

# THE REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEX OF SOUTH AMERICA: AN ANALYSIS FROM THE SOUTH AMERICAN DEFENSE COUNCIL OF UNASUR

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## Introduction

The present article is a result of an investigation about the Regional Security Complex (RSC) of South America, which is implied in the discussions about defense and security in the region, more specifically, since the creation of the South American Defense Council (SDC), within the framework of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), a south American integration project that was created in 2008, starting from the signature of *UNASUR Constitutive Treaty*, and which had as signatories twelve south American countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Since its creation, the SDC boosted the debate regarding its objectives and its own nature. Thus, for example, during the process of “articulation and negotiation” of the Council, at least three visions about these objectives came up: the vision advocated by the Brazilian government, which “defended that the SDC articulated measures for the creation and the strengthening of mutual confidence, for the exchange of military personnel in formation and [...]

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the defense industrial integration” (Abdul-Hak 2013, 20); the vision defended by the Venezuelan government, which “pointed out to its insecurity sense concerning extra-regional threats, defending an alliance of collective defense” (Abdul-Hak 2013, 20); and the Colombian government’s vision, which “insisted in the treatment, within the scope of a potential SDC, of the combat to the narco-guerrilla and terrorism” (Abdul-Hak 2013, 20).

More than a discussion about the objectives of a SDC, the established debate reflects the controversies that were present between the different south American countries regarding the model itself of the regional defense and security system that was intended for South America. It cannot be forgotten that, especially from World War II on, the whole South America was integrated to the North American project of defense and security for the region, undermining, in this sense, the importance of the south American particularities to the detriment of a “geostrategic and geo-economics conception of the Americas as only one continent”, “led” by the United States (Cabral 2010, 2).

If this historical heritage of South America’s relationship with the US stands as an obstacle to the proposal of a “defense and security regional system”, capable of being articulated from the South American countries’ historical particularities and not necessarily from an “universal agenda” based on predominant interests of a global power (which is the case of the US), it is necessary to note, also, that the constitution of UNASUR itself, integrating all South America’s countries, does not stand for a homogenizing vision of the region. Thus, for example, while in the Andean region “the presence of political, territorial and economic antagonisms involving neighbor countries such as Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela had been producing latent animosities, putting at stake the regional stability” (Rodrigues 2015, 2) in the Southern Cone region, there is no historical record of this kind of antagonism and conflict.

Therefore, it is in this sense, that this article resulted from an investigation that aimed at analyzing not only the different visions of regional security systems present among UNASUR signatories countries, but, mainly, which model of RSC has become hegemonic in the historical process that resulted in the creation of the SDC.

It is important to bear in mind that, still during the 20th century, the studies about Regional Security Systems have achieved a prominent position in the international context. The military operations that happened in World War II made possible the elaboration of regional concepts in the security scope, also permitting that other military operations and political actions were developed within the framework of local and regional particularities. During the Cold War, the subjects related to the collective security system, represent-

ed by the United Nations (UN), were conditioned to the superpowers and to the state-members influence in the Security Council (SC). Besides, as the world was divided in two great blocs, the regional systems were influenced by such bipolarity, and, as result, the main regional actors had only a relative degree of strategical freedom (Cabral 2010).

Hence, it was only in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the regional dimension gained prominence in international relations. If, in a first moment, the end of the Cold War was interpreted as a terminal crisis of the bipolar system and as “the possibility of the instauration of a unipolar system led by the US, being this the only power with global strategic capability” (Vigevani, Correa and Cintra 1998, 4), the posterior events contributed to the US-led unipolar thesis to remain only as a theoretical possibility (Vigevani, Correa and Cintra 1998, 4).

These aspects of the international conjuncture contributed, in the scope of the theoretical discussion about defense and security, to the emergence of the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). A theory which defines the RSC as “a set of units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another” (Buzan and Waever 2003, 44).

Particularly regarding integration in the area of defense and security arising from the negotiations involving UNASUR, the discussion on the RSC model gains importance not only because of the peculiarities of the region and its historical relationship with the United States but, also, due to the political changes that, since 2000, have occurred in practically all Latin American countries. It shall be considered, still, that South America does not constitute a homogenous bloc, whose countries have the same characteristics and face the same problems. Although the historical situation of economic dependence may represent an approximation point, the historical rivalries, the political presence of organized crime, the internal violence (resulting from trafficking-related crimes, from corruption, from poverty and from inequality), the presence of indigenous movements in the Andes and in Amazonia, the amazon region and its international importance, etc., make of South America a complex region, marked by regional and national singularities, turning it difficult the elaboration (and the execution) of a common integration agenda in the areas of security and defense.

In this context, the creation of UNASUR itself and the related SDC, which had Brazil as a protagonist country (Cabral 2010), met the interests of Brazilian governments from the 2000s on strengthening integration processes among Latin American countries, establishing relations with other coun-

tries in a South-South perspective, opposing to unilateralism and supporting multilateralism, but also, through leadership in the region, to project itself internationally, affirming itself, therefore, as a relevant regional actor, capable of occupying leadership positions in the international forums (Dias et al. 2015).

In this sense, the different aspects of Latin America's recent conjuncture, with an emphasis in the direction given to the foreign policy by Brazilian governments from the 2000s on, highlight the importance of comprehending which conception of RSC oriented the concrete experience of the creation of UNASUR and, particularly, of its SDC.

## The RSCT: concept and comparative analysis of the South-American RSC

The adoption of cooperative measures among countries with objectives specially connected to defense and security shows itself as important and necessary in order to guarantee regional stability, to avoid potential threats which may bring insecurity levels not witnessed previously; but also, in order to international insertion projects of a group of countries gain more visibility and more respectability in an international context (Pagliari 2009).

Also within this context of integration projects building among countries, the discussions regarding "regionalism" became more relevant, once the countries – specially those directly involved in regional integration projects – paid more attention to their geographical surroundings, also as a way to amplify its voice in the international community, making it possible, thus, the maximization of its insertion in the international scenario. As states Pagliari (2009), "regionalism" "[...] provided a greater space of autonomy, so that regions themselves could focus on their security agendas [...]" (Pagliari 2009, 13).

As a result, the studies about Regional Security Systems gained more importance in the international scene, particularly in the last decades of the 20th century, even though, in a Cold War context, issues related to security systems remained conditioned to the superpowers and to the influence of the UN Security Council's states-members. In this way, due to the fact that the International System (IS) was classified as bipolar, due to the influence of two great blocs – the capitalist and the socialist –, the regional systems remained subject to such polarization, which limited regional actors' strategic freedom (Cabral 2010).

With the end of the Cold War, the emergence of regional security projects permitted the occurrence of some changes in the analysis of glob-

al security systems, since the end of bipolarity represented a transformation in international security related issues and needed adjustments, in order to avoid the rise of new global conflicts. Moreover, it was from that period on that the deepening and the integration of many regions were strengthened through mutual confidence in the areas of security and economic and social development (Cabral 2010).

In this context, the RSCT emerges, being a result of a theoretical construction connected to the Copenhagen School, more specifically, to two international relations theorists: Barry Buzan (1946 -) and Ole Waever (1960-). The Copenhagen School was born in the 1980s, in a context of rising concerns, in the whole Europe, about the subjects related to security and defense. From then on, it became a reference in international security, owing much of it to the theoretical production of these authors. In spite of the school focusing its studies in European security, the authors embrace regional security of the whole planet (Nobre 2013).

Buzan and Waever have the merit of building an analysis about security and defense in the IS context that presupposes that geographical proximity facilitates the generation of common interests between different countries; highlighting, then, the geography as an important dimension in international relations dynamics, from which arises the argument that it is not possible to comprehend the security and defense dynamics in the international level and in post-Cold War period without considering the phenomenon of regionalization.

Furthermore, Buzan, since the 1990s, insists that the end of the Cold War did not only boosted a greater interest (political and theoretical) in the security and defense related issues, but also that military security does not stand anymore at the top of the agenda, signaling, still, that the issues related to the historical comprehensiveness of regional identities became more relevant (Fagundes 2014). In this sense, it is important to bear in mind that the Copenhagen School not only enhanced a greater discussion about security and regionalization, but also contributed to, in the scope of security and defense, new dimensions gain more visibility.

The RSCT aims at explaining why states engage in relations of cooperation and reciprocity. According to its formulators, the theory derives either from the anarchical relations established among the composing structures and its balance of power, or from the pressure existent due to the geographical proximities. Hence, we may affirm that the RSCT fits within the framework of reciprocal relations sought by the states and seeks to comprehend how it occurs the securitization processes' dynamics in the IS (Cardoso 2010).

Buzan and Waever defend that the theory was developed in order to

explain that the regional level is the most proper one to undertake a security analysis. The core argument is that there are two extremities to analyze security: the national and the global. The national security *per se* does not represent a level of analysis which may be considered as significant, given that security is a relational phenomenon. According to the authors, “[...]no nation’s security is self-contained” (Buzan and Waever 2003, 43). The global security, on the other hand, is a state which the countries aim to achieve; thus, it is not a “real phenomenon”, since the IS is not integrated in security terms. Differently, in a determinate region, defense and security become more important, seen that a country’s security does not occur in isolation, without considering the region itself. In this way, the regional level is where national and global level interact and where the great majority of actions take place.

Teixeira (2013), whereas analyzing Buzan’s and Waever’s studies, justifies this bigger interaction between national and global security in a regional level with the argument that there is a greater detachment of the great powers in local and regional conflicts, due to the great expenses involved in these kind of disputes. Thus, “local logistics favors regional rather than global relations as the interactions between neighbors are more relevant in the political calculation of security than the global relations [...]” (Teixeira 2013, 5).

This fact confirms what Buzan and Waever (2003) describe in their theory: that the securitization processes and, therefore, the interdependence levels in the area of security are more intense and better perceived among states of the same RSC rather than the interaction of these states with others that are not in the same complex or that are even more distant from them.

The RSCT seeks to interpret the post-Cold War polarity system and how it works in the IS, where there is the presence of diverse regions, formed by states and whose main difference lays in the security aspect. Besides, this theory aims at making a distinction between the interaction level of the great powers, which are capable to transmit their power through long distances, and the smaller ones, that is, those powers whose power transmission capability and whose security dynamics remain restricted to the region in which they are inserted (Fuccille and Rezende 2013).

Even though we may observe the influence of great powers within regions, the remarkability reached by the RSC after the end of the Cold War is owed to the changes in the international security pattern, which became more flexible, opposing, thus, to the pattern that was followed between the years of 1945 and 1991 (Buzan and Waever 2003). In this sense, we may affirm that the fact of states being inserted within a RSC presupposes a maximization of security of each one of them, since these units and, consequently, their security issues find themselves interconnected.

The security concept brought by Buzan and Waever has a great importance in international security and regionalization in security IS related studies. It cannot be forgotten that the importance given to regionalism and its security were not limited to military and warlike issues, since the emergence of “new issues” (considered by International Relations theorists as equally important to the dynamics of the international scenario) allowed the global delineation of new kinds of threats. Among these new threats, we may mention the environmental issues, the terrorism, the drug-trafficking, the extreme poverty and the disordered population growth (Fagundes 2012).

According to Teixeira, it is in the regional level that the relationships among states become more powerful, even though the region is connected to the global sphere – being such relationship also considered important for its development and its consequent projection in the international scene. It is necessary, therefore, to construct a security environment where conflicts may be solved and threats pushed away, in order to make the cooperation among members which constitute determinate regional integration organization feasible, as well as the distribution of attributions in defense and security politics (Teixeira 2013).

It is important, therefore, to affirm that the RSC seek to comprehend how securitization processes in the IS work and are established through a regionalist approach (Fuccille and Rezende 2013). A securitization process presupposes a series of emergency measures taken by a state in order to solve problems that may threat national interest or even the survival of such state in the IS. In this case, those measures may be justified as “exception actions, as human efforts and extraordinary budgets, to the consecution of public politics, restrictions on consecrated rights e unusual rising of secret and confidentiality procedures” (Cardoso 2010, 28-29).

The securitization process occurs, for example, in sectors like the military and the political and has as its function the protection of IS’ actors. Thus, the security relationships have as a characteristic the way in which measures will be taken in order to balance potential threats (Cardoso 2010).

According to Buzan and Waever (2003), in a RSC, the processes that cover it are interconnected, hindering, then, an independent analysis and understanding of the security problems faced by the countries that compose it. However, even though all the issues involving security related problems refers to a determinate region, the IS and its polarity continue to interfere; in other words, the events that permeate the international scene and that influence in the decision-making process of the RSC should also be taken into consideration (Fuccille and Rezende 2013).

From these considerations, a RSC may be conceptualized as “a set of

units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another” (Buzan and Waever 2003, 44).

The RSCs have their definition based on amity and enmity patterns, which end up forming the security interdependence patterns geographically defined. Furthermore, the particular characteristic of each Complex is directly linked to the historical pattern of its components, as, for example, the history of enmities between countries and even military, economic or cultural partners (Buzan and Waever 2003).

For a group of countries to be considered as a RSC, it is necessary that its interdependence degree is enough either to consider it as an interconnected set, either for it to be differentiated from the others in security terms. In Buzan’s and Waever’s words, “RSCs define themselves as substructures of the international system by the relative intensity of security interdependence among a group of units, and security indifference between that set and surrounding units” (Buzan and Waever 2003, 48).

The authors explain that the idea of the security interdependence being focused on the regional level derives from the power of the units, that is, in the capacity that a determinate state has to establish more or less security around the world. The superpowers tend to spread their security relationships all around the world, not fitting, therefore, in the logic of geography and proximity. The smaller states, on the other hand, possess limited capabilities, which diminish its security relationships with closer neighbors, strengthening the regional, differently from the great powers, that end up undermining the regional.

The logic between global powers’ distribution of capabilities and the dynamics of a RSC is within the so-called penetration, as explained below:

Penetration occurs when outside powers make security alignments with states within an RSC [...]. Balance-of-power logic works naturally to encourage the local rivals to call in outside help [...]. Such linkage between the local and global security patterns is a natural feature of life in an anarchic system (Buzan and Waever 2003, 46-47).

In this case, the RSCT tends to limit the role of great powers, so that local factors receive the required weight regarding an analysis in terms of security. Thus, “the standard form for an RSC is a pattern of rivalry, balance of power, and alliance patterns among the main powers within the region: to this pattern can then be added the effects of penetrating external powers” (Buzan and Waever 2003, 47).



Seen that, the essential structure of the RSC may be identified, which has four variables: the borders, which differentiate one regional complex from another; the anarchical structure, that is, a RSC must be composed by two or more autonomous units; the polarity, that is, how the power is distributed among the complex's units; and the social construction, which indicates the pattern of amity or enmity among the units (Buzan and Waever 2003). It is important to highlight, also, that there are different patterns in the relationship between states, emerging, then, two poles: the chaos, which refers to the enmity pole, and the amity pole, that is, the one of the security community (Medeiros Filho 2010). About this issue, it is also important to mention that:

[...] the security relations between states (usually neighbors) would be, in a greater extent, determined by the mutually perceived threat/fear pattern [...] the patterns may vary from a conflicting relation (power politics) to an amity model (political convergence). Between these two extremities, rising order of amity, Buzan suggests as intermediate patterns the coexistence and the cooperation (Medeiros Filho 2010, 57; own translation).

It is important to note that Buzan and Waever define two basic types of RSC based on the optical of power distribution, 1) *the standard* RSC; 2) *the centred* RSC, being this latter subdivided in unipolar centered in a great power, unipolar centered in a great power or when the region becomes an actor itself due to its elevated degree of institutionalization (Buzan and Waever 2003).

The *standard* RSC has as its main characteristic the absence of a power with action in a global level within the complex. As a result, the rules applied to the composing states, or even to allow the entrance of global powers in the complex, are defined by the relations among the states that are part of that same complex. Besides, in a standard complex, the polarity will be exclusively defined by the member-states, varying from uni to multipolar (Buzan and Waever 2003).

On the other hand, in a *centred* RSC, there is a power with global action, which may concentrate the majority of the existent capabilities in the complex. This power may be a great power, a superpower or even an institution (Buzan and Waever 2003). According to Fuccille and Rezende (2013), the theorists suggest the inclusion of an extra option in the *centred* RSC category, since they cannot classify it within any other; such option refers to a *unipolar centred* RSC, when a regional power cannot be considered as a great power in a global level.

Finally, and following the description of what is a RSC, one may note

the fact that South America is free from nuclear threats, being considered as a security region, once it can be observed the interdependence among the countries that compose the region and that, as a consequence, that the region forms a RSC, since the interactions between them constitute themselves as a security pattern.

## Possibilities and limits of a South American RSC model

The analysis presented by Buzan and Waever regarding the RSC is greatly respected among researchers and scholars that study defense and security related issues in integration processes among countries not only due to the emphasis attributed to the regional dimension, but also due to the presentation of different RSC models, contemplating the south American experience.

More recently, however, and from UNASUR's constitution on, some authors that occupied themselves with the defense and security issues in integration projects among Latin American countries have sought to discuss the reach of Buzan's and Waever's analysis regarding South America's RSC.

It is the case, for example, of Alexandre Fuccille and Lucas Pereira Rezende, who analyze the RSC in South America, in a dialogue with Buzan's and Waever's proposal, show not only the limitations in their theory, but also, some outdated conceptions in the model proposed by Copenhagen School's theorists.

Fuccille and Rezende seek to update descriptions of polarity in South America, as well as to discuss the Brazilian protagonism and the "currently active institutions with potential securitization profile" in the region, defending that the role of Brazil as a protagonist in South America makes the South-American RSC one first model of *centred RSC*, despite the absence of a nation with global leadership:

[...] being unipolar in the region, and from a protagonist role agreed upon by the United States of America (USA) at a global level, although faltering, Brazil has a role of centralizing the two South American subcomplexes, the North-Andean and the one of the Southern Cone. This makes the RSC to be described as *centred*, with the unipolar power not being a global power, inaugurating, then, a first empirical case of such kind of RSC (Fuccille and Rezende 2013, 78; own translation).

The Brazilian protagonism in South America, according to Fuccille

and Rezende, has different implications for the configuration of the RSC in South America. The first of these implications is strictly connected to the description of a RSC and refers to the Brazilian condition in the region, that, in spite of not being a power in the global scenario, dominates the regional security dynamics:

It becomes necessary, then, in order to comprehend the proper categorization of South America's RSC, to observe whether Brazil, as a unipolar power, thrives to dominate the security dynamics of the region. Our hypothesis [...] is that yes. And this is due to two reasons: (1) having its position relatively diminished in US' priority agenda, South America becomes more free to explore the regional security dynamics. As the US penetration gets smaller therefore, arises the possibility of a great protagonism of new actors. Such protagonism is, however, compromised, since the global level continues to influence the RSC; (2) from this consented autonomy, Brazil starts to exert a great protagonism in the RSC, bringing the security agendas of both subcomplexes even closer (Fuccille and Rezende 2013, 85; own translation).

According to the authors, the creation of UNASUR and of its SDC, besides of Venezuela's entry into MERCOSUL as a full member, shifts the possibility of an institutional cohesion in the region (now centered in UNASUR), opening up greater possibilities for Brazil, from UNASUR, to play the leading role in creating a security community involving all South American countries (Fuccille and Rezende 2013, 85). Thus:

[...] these two factors contribute to the possibility of delimitating a change in the South American RSC, but not towards a division of the region in two distinct subcomplexes, as sustained by Buzan and Waever (2003); rather, towards a *centred* RSC, with Brazil assuming the unipolar role. This would qualify South America's RSC as the only category that these authors present, but do not identify any case: a RSC *centred* in which the pole is not a great global power. However, although *centred*, it is an instable RSC, due to Brazil's hesitant performance as the center [...]. (Fuccille and Rezende 2013, 85-86; own translation).

The analysis made by Fuccille and Rezende is based in a set of assumptions, from which they do not categorically affirm a Brazilian protagonism in South America, but, rather, the importance of the Brazilian protagonism in order to consolidate a South American RSC. In this sense, some of the assumptions ought to be listed in order to later advance in a discussion regarding the conditions and possibilities of a RSC in South America.

A first assumption is related to the changes that took place from the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century on, namely, changes in Americas' security model that predominated in the Cold War period and in which the US remained as fully hegemonic. The end of this period, a "growing disengagement of the US in the region", as well as North American new priorities in the post-September 11 period, "ended up consolidating an imaginary in South America of a possible geographical space and capable of developing more independent policies, as a result of a greater autonomy margin" (Fuccille and Rezende 2013, 86).

The rise of left-wing governments in South America, alongside with the alterations in the international security agenda in the "post-September 11", created favorable conditions for actions aiming at the establishment of a South American RSC to make sense in the beginning of the 21st century. It was from these transformations on that, during the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso in Brazil (1995-2002), but, mainly, from the rise of Luís Inácio Lula da Silva (2003) to the Brazilian government, South American governments walked towards the creation of UNASUR and, through it, the institutionalization of a SDC (Fuccille and Rezende 2013, 87).

Over the process of discussion and institutionalization of UNASUR and its SDC, different issues were raised, not only by Brazil, but also having Brazil as a protagonist: the issue of drug-trafficking in the region, the sub-regional conflicts (Peru and Ecuador), the interest in obstructing the "Bolivarian impulses", the interest in avoiding an "arms race" in the region, the consolidation of the South Atlantic as a region of peace – free of nuclear weapons and important for the Brazilian projection in the IS –, the resistance to the materialization of a development policy in the region led by the US, the Brazilian interest in consolidating a foreign policy with new directions (South-South relations), focusing more in the South American integration (Fuccille and Rezende 2013).

It was based on this perspective that, according to Fuccille and Rezende, a dynamic of integration was consolidated, having UNASUR as the objectification of such dynamic, which walks toward the formation of an "only RSC", a centered model, insofar as Brazil (though with frailties) thrives to aggregate the two South American subcomplexes:

Brazil's unipolarity in South America implies a *centred* RSC, whether the country assumes the position of guarantor of this or not. It is in this point that one [RSC] differs from a security community: for the first one, there is no need to exist harmonious relationships, as long as the security dynamics of the region are centered in one actor. Even though sometimes [...] Bra-

zil lacks maturity as the guarantor of regional institutions, all of the main regional security dynamics have, somehow, passed under Brazilian aegis (Fuccille and Rezende 2013, 93; own translation).

Regardless of that, the discussion about the possibilities of consolidating a South American RSC – whose roots may be found in the establishment of the Brazilian hegemony in the region, as presented by Fuccille and Rezende – sheds light in the existent frailties that difficult such project to take place, being these derived either from latent issues in South America, either from issues that gained visibility in the last years, especially those regarding the crisis of the left-wing projects, which, in the beginning of the 2000s, have risen to the national governments.

On the other hand, it might be equally important to mention that, from the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century on, political ruptures can be observed in different South American countries, pointing out to a crisis in the period of left-wing governments in the region and to the rise of political and social forces committed to a neoliberal political and ideological orientation.

This period of ruptures and/or discontinuities in South America began with the destitution of Fernando Lugo from the Paraguayan presidency, in 2012, in a process that, although considered as legit by the juridical authorities of the country, was condemned and considered as illegitimate by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, creating an international diplomatic crisis among the South American countries that are members of MERCOSUR and UNASUR – whose members, in its great majority, refused to accept the destitution of Lugo from the Paraguayan presidency.

In sequence, the death of Hugo Chávez, in 2013, and the political (and economic) crisis faced by Venezuela since then, the election of Mauricio Macri in Argentina as President of the Republic and, especially (due to the Brazilian protagonism), the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in Brazil, in 2016, symbolized the crisis of the development projects that guided governmental politics in many of the South American countries from the 2000s on, committed to the reduction of social inequalities, to a greater economic integration of the popular social classes and the laborers, to regional integration processes capable of consolidating a South-South perspective; moreover, they expressed changes in the national governments' politics, now more with more affinity with the neoliberal perspective. More than a crisis in the development projects, the aforementioned events marked the possibility of a new period in South America, with a greater alignment with North American (especially the US) and European countries.

The transformations occurred in Brazil since the impeachment of

Dilma Rousseff, with its respective repercussions in the country's foreign policy, are certainly an important conditioning, due to the representation that Brazil has in South America, for the analysis not only of the (future) dynamics of UNASUR and its Defense Council, and of the possibilities of setting up a South American RSC (with Brazil as the main country); but also for a better understanding of the limits and difficulties that have arisen, since its origin, in the discussion and implementation of regional defense and security policies in South America.

## The South-American Defense Council

As previously mentioned, the South-American continent does not face conflicts of great proportion, neither direct enemies that may threaten its security. From the end of the Cold War on and since the re-democratization process, the Brazilian Armed Forces live in a historical condition in which its functions are not well defined, seen that, on one hand, there is internal resistance regarding its intervention in the public security and, on the other hand, the presence of external enemies in the region remains distant not only from Brazil, but also from South America (Abdul-Kak 2013).

The regional integration is one of the factors that contribute to enhance confidence among countries that belong to a same region, being able, then, to reduce the number of conflicts and to ensure that solutions to potential controversies are negotiated and resolved in a peaceful manner.

In this sense, UNASUR shows itself as an important organ when it comes to security and defense in South America. Not only for standing as an instance of political discussion among South-American countries, but also and because, in its own constitution, proposes that the member-states shall articulate joint actions, exchanging information and experiences in defense matters, as well as establishing combat strategies to possible terrorist actions, to arms and drug-trafficking, to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, to the transnational organized crime, etc. It is interesting to observe, in this sense, about defense within the scope of UNASUR that:

[...] the aim is not to achieve integration in defense, but rather to establish the exchange of information and experiences in defense matters, what can be seen as a first step to construct a common thought, being such thought capable of providing a basis for the common strategic formulation, implying, if and when achieved, a greater autonomy of the region in defense issues (Mathias and Matijascic 2011, 237; own translation).

This is, therefore, one of the guidelines that oriented the creation of the SDC itself within the scope of UNASUR. A Council that was created during a meeting of the Council of Heads of State and of Government of UNASUR, taking place in Salvador, in December 16 of 2008. On this occasion, apart from the SDC, other Councils were created, as well as Working Groups, aiming at a better coordination of the work dynamics in UNASUR (Unasul 2008a).

Brazil had a differentiated importance in the creation of the SDC, being considered as its biggest advocate. However, one must consider that the creation of the SDC, within the framework of the discussions that resulted in the creation of UNASUR, had its normative benchmark based in three Presidential Declarations, which resulted from meetings with the objective of creating an integrative agreement between South-American countries: 1) The Political Declaration of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile, of 1999, which resulted in the creation of a “Zone of Peace”; 2) The Declaration on the South-American Zone of Peace, which resulted from the Second Meeting of Presidents of South America, of July 2002, and was ratified by Resolution of the United Nations’ General Assembly, in November of the same year; 3) The Declaration of San Francisco de Quito on the Establishment and Development of an Andean Peace Area, of July 2004, ratified by a Resolution of the UN’s General Assembly, in December of the same year (Abdul-Hak 2013, 140).

The result of this discussion process became materialized in the First Conference of Defence Ministers of the South-American Community, which took place in 2006 and whose commitments were based on:

[...] the development of information and intelligence exchange mechanisms, academic exchange, capacitation and training actions, exchange of experiences and scientific and technological knowledge regarding the industry of defence, and the realization of bilateral or multilateral meetings among the members of the South American Ministries of Defence (Abdul-Hak 2013, 140).

In 2006, within the scope of UNASUR, the security and defense related issues were already on the agenda and, moreover, the importance of a “regional security doctrine” was already thought of, as well as the creation of some responsible institutional instance.

Possibly, in the discussion of the own constitution of UNASUR, a series of demands regarding defense and security were being made by the representatives of South American countries. Demands as the ones indicated by Medeiros Filho: “maintenance of peace and democracy in the countries of

the region, construction of a South-American geopolitical identity, combat to organized crime and creation of a regional defense market” (Medeiros Filho 2009, 3).

It is interesting to note that, in the documents available at UNASUR’s Digital Repository, the discussions of the year of 2007, aiming at the Constitution of UNASUR, defense and security did not have a significant place. This, evidently, does not mean that the matter was not being discussed. Regardless of that, it is only in the register of an Extraordinary Meeting of Heads of State and of Government of UNASUR, which occurred in May 23 of 2008, that one may find an explicit reference to the subject. In such Meeting, the then President of Brazil, Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, proposed to establish the SDC, when, then, was suggested the creation of a Working Group (WG) to analyze the proposal of the Brazilian President. The protocol from that meeting registers that the proposal for the creation of a WG was expressively backed up “by some countries and was finally approved” (Unasul 2008b), registering, still, that the President of Colombia, although agreeing with the creation of the WG, affirmed that its country could not participate of the initiative, “given the current circumstances derived from the terrorist phenomenon” in that country (Unasul 2008b).

The potential non-participation of Colombia in the WG that was established to discuss the creation of a SDC was not confirmed. The protocol of the XIII Meeting of the of the Council of Delegates of UNASUR, that took place in Santiago of Chile, in August 11 and 12 of 2008, registers that the WG on the SDC had already made two meetings, with the presence of all UNASUR’s members and with the official incorporation of Colombia (Unasul 2008c).

The issue is that the WG established to discuss the creation of the SDC, which, by August of 2008 had already have two meetings, advanced significantly in the discussions, in such a way that, in a meeting that took place in Santiago of Chile, in December 11, the Statute of the Council was approved. Such Statute would also be approved by the Council of Heads of State and of Government of UNASUR, in its Third Ordinary Meeting, gathered in Brazil, in December 16 of that same year.

The approved Statute of the SDC has 18 articles, versing about five themes: 1. Nature; 2. Principles; 3. Objectives; 4. Structure; and 5. Functioning (Unasul 2008d).

Regarding the *nature* of the SDC, the same is considered as a “consult, cooperation and coordination instance in defense matters”. Therefore, within the functioning structure of UNASUR, the Council does not have deliberative power, constituting itself in a space of discussion, of exchange of information, of cooperation in the area of defense, as later indicated in the presentation of



its objectives (Unasul 2008d).

In what concerns the *principles* of the SDC, its Statute, in its articles second and third, affirms its subjection to the principles and purposes established in the Charter of the United Nations, to the Charter of the Organization of American States and to the mandates and decisions of the Council of Heads of State and of Government of UNASUR (Unasul 2008d).

It is important to notice, also, that besides of the Council representing only a consultative organ within the scope of UNASUR (therefore, subordinated to the superior instances of the institution, more specifically, to the Council of Heads of State and of Government of UNASUR), the principles of its Statute imply that the acting of UNASUR itself, in the defense field, does not always stand as a normative power towards the constituted national authorities, that is, towards the rules, the legislations or even actions of national governments.

Then, a situation emerges in which the Council has an advisory character, it is able to carry studies, to propose agreements and actions of cooperation, but its performance is limited by the own horizon of the integrative process. In the limit, it expresses principles and generic rules, without an auto-applying power and with limited capacity of interference in the member-states, even if its internal political dynamics occur in conformity with the assumptions and the principles affirmed by the integrative agreements. As the history of integrative processes in South America shows, the national states are generally opposed to the transference of its prerogatives to the scope of integrative blocs (Almeida 2009).

The Statute of the SDC defined some general objectives and a set of specific ones, aiming at delimitating its actions. As general objectives were defined:

- a) To consolidate South America as a Zone of Peace, basis to the democratic stability and to the integral development of our peoples and as contribution to world peace.
- b) To build a South-American identity in defense matter, which considers sub-regional and national characteristics and which contributes to the strengthening of Latin American and Caribbean unity.
- c) To generate consensuses in order to strengthen regional cooperation in defense matter (Unasul 2008d; own translation).

The existence of eleven specific *objectives*, for its turn, allows us to consider at least three plans of action: the importance attributed in that mo-

ment to the production and the sharing of information regarding defense and security; the necessity of formation plans (construction and socialization of knowledge) about defense and security; the cooperation in plans aiming at the development of the defense industry (including here the own modernization of the armed forces); the actions aimed at humanitarian disasters (natural catastrophes, especially); and the issue of gender, as an issue to be incorporated in the discussion about defense and security.

From the point of view of its *structure*, the SDC is composed by the Ministers of Defense (or its representatives) of UNASUR's member countries. The national delegations are composed by high representatives of the Foreign Affairs and the Defense and by aids, being this latter present when considered important in the participation of the meetings by the state-members.

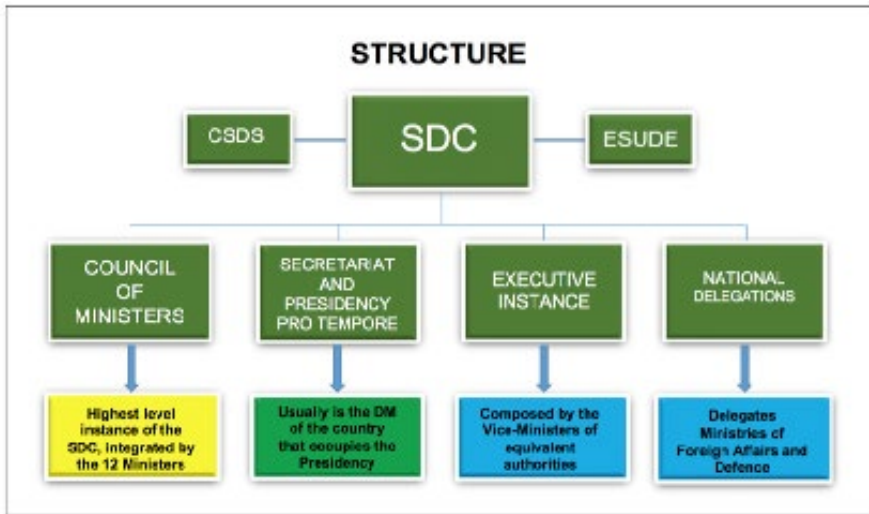
The SDC has an executive instance, headed by Vice-Ministers of Defense (or equivalent). The presidency of the Council corresponds to the same country that occupies the presidency *pro tempore* of UNASUR, having as its responsibility "to coordinate the activities of the Council". To be precise, the Statute of the Council, in its article 11, defines the attributions of its presidency as:

- a) To assume the duties of the Council Secretariat and other working bodies, including the communication with member-states and the sending of information of interest to the work of the Council.
- b) To elaborate the agenda proposal and the organization of the works, to the ordinary and the extraordinary meetings of the South-American Defense Council, to be submitted to the other member-states.
- c) To formulate, with previous consultation to the member-states, invitations to specialists to take part in meetings of the South-American Defense Council (Unasul 2008d; own translation).

As it can be observed in the following figure, the SDC counts also with the Center for Strategic Defense Studies – CSDS, first permanent organ of the SDC. The CSDS was gestated in 2009, although its official creation has occurred only in 2011, in a conference regarding South American strategical positioning in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Its Statute was approved in the end of 2012, by the Council of Heads of State and of Government of UNASUR (Unasul 2012a). Its headquarters are located in Buenos Aires, in Argentina, and, as already pointed out, it was created with the expectative of "generating a strategical thought in the regional level", capable of contributing to the coordination and harmonization of defense politics in South America. It is an organ committed

to the production and the diffusion of strategical knowledge in defense and security in the scope of UNASUR.

**Figure 1 - Structure of the South-American Defense Council**



Source: Barbosa 2016.

Still in what concerns the structure of the SDC, there is the South-American Defense School – ESUDE, from its Spanish name –, approved in February of 2014 and created in August of the same year. ESUDE is a center of high studies, which has as its objective to capacitate civilians and military personnel in the areas of regional defense and security, in the political and strategical levels (Silva 2005). The creation of ESUDE met the expectations regarding the exchange between specialists of South-American countries, besides of covenants between South-American institutions and universities. As affirmed by Fonseca, when referring to ESUDE, the same was configured as a “regional institutional space that, through the education and the research of regional subjects of common interest, will contribute to the construction and the diffusion of a South-American defense thought” (Fonseca 2014, 7; own translation).

From the perspective of its functioning, the SDC, according to its Statute, summons ordinary meetings annually. Furthermore, the Council Agreements are adopted by consensus (according to the article 12 of UNASUR’s Constitutive Treaty). The Executive Instance, however, gathers at each six-month period, aiming at the elaboration of annual action plans of the Council. The Statute also highlights, regarding the functioning of the Council, that the incorporation of new state-members, as well as the cooperation dialogue with

other similar regional or sub-regional organizations, occurs accordingly to the determinations contemplated in UNASUR's Constitutive Treaty (Unasul 2008e).

## Which Regional Security Complex: an analysis from the agenda of the South-American Defense Council of UNASUR

As previously mentioned, according to Buzan's and Waever's theoretical orientation, a RSC is formed based in the interdependence degree existent among a group of states, besides of geographical proximity and historical, economic and social factors present in each of these states. Thus, the cooperation level experienced by a Complex will be greater as bigger is the interdependence among its members, added to the consensus that must permeate the decisions in the interest areas of that Complex.

In the case of the South-American RSC, regarded from the experience of the SDC, the decisions made by its members in the areas of defense and security are based on consensus. Buzan and Waever would classify the South-American RSC as *standard*, given the absence of a power that acts in the global level within the IS; the power is defined in terms of regional polarity, and the amity-enmity patterns may present itself as conflictive, security regimes or security communities.

It is important to note that, in the moment of the analysis, Buzan and Waever also consider the existence of *centred* RSC, which they classify in different types: unipolar, having as a pole a great power; centered, but integrated by institutions, and not by a regional power. One shall still consider that the theorists that discuss the theory of the RSC identify another model of *centred* RSC: an "extra option", "when there is an unipolar *centred* RSC, but the power is not a great power in the global scale" (Fuccille and Rezende 2013, 80; own translation).

The experience of UNASUR, and also of its SDC, have already boosted a debate regarding the relevance or not of the theory developed by Buzan and Waever, more specifically, in the definition they propose to the South-American RSC. In this sense, Fuccille and Rezende, for example, have already questioned Buzan's and Waever's theory, stating that the South-American RSC defended by these authors is "limited, or even outdated, due to some misunderstanding of the specific dynamics of the region" (Fuccille and Rezende 2013, 77; own translation).

In the analysis presented by Fuccille and Rezende, the RSC model for South America defended by Buzan and Waever cannot properly understand

the importance of Brazil for the region. According to Fuccille and Rezende, Brazil acts in South America as an “unipolar power” and “thrives to dominate the security dynamics in the region” (Fuccille and Rezende 2013, 85; own translation), in such a way that, for the South-American case, emerges a model “described as centered, in which the unipolar power is not a global power, inaugurating, thus, a first case of this type of RSC (Fuccille and Rezende 2013, 78; own translation).

So, this is the relevance of UNASUR and, especially, of the creation of the SDC, in which Brazil had a differentiated importance. Through UNASUR and the SDC, emerged a possibility for Brazil to exert a protagonism, being qualified as the “central actor of the RSC”, “exerting its regional hegemony through institutionalization and aggregation to a process of regional integration” (Fuccille and Rezende 2013, 85; own translation).

It is important to date the text of these latter authors, written in 2013 and, therefore, previously to the political and institutional crisis that resulted in the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff (approved by the Brazilian Senate in August of 2016). An analysis that, in this sense, cannot contemplate – for evident reasons – not only the political and institutional instability that Brazil has been facing in the last two years, but also, the own transformations in the foreign policies adopted by the following government, presided by Michel Temer.

In other words, one may not forget that, when UNASUR and the own SDC were created, Brazil was governed by Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, which leveraged its projection in the international scenario with an affirmative foreign policy, with emphasis in the South-South relations and betting in integration processes involving countries outside of the axis US – Europe – Japan.

This reverberated in the own acting of the country in South America, where Brazil effectively sought to be protagonist, achieving leadership in the integrative dynamics, as it is the case of UNASUR, in a perspective of uniting both sub-complexes present in the region (the Southern Cone one and the Andean one). The acting of Brazil in that period, in such direction, also sought to affirm its interests of international projection, being illustrative, in this case, of its candidacy (in that context) to occupy one of the permanent seats of UN’s Security Council.

The Brazilian political orientation in that period, thus, was driven by an interest of strengthening its leadership in South America, through a process of integrative institutionalization, capable of projecting and assuring its political hegemony in the region, and by its interest in occupying a space of greater importance in the global context, either through already existent institutions and alongside with countries of greater political and economic

importance, either through the establishment of new relations, with countries located in different “southern” regions.

These factors are important, including the discussion of issues (which point to some skepticism) brought by Fuccille and Rezende when analyzing UNASUR and the South-American RSC. The possibility of Brazil assuming a protagonist role in South America and, in this sense, standing as a Latin-American “central actor of the RSC”, as noted by the authors, requires some conditions to be attended: that Brazil stands as a guarantor of stability in the region; that the bet in the development dimension (to the detriment of the strategical-military dimension) not only overcomes the limits of such bet, but also that the own strategy centered in the development reaches legitimacy (economic stability in the countries and in the region); that exists interest, in the Brazilian side, of exerting hegemony in the region (as the authors point, when referring to Buzan’s and Waever’s analysis, “a center not willing to be a center might give continuity to the regional instabilities in course”), even if Brazil sustains its desire to be a global player (Fuccille and Rezende 2013, 88; own translation).

Evidently, one cannot deny the advances represented by the creation of UNASUR and, from within it, the creation of the SDC. An analysis of the SDC acting allows us to perceive a number of actions and discussions that express a virtuous historical process, consensually built from the consolidation of an institutional apparatus which allowed South-American countries to advance in the discussion regarding regional defense and security, including in a perspective of the construction of a defense and security community. Examples of these actions and advances are: the creation of the CSDS and of ESUDE, the Annual Action Plans of the SDC, the Declaration on the South-American Zone of Peace, the Proposal of Procedures for the Application of Measures to Promote Trust and Security, the numerous studies, diagnostics and prospecting analysis that were made.

It is necessary to notice, however, that the process of discussion and implementation of the SDC’s actions express a process that is still incipient, in which different issues still face distinct kinds of difficulties. Difficulties which are expressed, symbolically, in the change of designation of the own Declaration on the South-American Zone of Peace, initially a construction project of a protocol. Difficulties that were witnessed in the episode related to the dismiss of the Paraguayan President, when UNASUR, assuming a consensual position of its members, positioned itself in favor of the thesis that occurred a constitutional rupture, but that, in the limit of its own nature as an integrative process, limited itself to temporarily alienate Paraguay, later spending efforts in order to diminish losses that such country may have had

when dismissed.

Hence, the question (which South-American Security Complex?) may be answered, especially if taken into consideration the period which comprehends the creation of UNASUR until the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff (2016), from the own proposition defended by Alexandre Fuccille and Lucas Rezende: it is a *centred* model, with a unipolar power which does not exert global power. Nonetheless, this proposition, as the authors themselves assume, has to be taken very cautiously, because:

The relative autonomy experienced by South America allows the Brazilian prominent role as an articulator of the security perceptions of both regional sub-complexes. The institutionalization of UNASUR and of the SDC contributes to reaffirm Brazilian position in this process. The RSC of Latin America is of a *centred* model, but with a fragile center, and its stability depends on Brazil's actuation as a stabilizing center [...]. The question that remains, however, is: are we ready to assume those new responsibilities? (Fuccille and Rezende 2013, 95; own translation).

All of this questioning becomes even more important in light of the changes that occurred from the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff on. Since Rousseff's dismiss, the new Brazilian government, from its beginning, showed clearly that its priorities would not be the same as the ones that, until now, had oriented the actions of the country not only towards Latin America, but also towards other regions and countries of the planet. Documents made public by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicated that the new Brazilian leaderships have different points of discordance regarding the orientations given from Lula's government on, especially the underrating of relations with central capitalist countries, fundamentally the US.

In this moment, new questions ought to be posed. Although the US, through its recently elected governor, Donald Trump, have not openly declared changes concerning Latin America (thus implying that the region remains not being a priority), it is undeniable that, even in the analyzed period, the country kept a critical posture specially in what concerns the actions of governments that indicated a greater detachment from its interests (clearly regarding Venezuelan governments of Chávez and Maduro). In this sense, it is certain that, for that country, it is interesting that the South-American governments, as well as its integration experiences, do not represent a rupture with North-American interests in the region, neither a strengthening of relation that, in global level, may represent a confrontation to its interests.

Even if South America's position remains small in North-American

priorities agenda, it is important to ask whether the political changes occurred in important South-American countries, especially in Argentina and in Brazil, with the rise of social and political forces which strengthened the neoliberal pattern of development adopted during the 1990s (aligned, therefore, with the interests of the international capital, represented by institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank), did not result in a renouncement by these countries to the protagonist role in the region. Is it possible to affirm, for example, that Brazil, in the post-PT governments period, is interested in maintaining a leadership in Latin America, in exerting protagonism in the South-American RSC? Is it possible to affirm that Brazil will keep betting in the approximation of security agendas between South-American countries, confirming its interest in the institutionalization of integration projects with the South-American countries, or even with countries of other regions, located outside of the US – Europe – Japan axis? Even the complexity of the South-American countries' reality in the recent period, either in its internal relations either in the relations among themselves (here, two events can be just mentioned: the disputes that occurred/occur in Ecuador and Venezuela, the former expressing a political polarization and an already strong opposition to the guidelines assumed by the governments after the election of Rafael Correa; and the crisis in the relationship between Venezuela and MERCOSUR), will guarantee the availability and the sensibility demonstrated by the state-members of UNASUR, in the sense of maintaining the expectations of an integrative process and of the creation of a Security Community? And, in this sense, the own existence of UNASUR may be put at stake, because, although not abandoned, but rather placed in a position of "past project", the participation of countries, or of some strategic countries (as it is the case of Brazil), may result in a process of rising weakening of its acting.

The ending of this previous paragraph with an affirmation raises the possibility (and only the possibility, which means working with the hypothesis) of, due to the recent events involving important South-American countries, of the effective affirmation of a historical reality in which both existent and relevant security sub-complexes in the region (Southern Cone and North-Andean) enhance its importance and, also, in which, within the scope of these two sub-complexes, the relations with the US gain new contours (the persistence of North-American interest in the Northern-Andean region, not only due to the drug-trafficking, but also due to the political and ideological orientation of the Venezuelan government; the possibility of a greater integration with the countries of MERCOSUR, in a perspective of great economic approximation).

Regardless whether those questions lose historical meaning due to



the events of a future conjuncture, the issue is that, in a recent period, there are clear signs of the fact that the changes, especially in Brazil, put at stake UNASUR's own objectives. The prominence assumed by Brazil in this integration process, in a moment in which the country faces a crisis that is not only political, but also economic, puts at risk different expectations created up to now. In this direction, as an example, one of the issues that may be put at stake is the one of the continuity of investments in South America aiming at the physical integration of the region, such as the case of the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA), a project created in 2000, aiming at the development of joint actions (among South-American countries) of transportation, energy, and telecommunication infrastructure development. One may not forget that, since Lula's government, these projects depend on the financing of the Brazilian government, through the Brazilian Development Bank – BNDES, as well as Petrobrás, both in a recent period involved in denunciations of corruption and with a redefinition of its investment policies.

Finally, starting from the affirmation that, in a RSC, the leader country (or leader countries) ought to live in a situation of stability, one cannot undermine the crisis that Brazil has been facing in this latter period. Internally, besides of the corruption (involving almost all of the political parties and a significant number of political representatives that occupy elective positions, either in the Chamber of Deputies, either in the Senate) and the political and economic crisis, it is important to note that the country currently lives through a crisis of its own democracy, with different signs of the weakening of democratic institutions (certainly the most important is connected to the own democratic rupture represented by the impeachment of President Dilma and the set of reforms that, without the approval of the population that elected this President, its vice, now in the condition of President itself, is proposing and executing). Externally, it is at stake the possibility of continuing important movements executed in the recent period, in a perspective of reaching a prominent space in the global power institutions (as illustrated by Brazil's withdrawal from its interest in occupying a seat in UN Security Council)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Brazil has not presented a candidature in the last years for the occupation of a seat in the UN Security Council and, therefore, will not be a part of the referendum at least until 2033 (Folha de São Paulo 2017). Last modified on March 17. <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2017/03/1867280-brasil-ficara-de-fora-do-conselho-de-seguranca-da-onu-ao-menos-ate-2033.shtml>.

## Final Considerations

This article has analyzed the RSC implied in the discussions about defense and security in South America, more specifically, from the creation of the SDC, within the scope of UNASUR, on.

The article has presented and analyzed the RSCT, especially in its version constructed by the theorists of the Copenhagen School, Buzan and Waeber, through which was possible to indicate the main theoretical questions that oriented the analysis of the historical meaning of the creation and the actuation of the SDC.

The discussions regarding the creation of UNASUR advanced during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, until, in 2008, was signed the Constitutive Treaty of UNASUR. A treaty that, in the same line as presented in the proposal of a Community of South-American Nations, affirmed, in its preamble, the commitment to the “shared and solidary history” of the South-American countries, characterizing these nations as multiethnic, pluri-lingual and multicultural; but also, the commitment to the creation of an integrated regional space in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and energetic dimensions, in the perspective of catalyzing the sustainable development in South-America, focused in the people’s well-being, in the multilateralism, in the balance, in the justice, in the equality, in the affirmation of a peace culture.

From then on, the analysis had as its core the historical formation of the SDC and, especially, its structure and actuation, in the period that comprehended its creation, in 2008, and the year 2015. The analysis also presented its Statute (Nature, Principles, Objectives, Structure and Functioning) and its functioning structure.

It was possible, thus, to reach a discussion regarding what is the RSC implied in the debate about defense and security in the South-American Defense Council. In this direction, it was affirmed that, effectively and from the analyzed experience in such period on, the studies affirmed a *centred* model, with an unipolar power that does not exert global power, objectified in the protagonism that Brazil assumed in the construction process of UNASUL. It was highlighted, nevertheless, the fragility of Brazil’s position in South America, the difficulties found in UNASUR’s own affirmation while an integration project among South-American countries and, mainly, how the more recent conjuncture, marked by ruptures in the political dynamics of important countries in the region, especially in Brazil, put at stake the own nature of the South-American RSC, and even the ways of continuing the integration project represented by UNASUR.

In this sense, this article presented one of its limits, given by the choice of a period of analysis that, although have not refused to contemplate aspects of changes occurred recently (especially in Brazil), have occupied itself, fundamentally, of what occurred until the end of 2015. New researches, thus, are not only important, but also necessary to a more precise analysis of the repercussions of this recent conjuncture in UNASUR, in the discussions regarding defense and security, and even in the South-American Regional Security Complex.

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**ABSTRACT**

This article is the result of an investigation into the model of Regional Security Complex (RSC model in South America, especially since the creation of the South American Defense Council (SDC), within UNASUR - Union of South American Nations. From a theoretical discussion on the Regional Security Complexes, it is argued that the recent South American experience affirmed an “extra type” model, since in its dynamics it is not identified a regional power that acts in a global level despite Brazilian’s greater economic expression in regional and international arena.

**KEYWORDS**

Union of South American Nations; Regional Security Complex; South American Defense Council.

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