for this outcome, it is necessary to take into account the interplay between domestic and regional subsystemic dynamics.

Domestically, the difficulties of the Clinton administration in obtaining fast track authority to negotiate the FTAA made it clear that the United States was not willing to pay the costs of regional subsystemic change. This lack of effective leadership was a key element in enabling Brazil to push its agenda in South America more successfully. The case of Chile, which had gone from considering NAFTA membership to embracing Mercosur, provides a clear illustration of this claim. In regional subsystemic terms, the outbreak of the economic crises first in Mexico and later in Argentina acted as catalysts that helped to set in motion regional subsystemic dynamics by bringing closer together the two major actors of each regional subsystem – the United States and Mexico in North America, and Brazil and Argentina in South America. While the outcome of the Mexican crisis made it clear that NAFTA had definitively North-Americanized Mexico, the Argentinean crisis contributed to the South-Americanization of Argentina's foreign policy. Both of these processes reinforced interactions at the regional level making even more difficult the establishment of new patterns of interactions necessary for the reconfiguration of the regional subsystems in the hemisphere.

These interactions favored the *Brazilian strategy of consolidating a South American bloc around the Mercosur core*, and when the United States eventually overcame some of its domestic obstacles as the US Congress granted fast track authority (then renamed Trade Promotion Authority) to the Bush administration in 2002, the

original FTAA goals of a genuine hemispheric integration had lost much of its impulse. As a result, even with fast track authority in hands, the Bush administration was not able to conclude the FTAA by the original 2005 target date. The immediate consequence of the FTAA debacle was that the United States resorted to the establishment of bilateral trade agreements with individual countries in South America, while Brazil hoped to accelerate the process of institutionalization of the South American space, thus incorporating issues going beyond trade, such as security.

In contrast to the US strategy, which relies mostly on specific trade agreements and therefore is much more restricted, Brazil seems to pursue a strategy of co-operative hegemony in which it attempts, within a multilateral structure and by stressing a common identity, to make all South American states rally around the political project of establishing South America as a distinct region within the hemisphere, thus increasing the costs of a more significant US involvement in that subsystem. The Brazilian strategy of leading a South American bloc seems to have been working so far, as indicated by a recent public opinion poll taken on eighteen Latin American countries which shows Brazil as being perceived as the country with greatest leadership in the region by 19% of the population in Latin America followed by the United States with 9%.⁷¹³ It is interesting to notice that the same report shows that 67% of the Latin American population sees the United States as a positive influence, contrasted to Brazil's 61%, which seems to indicate that US numbers are not related to an anti-US feeling. Since Brazilian leadership perception decreases as one moves from Argentina to Mexico, when considering only the nine South American countries in the sample (excluding Brazil), Brazil's average goes up to around 27%, with half of the Argentinean population

⁷¹³ Latinobarómetro, "Anual Report 2010," (Santiago: Latinobarómetro Corporation, 2010), 111.

indicating Brazil as the regional leader.⁷¹⁴ These numbers seem to indicate that Brazilian strategy of co-operative hegemony has achieved a considerable degree of success, which at the same time seems to depend to a great extent on keeping the United States as a relative absent empire in the South American regional subsystem.

⁷¹⁴ In decreasing order of Brazil's leadership perception: Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela, and Ecuador.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation aimed to fundamentally address two broad sets of questions. First, it sought to challenge the notion that the concept of Latin America should take preeminence over other possible regional subdivisions within the field of international relations. For that reason, the first set of questions asks if there is such a thing as South America and, if so, what makes it distinctive from the rest of Latin America. The second set of questions builds upon the first and asks if, from the perspective of international relations, the fact that there is indeed a South American regional subsystem matters. In a nutshell, it was argued that geography and patterns of interactions justify the existence of a North and a South American regional subsystem in the Western Hemisphere, and that this is important so that one may understand the distinct interactions that characterize US relations with each of these subsystems.

In order to answer these two sets of question, this research developed a methodology that was based on the literature on regional subsystems. Hence, chapter 2 offered a review of this literature, in order to organize and locate it within the broader literature dealing with the issue of regions. A major concern of this chapter was to present the literature on regional subsystems as a distinct theoretical body, particularly in relation to the literature on regionalism. In examining the work produced on the subject, chapter 2 laid out a conceptualization of regional subsystems that was both regional and systemic. Thus, a regional subsystem was defined as a *subset of the international system reflecting*

the outcome of actual patterns of interactions – including the whole spectrum between conflict and cooperation - among countries in condition of geographic proximity. By focusing on geography and patterns of interaction as necessary and sufficient conditions for the establishment of a regional subsystem, other variables, such as culture or level of development, were deemed as irrelevant. Subsequently, chapter 3 sought to use the insights of the previous chapter to understand the specific theoretical contributions of the regional subsystemic approach to the study of international relations. It was argued that the regional subsystem should be understood as a third level of analysis between the domestic and the international system, therefore adding an extra level to the international relations game. Because of the emphasis on patterns of interaction, it was demonstrated that a constructivist perspective provides the most adequate fit for the study of regional subsystems, which should take into consideration not only the spatial dimension (to reflect geography) but also the time dimension (to reflect patterns of interaction). While geography is hardly changeable, patterns of interaction are not and therefore this is where the roots of subsystemic change should be found.

The theoretical framework developed in these two chapters, prepared the ground for chapter 4 to finally answer the central questions asked by this research. This chapter demonstrated that, if geography and patterns of interactions are considered as necessary and sufficient conditions for the determination of a regional subsystem, it logically follows that dividing the Western Hemisphere between a North American (including Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean) and a South American regional subsystem makes more sense from the point of view of the study of international relations than dividing it between Latin America (including the Caribbean) and United States/Canada.

While the first subdivision follows the regional subsystemic criteria laid out by this dissertation, the second is based on variables that have little utility for the purposes of this research. Nevertheless, it is the latter categorization that has been most widely used by scholars of international relations.

As this research argued, the concept of Latin America is clearly not a geographic one, even though it has been used as such. Indeed, making the case for a Latin American regional subsystem based only on geography is far more complicated than making the case for a South and a North American regional subsystem. On the other hand, chapter 4 sought to offer the rudiments of a possible way to operationalize patterns of interactions based on the variables war/armed conflicts, trade, and international organizations. It was suggested that North and South American countries fight more within their own respective subsystems, trade more within their own subsystems, and create more enduring and relevant international organizations within their own subsystems. Hence, a central preoccupation of the present dissertation was to demonstrate that subdividing the Western Hemisphere between a North and a South American regional subsystem can provide relevant insights and uncover a number of important interactions that are neglected both by using the international-domestic dichotomy as well as by employing the concept of Latin America to explain the international relations of the Americas. In summary, that is why it does matter that there is a South American regional subsystem.

Chapter 4 suggests that a key interaction that a regional subsystemic perspective for the study of South America helps to uncover is the relationship between that regional subsystem and the United States. While a number of students of Latin America have acknowledged that “the United States has treated South America somewhat differently

than it has Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean,” this differentiation has not been sufficiently theorized and explained.⁷¹⁵ Basically, those who dedicated some time to explain this differentiation have been content to point to two main variables: distance and stability, which combined would make South America strategically irrelevant for the United States. Although these variables can provide compelling explanations for the relative absence of the United States in South America vis-à-vis the rest of Latin America, the best they can do is perhaps explain a supposed lack of interest, or neglect, toward South America vis-à-vis Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. However, they have several shortcomings. First, they do little to satisfactorily explain why South American states would be more “stable” than other Latin American states. Moreover, these variables become less relevant in instances when the United States demonstrated a clear interest in South American affairs, and yet the outcome was the same relative absence. Finally, they tend to be a pretext to transform this US relative absence from South America in the studies of US foreign policy.

The alternative explanation offered by this dissertation to account for the distinct interactions that have characterized the relations between the United States and South America in contrast to the rest of Latin America is based on the role of Brazil within the South American regional subsystem. Hence, in making the case for a subsystemic approach to the study of South America, this dissertation also makes the case for emphasizing the role of Brazil in that subsystem. It follows that a central argument of this research is that Brazil is a status quo power that has affected the calculations of costs and benefits of subsystemic change in South America for the United States. In other words,

⁷¹⁵ Samuel L. Baily, *The United States and the Development of South America, 1945-1975* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1976), viii.

this dissertation maintains that without understanding the role of Brazil in the South American subsystem, any explanation for US relative absence from South America is incomplete at best. Under this perspective, South America's allegedly strategic irrelevance would not provide a sufficient explanation for this phenomenon; instead, it may have worked in favor of Brazil in the sense that it gave more room for the South American country to pursue its regional objectives by spending fewer resources than would have been the case had South America been considered a region of high strategic value.

In order to assess the validity of the hypotheses that Brazil has affected the calculations of US statesmen when interacting with the South American regional subsystem, chapters 5, 6, and 7 explore case studies demonstrating instances when a clear interest in South America was demonstrated – thus the argument of neglect could be discarded – and yet the outcome was consistently the same: an absence of imperial policies of the kind that often characterized US policies towards the rest of Latin America. Chapter 5 deals with the early interactions between the United States and the newly independent Latin American countries in order to demonstrate that there has been a clear differentiation, both in actions and discourse, between South America and the rest of the region since the beginning of their interactions. This differentiation is hardly acknowledged by the literature, which interprets the Monroe Doctrine as an all encompassing policy that was applied homogeneously to the whole of Latin America. Nevertheless, an examination that goes beyond the 1823 declaration and investigates how the Monroe Doctrine was actually applied throughout history as well as the interpretation given to it by subsequent administrations makes clear the scope and extent of that policy.

This examination is what chapter 5 attempted to accomplish. It sought to demonstrate that successive US administrations made progressively clear the Caribbean character of the doctrine. Distance from the United States and relative stability of core South American countries are just part of the explanation in the sense that these factors made possible the early development of a system of power politics in South America around the ABC countries: Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. It is noteworthy that the two administrations that were the most interventionist in Latin America – Theodore Roosevelt’s and Woodrow Wilson’s – were also the two administrations that most clearly made a distinction between the North and South American regional subsystems. This view was utterly reciprocated by Brazil, which pursued an “unwritten alliance” with the United States, meaning “a tacit accord whereby Brazil acknowledged the hegemony of the United States in North America and the United States respected Brazilian pretensions to the hegemony of South America.”⁷¹⁶ This arrangement became even more relevant by the beginning of the twentieth century, when Chile declined in power and Argentina developed a foreign policy with a clear anti-United States component. Brazil’s willingness to be the defender of the status quo in South America allowed the United States to concentrate its actions in the circum-Caribbean area, and there was no compelling reason for the United States to change this state of affairs. In other words, Brazil played a role in South America that increased the benefits of subsystemic stability for the United States.

The examination of these early developments of the South American subsystem and its interaction with the United States helped to put in context the case studied in chapter 6. The overthrow of the Salvador Allende government in Chile is an especially

⁷¹⁶ Burns, *The Unwritten Alliance: Rio-Branco and Brazilian-American Relations*: 207.

relevant case for at least two reasons. First, it is a clear instance when both a Democrat and a Republican administration in the United States demonstrated a strong interest in employing imperial policies in South America, such as the ones previously implemented elsewhere in Latin America during the Cold War, like in Guatemala or in the Dominican Republic. This was because the Cold War environment increased the incentives for the United States, now a true global power, to intervene in several regions of the world in order to contain the spread of communism. This was particularly true, even if for symbolic reasons, in Latin America, which was considered the US most immediate sphere of influence, where its power should be uncontested. The second reason that makes the case of Chile particularly important is the fact that this has been widely mentioned as an example of a homogeneous imperial Latin American policy on the part of the United States. Because there is an abundance of evidence of US involvement in Chile, the usual interpretation is that this equals an evidence of abundance. On the other hand, there is much less evidence of involvement from third countries in the Chilean case, such as the Soviet Union and Brazil, and this lack of evidence seems to be interpreted as an evidence of lack. The result is that when it comes to the assessment of foreign influences leading to the military coup that eventually overthrew Allende, there is a virtual monologue when in fact there may have been more voices present.

Therefore, congruent with this research's central argument, chapter 6 intended to emphasize the role played by Brazil during this process. By using both primary and secondary sources, the chapter sought to put the specific case of Chile into context by demonstrating Brazil military government's willingness to take action in order to prevent South American countries from tilting towards communism. In other words, chapter 6

suggests that Brazil played a role in Chile that allowed the United States to limit its involvement to that of a great power, instead of having to resort to truly imperial solutions which would have involved taking decisive actions to topple Allende. Brazil's role in the Chilean case was far from being an isolated one during the Cold War, as demonstrated by the cases of Bolivia and Uruguay before that, and by the case of Suriname afterwards.

Although covering different periods of time with different configurations of the international system, the cases studied on chapters five and six had one characteristic in common – they displayed a relative congruence in terms of foreign policy objectives between the United States and Brazil in regards to the South American subsystem as both sought the maintenance of the status quo there. This was not the case after the end of the Cold War, when the United States proposed a free trade area in the hemisphere that could potentially lead to the development of new patterns of interactions and, therefore, to subsystemic change by incorporating the South American subsystem into a truly hemispheric subsystem centered on the United States. Because this was perceived as a challenge to the status quo in South America, Brazil sought to increase the costs of subsystemic change for the United States. It did so by actively participating in the FTAA process while at the same time working to create a web of South American institutions in order to consolidate its position in that regional subsystem. Brazilian strategy was greatly facilitated by domestic issues in the United States that were translated into a lack of effective leadership to move forward with the FTAA. Additionally, economic crises in Mexico and Argentina acted as catalysts that reinforced regional subsystemic dynamics and brought closer together the pairs of countries that are the most relevant for each of

the regional subsystems in the hemisphere. By the end the first decade of the twenty-first century, it was more evident than ever the distinction between a North and a South American regional subsystem in the Western Hemisphere.

FINAL THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research attempted to offer an alternative framework for the study of inter-American relations in particular, and of international relations in general, based on the regional subsystemic approach. This approach was presented as a third level of analysis between - and distinct from - the customary two employed in the field of international relations. The cases studied in this dissertation sought to apply this regional subsystemic framework to the specific case of South America by emphasizing the interactions between the two most important members of each regional subsystem in the Western Hemisphere: the United States in North America and Brazil in South America. The focus was on how US foreign policies initiatives interacted with the South American subsystem to bring about outcomes that differed from the ones often produced elsewhere in Latin America. It has been argued that, within this regional subsystemic framework, the role of Brazil in the South American subsystem is the key to understanding the outcome of these interactions, which has kept the United States a relatively absent empire in South America.

One criticism that could be raised regarding the explanation offered here is that each of the particular case studies could be satisfactorily explained by reference to domestic politics, without consideration to regional subsystemic dynamics. For example,

the failure to reach an agreement for a comprehensive free trade in the Americas could be attributed to the rise of leftist governments in South America by the early 2000s that were opposed to the FTAA project. Similarly, Brazilian policies during the military regime could be attributed to the particular characteristics of that type of government. In fact, if it could be demonstrated that the historical events studied by this dissertation were related mostly to particular domestic configurations of individual countries, with regional dynamics playing no distinctively relevant role, then this would obviously affirm the hypothesis set forth here. Nevertheless, one preoccupation that was present throughout this research was to make clear that there has been a regional pattern of interactions that remained relatively stable regardless of particular domestic circumstances both in the United States and in Brazil. Likewise, this was also true concerning the configuration of the international system and the role of the United States in it. Even as the United States went from a regional power in a multipolar world, to a global power in a bipolar world, and finally to the remaining superpower in a unipolar world, there were certain patterns of interaction that remained relatively unchanged. On the other hand, although Brazil went from a monarchy to a republic, from a military regime to a democracy with presidents from distinct political outlooks, the basic concern with the maintenance of the status quo in the South American regional subsystem remained. In other words, changes both in the domestic environments and in the international system did not lead to change in the regional subsystem, which seems to indicate that the latter operates with a distinct logic.

Evidently, as this research also sought to make clear, the fact that the South American subsystem has shown a great deal of resilience does not mean that it is

unchangeable. Here, the agent-structure debate mentioned in chapter 2 is germane as it indicated that agents and structures, or states and regional subsystems, both determine and are determined by the other, which means that they are not independent variables but the relationship is one of co-determination. This is central to explain the possibility of subsystemic change, and in fact, this was an overall theme present throughout this dissertation. One possibility for subsystemic change would be if the most powerful outside actor concluded that the benefits of change outweighed the costs, that is, if the United States decided, for example, to become a present empire in South America. This could happen through the emergence of particular international conditions and domestic circumstances in the United States combined with Brazilian inaptness to effectively affect US calculations. The result would probably be the establishment of new patterns of relationship in the Western Hemisphere, thus leading to a possible amalgamation of the North and South American subsystems which would make any differentiation between them largely irrelevant. Likewise, the hypothesis proposed by this research only remains valid as long as Brazilian interests remain linked to the maintenance of the status quo in the South American regional subsystem. It follows that if Brazil becomes unable or unwilling to uphold the status quo, the possibility for subsystemic change increases significantly. This dissertation sought to demonstrate that this basic interest has not changed throughout history, and that it has been present regardless of variations in domestic or international conditions. This is evidently not surprising, since it is reasonable to expect the dominant power in any given regional subsystem to favor the maintenance of the system's status quo, which perhaps explains the relative consistency in Brazilian regional goals as opposed to the wide variations in the foreign policies of a

number of other Latin American countries. As this dissertation intended to evidence, because US power has been perceived as a potential threat to the Brazilian position in the South American regional subsystem, keeping the United States an absent empire in that subsystem has been a central Brazilian concern.

The discussion above is also important to address another important issue regarding the assumptions of this dissertation. The attentive reader will notice the constant references to “Brazilian” or “US” interests, which would indicate that, in spite of the constructivist methodology, this research has a realist bias since it both considers states as the main actors in international relations as well as it treats them as unitary actors primarily concerned with what they perceive as their own national interest. While the first is indeed a central assumption of this research, the second is only partially so. Because this research had a systemic/structural focus of which the aim was to explain continuity rather than change, as well as the outcome of foreign policies initiatives rather than decision-making processes leading to particular policies, treating states as unitary actors was nothing but a convenient expedient for the sake of parsimony. As pointed out above, a central concern of this dissertation was to show that there has been a broad pattern of interactions between the United States and the South American regional subsystem that has existed regardless of particular domestic circumstances. It would be difficult to make this kind of generalization and at the same time to take into consideration the complexities of domestic processes. Additionally, since this research covers a lengthy period of time, examining the peculiarities of each individual foreign policy decision would be a herculean task clearly beyond the scope of the dissertation. Nonetheless, a convenient expedient is not necessarily an assumption. Neorealists can

comfortably assume states as unitary actors in great part because they treat the international system as the independent variable, creating such dominating pressures that domestic dynamics are of little or no importance. The theoretical perspective employed by this research assumes that states and regional subsystems are mutually constitutive and therefore domestic changes may eventually lead to subsystemic change. In fact, this dissertation makes an important unit-level assumption when it claims that successive Brazilian governments have been concerned with the maintenance of the status quo in South America, which can also be understood as a response to a subsystemic incentive. As mentioned above, was this central concern to change, the subsystem might also change. Because this has not been the case, and the aim of this research was to explain the persistence rather than transformation of the South American regional subsystem, it was not necessary to resort to the examination of domestic dynamics.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

As pointed out above, in order to answer the questions posed by this research, it was necessary to develop a methodology based on the concept of regional subsystem. This methodological choice was based on the grounds that neither the domestic nor the international system approaches were equipped to explain the main puzzle examined by this dissertation. Although the main concern of this dissertation was to analyze specifically the interaction between the United States and the South American subsystem, the methodology employed here could contribute to refining broader theoretical questions

in the field of international relations. At least three major theoretical contributions can be pointed out.

The first contribution that the regional subsystemic perspective developed here could offer to the study of international relations is when one moves from the strict focus on great powers to the study of lesser powers in the international system. The international system approach, with its explicit focus on the great powers, tends to ignore the importance of middle powers. Because middle powers are likely to have mostly regional - rather than global - interests, the regional subsystem approach seems uniquely equipped to understand the role of these states both in relation to their own regional subsystem as well as in relation to outside powers. This has become increasingly more important, as it becomes clear that traditional international system approaches to international relations have limited applicability in the current world. Conventional systemic approaches based on the number of poles in the system and the formation of global balances of power tend to become less relevant in a world that is neither multipolar, bipolar, and increasingly less unipolar. In the mid sixties, George Liska described the international system as bipolar, but “unifocal,” meaning that even though there were two major poles in that system, it constituted in essence an “imperial system” centered around the United States – the relationship of individual countries with the United States was more important than the relationship those states had among themselves.⁷¹⁷ Drawing from Liska, one could describe the current international system as unipolar, but multifocal. That is, even though there is one clear major pole in the system, the system is not necessarily organized around this pole. It is not that the United States has lost its preeminence, or even that it will lose it in the near future, but that this

⁷¹⁷ Liska, *Imperial America: The International Politics of Primacy*.

preeminence is becoming increasingly irrelevant. In other words, the international system may still be characterized as unipolar but that does not seem to matter much. If during the Cold War, global pressures emanating from the bipolar configuration of the international system could explain a number of phenomena, in the current world states are increasingly subjected to pressures emanating more from their own respective regional subsystems than from the international system as a whole.

A second contribution of the regional subsystem approach to the study of international relations is the fact that it draws attention to the other fundamental feature of the international system, besides anarchy: non-mobility, that is, the fact that states are fixed in space. Applying systemic theories that were created and taking into consideration units that are mobile to a system where the major units are non-mobile may generate unsatisfactory explanations. If a system is composed by structure and interacting units, the regional subsystem approach highlights the fact that both anarchy and geography affect the interaction among states. Ignoring the role of non-mobility would mean to assume that if Brazil were located where Mexico is, little would change in Brazilian foreign policy. This seems counterintuitive for the simple fact that Brazil's foreign policy, as the foreign policy of any other state, is intimately related to its geographical situation. Therefore, the regional subsystems differ from the international system in which the first varies not only in time, but also in space. Applying the framework laid out by this dissertation to the study of other regional subsystems would require first delineating the borders of the regional subsystem based on geography and patterns of interactions, followed by the identification the specific characteristics of the regional subsystem under study, which is what chapter 4 attempted to do for the South American

subsystem. This characterization could start by deciphering the main regional actors and the main outside powers, followed by an examination of how the main regional actors interact within their own subsystem as well as how they interact with the outside powers. If a general theory of regional subsystems is to be developed, it should probably begin by establishing the main criteria to classify different types of regional subsystems in order to compare and evaluate whether similar regional subsystems display similar characteristics.

Finally, the regional subsystem approach deals with two fundamental theoretical issues in international relations: the level-of-analysis question and the agent-structure debate. Regarding the first, the subsystemic perspective opens up new possibilities for research since it reveals a third level of analysis located between the domestic and the international system. Thus, it seeks to avoid both the artificial homogenization associated with the latter as well as the over-differentiation associated with the first by acknowledging different degrees of interaction among states but without necessarily looking into each individual country, since the main concern is with the role of the most powerful regional players. Nevertheless, because the overwhelming majority of the literature in international relations has focused either on the total international system or the national state, the regional level has remained considerably undertheorized. In relation to the agent-structure debate, the regional subsystem approach, with its acknowledgement of different levels of interaction among states, calls for the utilization of an approach equipped to deal with the relationship between social interaction and structural effects. Hence, this dissertation argued that a constructivist perspective, the basic premise of which is the notion that agents and structure are mutually constitutive, is appropriate. But while the constructivist literature tends to stress ideational structures in

detriment of material structures, the regional subsystem approach, by stressing territoriality, highlights the latter. Consequently, it assumes that interactions among states are affected not only by the role of ideas, but also by the physical reality of geographic location, which also affects how ideas are produced and reproduced.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Demonstrating the existence of a distinctive South American subsystem and examining how it has interacted with the United States has not only implications for the study of inter-American relations but also has important policy implications for US policy makers. First and foremost, it makes evident that the United States must take into account that its initiatives toward Latin America will generally tend to have different outcomes in the different regional subsystems in the hemisphere. Almost forty years ago, Thompson commented that “the foreign policy of great powers have on occasion given the impression that subsystems either do not exist or at least need not to be taken seriously.”⁷¹⁸ Although it could be argued that overall the United States has improved in terms of designing specific foreign policies for different regional subsystems, in its own hemisphere there has been little advance, as there remains the premise that there is a Latin American regional subsystem. Therefore, it would be advisable for the United States to do away with its “Latin American” policy and design policies specifically directed to South America. In fact, the United States does not have an “African” policy that includes both Egypt and South Africa for the simple reason that this would be of little use in practical terms. The State Department has a “Bureau of African Affairs” that

⁷¹⁸ Thompson, "The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory," 97.

covers sub-Saharan Africa, while having a separate “Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs” for North Africa and the Middle East. Conversely, the “Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs” covers all of Latin America.

But bureaucratic subdivisions are less important than actual policy formulations, and the fact is that the United States has developed a specific set of policies for key countries in the world. Hence, successive US administrations have had to deal with the development of a China policy or a Russia policy. Likewise, within the context of a larger South American policy, a Brazil policy should be developed. This has become even more relevant given the increasing importance of Brazil in the international arena.⁷¹⁹ As Fareed Zakaria argues, in spite of political turmoil, the first years of the 2000s witnessed the largest period of global economy expansion, which benefited particularly the emerging economies in Asia and Latin America, and opened the way for a “tectonic power shift” in the distribution of power. For Zakaria, this redistribution of power has led to a “post-American world” characterized not necessarily by the decline of the United States, but by “the rise of the rest.”⁷²⁰ Within this context, even though much attention has been paid to India, and especially to China, Brazil may become a relevant player. For Leslie Gelb, the current international system is characterized by a “pyramidal” structure in which the United States occupies the top and right below it there is a second tier composed by China, Japan, India, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Brazil. Gelb terms these countries as “the Eight Principals,” and claims that they possess “enough power to provide essential support to joint efforts with the United States and to

⁷¹⁹ See, for example, *The Independent*, “The Rise and Rise of Brazil: Faster, Stronger, Higher,” September 27, 2009; *Economist*, “Brazil Takes Off,” November 12, 2009; Larry Rohter, *Brazil on the Rise: The Story of a Country Transformed* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); *Washington Times*, “Obama: U.S. Supports Rise of Brazil’s Economy,” March 19, 2011.

⁷²⁰ Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008).

block or seriously impede action by Washington.”⁷²¹ According to Gelb, these are the key countries that the United States should take into consideration when seeking support for its actions in the different parts of the globe.

Therefore, the development of a foreign policy distinctively designed for Brazil makes sense from the point of view of the United States both because of Brazil’s increasing clout in the emerging international system as well as within the specific context of South America. As long as South America in general, and Brazil in particular, remains buried in the midst of a “Latin American” or a “Western Hemispheric” foreign policy, US initiatives toward the region will be destined to have few satisfactory results. If the United States could easily afford not having a South American policy in the past, the current global trends seem to indicate that this neglect will increasingly have more important consequences for US ability to shape the post-American world.

But what kind of South American policy should the United States design? Although it is not the aim of this dissertation to offer an answer to this question, a few lessons from what has been demonstrated here could be helpful. Chiefly among them is the fact that any US policy that can be interpreted by Brazilian policy-makers as affecting the status quo in the South American subsystem will almost certainly face resistance in Brazil. The question is how an increasingly more powerful Brazil is going to manipulate this resistance within the context of the South American subsystem. If, on one hand, Brazil’s growth may give it more resources to defend the status quo in South America and consolidate its position, on the other hand this same growth may generate suspicions among its neighbors and resurface fears of a Brazilian hegemony in the subsystem.

⁷²¹ Leslie H. Gelb, *Power Rules: How Common Sense Can Rescue American Foreign Policy* (New York Harper, 2009), 76.

Therefore, Brazil's ability to handle its own rise regionally will be a key component of how regional subsystemic dynamics will evolve. In any case, if the United States intends to have any significant future leverage in Brazil and consequently in South America, one feasible alternative is to increase the level of interdependence, particularly in the economic field, between them. This would require taking measures, even if unilaterally, directed at increasing the level of trade between the two countries, particularly in areas sensitive to Brazil, such as agriculture. For example, Brazil has a successful sugarcane-based ethanol program, and it could export much of it to the United States if it was not for the existence of an almost prohibitive tariff imposed in order to protect an inefficient corn-based domestic ethanol industry.⁷²² Measures as simple as removing the tariff on Brazilian ethanol would significantly increase the level of interdependence between Brazil and the United States, thus approximating the two countries. Obviously, there are domestic obstacles in the United States that must be overcome in order to undertake such initiatives. The question then is whether US policy-makers will be willing to bear the costs of global and hemispheric leadership in the new emerging international environment or if domestic concerns will make the United States increasingly more absent from South America.

⁷²² I have discussed this topic earlier in more detail in: Carlos Gustavo Poggio Teixeira, "Brazil and United States: Fading Interdependence," *Orbis* 55, no. 1 (2011).

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