From Brasília to Caracas: Brazilian Cooperation to Venezuelan Contention

Octavio Ribeiro¹, Pedro Maia²

Resumo

O ano de 2012 entra para a história do sistema institucional sul-americano e caribenho, sendo a inserção da Venezuela no Mercado Comum do Sul representação da intensificação de tal processo integracional. Ao entrar como membro pleno do MERCOSUL, a Venezuela se vê inserida em três dos principais processos de integração regionais propostos e liderados pelo Brasil, sendo os outros dois a União das Nações Sul-Americanas (UNASUL) e a Comunidade dos Estados Latino-Americanos e Caribenhos (CELAC). Este artigo visa compreender os motivos pelos quais o Brasil estimula a entrada venezuelana em tais instituições, com base analítica no neorrealismo defensivo de Joseph Grieco, que permite uma análise de instituições sem que se configure um perigo ao núcleo duro do projeto de pesquisa neorrealista. Percebe-se que em cada instituição, o Brasil desenvolve uma maneira particular para minar a atuação venezuelana no sistema regional.

Palavras-chave: Brasil e Venezuela, neorrealismo defensivo, integração regional, arranjos institucionais, contenção.

Abstract

The year of 2012 became a remarkable year for the Latin America and Caribbean’s institutional system. The insertion of Venezuela in MERCOSUR represents the intensification of this process of integration. Once in MERCOSUR, Venezuela becomes member of three of the most relevant process of regional integration, UNASUR, MERCOSUR and CELAC, all of them led by Brazil. This article aims to understand the reasons why Brazil fosters Venezuela’s entrance in those institutions, based at Grieco’s defensive neo-realism, which allows us to analyses the institutional process without harming neorealism’s hardcore and it’s research program. It can be seen that in each institution Brazil develops a particular way to undermine Venezuelan’s regional project.

Key Words: Brazil and Venezuela, defensive neorealism, regional integration, institutional arrangements, contention.

Abstracto

El año 2012 llega a la historia del sistema institucional de América del Sur y el Caribe, con la inclusión de Venezuela en el Mercado Común del Sur representando la

¹ Octavio Ribeiro – Researcher at BRICS Policy Center (BPC), in the Country Desks/Russia core.
intensificación de este proceso integracional. En su calidad de miembro pleno del MERCOSUR, Venezuela se encuentra inserta en tres grandes procesos de integración regionales propuestos y liderados por Brasil, los otros dos son la Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (UNASUR) y la Comunidad de Estados de América Latina y el Caribe (CELAC). Este artículo tiene como objetivo comprender las razones por las cuales Brasil estimula la entrada de Venezuela en esas instituciones, con base en análisis neorrealista defensiva de Joseph Grieco, lo que permite un análisis de las instituciones sin ser un peligro para la configuración del núcleo duro del proyecto neorrealista de investigación. Se observa que en todas las instituciones, Brasil desarrolla una manera particular para socavar las operaciones en Venezuela en el sistema regional.

**Palabras Clave:** Brasil y Venezuela, el neorrealismo defensivo, la integración regional, los acuerdos institucionales, la contención.
Introduction

During 2012, a series of events marked the history of the Latin American political system. Among those events it’s worth mentioning Paraguay’s suspension of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), due to the noncompliance of the democratic clause. However, it was also possible to note the presence of deeper and highly institutionalized processes of regional integration; we may see the inclusion of Venezuela as a full member of MERCOSUR as an evidence of such a claim. The admission of Venezuela may be understood as the pinnacle of the integrational process in Latin America, alongside a greater degree of institutionalization through the full operation of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the first conformations about the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). Within such a scenario, it becomes clear the role of Venezuela. Through their inclusion in such arrangements, the Venezuelan government seeks to have a greater voice and exert greater influence within the regional political game.

Despite the creation of such institutions, we may notice divergent foreign policies of Brazil and Venezuela, mainly in relation to their regional projects. Venezuela’s project may be understood as one influenced by a left exacerbated character, aggressive and based on oil as a bargaining tool at the multilateral level (Arellano, 2009, p. 131-133). While Brazilian regional policy is based on trade as a way to rationalize power, find partners for cooperation and influence in the Latin American region (Arellano, 2009, p. 124-127). Therefore, we sought to understand why - despite their differences - Brazil supports Venezuela's adherence to institutional arrangements such as MERCOSUR, UNASUR and CELAC.

From this point on, we use the theoretical framework created by Grieco in the article The Maastricht Treaty, Economic and Monetary and the New-Realist Research Program for further understandings. While analyzing Brazil's position in accordance with this framework, we realized that Brazil seeks to consolidate its regional leadership, improve their relative position amid the international system and perpetrate the realistic quest for eternal security. Ando to do so, it conforms Venezuela in institutional arrangements, such as MERCOSUR, UNASUR and CELAC, in order to restrict it behavior making it more predictable (Grieco, 1997, p. 163).
The instrumentalization of institutional arrangements by Brazil, takes on the Brazilian attempt to rationalize the use of power as a way of maintaining its superior relative position. Given the active participation of Brazil in regional organizations, inserting Venezuela in such spaces means: (1) require the Venezuelan state to comply with a series of determinations that would institutionally restrict its operations and generate predictability of its behavior - as the democracy clause; (2) insert a new actor in contexts where Brazil already has a major influence, such as MERCOSUR; (3) contain Venezuela’s actions and its threatening position face the Brazilian regional project.

The MERCOSUR is a customs union initially idealized bilaterally between Brazil and Argentina, which nowadays extends to Paraguay, Uruguay and recently Venezuela - architected to promote economic and social development with equity, poverty reduction and respect for democracy (Prado, 1997, p. 276-299). From the creation of MERCOSUR on, we may notice a more active Brazilian participation in search of a regional leadership, both economic and political (Arellano, 2009, p. 127). In June 2012, the Common Market of the South embraced another Member State: the Venezuela of Hugo Chávez, after six years of signing the Protocol of Accession.

UNASUR, arising from the CASA (Community of South American Nations), it is an intergovernmental organization, without supranational pretensions. The institution was conceived as an attempt to create a space for Latin American regionalism that did not have direct U.S. participation. Precisely for this purpose, that the Brazilian state became one of the main supporters of the institution. In such an organization, Brazil has been exerting democratic leadership, while stimulating the strengthening of the institution and of the multilateral institutions in the region (Scott, 2010, p. 151-168).

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) is far from an isolated initiative, it is a continuation of part of the process of regional fencing consolidated in recent years, largely coordinated by Brazil, which sees this institution as a possible instrument for expanding the political dialogue within the region. This institution has as its primarily challenge achieve a political coordination, find common positions to deal with common problems and reduce their difficulties to relate to other
countries (Vaz, 2010, p. 4-8). The CELAC takes historical heritage of the Rio Group and CALC (Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean).³

During this analysis, we will try, from the analytical framework developed by authors such as Felix Arellano, Sean Burges and Miriam Saraiva and theoretically informed by Joseph Grieco and Lloyd Gruber, to understand the reasons why Brazil conforms Venezuela into institutional arrangements and why it foster the Venezuelan desire for membership in many Latin America regional institutions.

Chavez's approach is marked by a statist and mercantilist bias that intends to increase the country's wealth through the exploitation of oil, Burges argues that such a route tends to create a vision of globalization and of a regional project centered in Venezuela (Burges 2007, p.1-6). We start from this assumption to justify the argument that such a search could create a threat to Brazil's position in the system, justifying the Brazilian attitude of encouraging the entry of Venezuela in institutional arrangements.

Felix Arellano said that while Brazil and Venezuela share a leftist political ideology, there are some differences both in ideological depth - Brazil being center-left, while keeping Venezuela as a radical left - and among the regional projects of the two states: Brazil adopts a commercialist approach while Venezuela bases its foreign policy on the energetic pillar mainly on oil exploration (Arellano, 2009, p. 124-127). We use this argument to support our hypothesis that, due to a higher relative position of Brazil and thanks to divergent regional projects, Brazil supports the admission of Venezuela into several regional arrangements as a way to rationalize power.

Despite the political disagreement - as much as the political-ideological aspect of governments and the regional projects situation - Ruiz and Scott claim that Venezuela got increasingly closer to MERCOSUR, whereas withdrew from the Andean Community. However, it did not realize that such a position led Venezuela into the Brazilian political game of autonomy through integration. This foreign policy strategy is responsible for a discrete regional leadership by Brazil (Ruiz and Scott, 2009, p. 124-127). Therefore, this understanding of the regional political dynamics corroborates with

³ The Rio Group was an instrument of political dialogue for democracy, inspired by the work undertaken by the Group Contadora and support groups in favor of peace in Central America. The Latin America and Caribbean Summit on integration and development (CALC) aimed to address competent attitudes in the areas of regional cooperation and integration, sustainable development, eradication of poverty, promotion of social justice and democracy (Itamaraty, 2014).
our argument that Brazil uses regional institutions to maintain its defensive position in the system.

Based on Gruber’s approach, we understand the choice of international institutions once they formalize the terms of cooperation, monitor the behavior of the countries and transmit information efficiently and with lesser costs. Thus, when Brazil wants to change the behavior of Venezuela, this is much more likely to occur covertly, indirectly, involving the manipulation of the possible choices of the Venezuelan state. Being an indirect tactic of operation, restrictions on Venezuela appear disguised as institutional conditionalities, so the Venezuelan government ends up having limited its scope of action. This Brazilian action emerges as rational to the extent that it becomes a less costly way to combat Venezuelan foreign policy (Gruber, 2005, p. 103-108).

This topic is relevant to the IRs once it show two possibilities for analysis of the study: an analytical and a practical. The analytical goes through the theoretical framework, the realism used in this article will start from assumptions as international anarchy, the positioning of the States through the International System and the impact of the formation of preferences of the actors involved and the rationalization of costs (Grieco, 1997, p. 163-179), relating directly to our goal of analysis. The practical part is also present once we relate to: (1) the integration processes in the Americas - area of intense dynamism; (2) Weight actors at the regional level - Brazil and Venezuela, the first one looking for a bulkier role in the region; (3) a rather controversial actor like Venezuela and his former agent, Hugo Chávez.

Our methodology is based on a theoretical and empirical analysis. We use a theoretical framework and empirical data supplement. Our research is based on a screening process, where we track and trace Brazil’s behavior in MERCOSUR, UNASUR and CELAC. We take as independent variables the relative position of the states of Brazil and Venezuela and as the dependent variable the intensification of cooperation between both countries. Thus, we frame the cooperation between the two states depending on the position that they occupy in the international context.

---

4 Aims to understand why certain institutional arrangements have flexible rules. Claims so that flexibility is important, since it allows the insertion of new actors and a reformulation of the rules of the scheme and of its agenda (Gruber, 2005).
The theoretical framework is represented by the defensive neorealism, which will examine the formation of preferences and the behavior of states in the international system. Having the relative capabilities as reference states follow certain lines of behavior, taking defensive measures as a consequence of the constant insecurity inherent to the anarchic world. In this scenario the leading players in the international system act to promote safety and claim a reduction of their threats, maintaining their relative positions and consequently its safety itself. Thus, it is reasonable to create institutions that seek a rationalization of power, bearing in mind their pursuit for security (Grieco, 1997, p. 161-178).

Our technical approach, however, goes beyond neorealism itself. According to Lakatos, a scientific program over time should not be based on a fixed and immutable theory but instead on a rolling program. A research program should contain: (1) a hardcore composed of fixed concepts; (2) certain assumptions about the particular field, and (3) a protective belt - composed of auxiliary hypotheses that stem from the same core. The neorealism hardcore can be defined as: (1) states as the principal actors in the international system; (2) States as substantively and instrumentally rational actors; (3) the preferences and choices of these are shaped by the International anarchy. States are, mainly, interested in security and independence, making them sensitive to costs and, consequently, leaning towards policy choices aimed at promoting such interests (Grieco, 1995, p. 26-27).

Based on this research design, the neorealism offers us numerous hypotheses regarding the field of cooperation and international institutions. Even with the neorealist disbelief in institutions, it is necessary to take into account that, in many cases, the rationality of states leads them to accept the importance of international institutions. Thus, the theoretical neorealists should look at the auxiliaries hypotheses hitherto neglected (Grieco, 1995, p. 28-30).

But in addition, we intend to discuss the neorealist theoretical range in dealing with policy issues that go beyond the major powers. Accordingly, we assert that thinking about a realism to states located in "noncentral" areas of the International System involves analyzing elements that are not necessarily understood in terms of concrete power by major powers. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on policy issues absent in large part, in the calculations of power, as international institutions, regional
relations and economic flows. The realist understanding of power in tangible terms is informed largely by an understanding of the great powers. States that are not in the select group of major powers end up using other elements to influence - like business relationships - which, although not necessarily concrete, directly impacting end power relations among states.

**Theoretical Framework**

The recent debate over institutions within the field of IR, caught between neorealism and institutional neoliberalism serve as an introduction to our theoretical framework. The neorealism has a core composed of three assumptions: (1) States are the main actors in international politics; (2) are rational actors; (3) their preferences and choices are determined by the absence of a centralized international authority. The neorealism suggests that international anarchy forces states to worry about their safety and independence, becoming sensitive to costs and as a consequence, choosing policies that help to promote their safety and autonomy, focusing on relative gains. Thus, cooperation between states and international institutions emerge as mere instruments of power relations among states (Waltz, 1979).

Neoliberalism, in turn, agrees with certain concepts present in neorealism as the rationality of the state actor, his leading role in the International System and the understanding of the international context as anarchic. Nevertheless, a disagreement between the two theoretical currents is directly related to the aspect of cooperation. For neoliberals, the cooperative arrangements appear as a mechanism found among states to mitigate the effects of anarchy, since international institutions are able to offer more information, reduce transaction costs and provide predictability on the actions of other states (Keohane, 1984).

Thus, we note that both theoretical perspectives end up approaching at certain points - as the state rationality - but differing when it comes about dealing with institutions. However, even within the broader category of neorealism distinctions begin to emerge. The main one is between the offensive and defensive neorealism. The first believes that the goal of all states is the hegemony and that the defining principle of

---

5 Relative gains become important, as any asymmetry of gains can be reversed in a concrete power asymmetry.
power is military capability. This is achieved thanks to the anarchy of the international system that forces states to take aggressive postures towards survival (Mearsheimer, 2003)\(^6\). While the defensive neorealism - in this work represented by the ideas of Grieco - believes that the states in the international system, are in search of safety, and to achieve this goal, it is necessary to adopt a defensive posture. Thus, institutions can serve as instruments of power projection, because they are arrangements that optimize the relationships and improve the balance between cost and benefit of its member states. (Grieco, 1995, p. 27).

The Grieco’s neorealism allows international institutions to have a relevant role to the States, to the extent that they become arenas for power projection and enhancement of the relative position of states. Moreover, these organizations are able to maximize the use of power thanks to its instruments providing predictability, reducing uncertainty and increasing the shadow of the future. In general, we claim that this approach means employing power in a safe environment (Grieco, 1995). When thinking of a debate with liberals, in this case Lisa Martin, we notice how the author claims that institutions became an arena of secondary operations, mostly to states that do not have major power capabilities, using schemes and multilateral arrangements as an alternative in the search for a better position in the international scenario (Martin, 1992). However, what we say with Grieco, is that institutions are directly related to the calculations of power and capabilities. They are not only side spaces where states without capacity are present, they are actually safe spaces for the use of power, where it is rationalized and the chances of increasing its profits and optimize the position of the State in the International System are concrete (Grieco, 1995).

Thus, we realize how neorealism can give birth to other hypotheses hitherto marginalized, allowing a theoretical update that respects the core of this analytical lens, making it more flexible, contributing to the renewal of such way of seeing the international relations.

**Divergent External Policies of Brazil and Venezuela**

The Venezuelan regional project has a geostrategic and military character, it is informed by a series of ideological elements clearly perceived in Chavez foreign policy.

---

\(^6\) Mearsheimer is considered to be one of those responsible for spreading the so-called offensive neo-realism.
Through a foreign policy based on the use of energy resources, as noted in Petrocaribe, Venezuela seeks to strengthen its leadership in both the Latin American continent and in Central America. At the same time, Venezuela assumes a greater role through alliances with Iran, Russia and China and the instrumentalization of OPEC as a forum for global impact. In contrast, the Brazilian regional project is multidimensional and guided through productive, industrial and commercial development (Serbin, 2009, p. 147-148).

Both projects do not exclude relations with the U.S., but considered it from different perspectives. Venezuela adopts a conflicting attitude towards the U.S., while Brazil, to weigh the value of a business relationship with the U.S., seeks to be recognized as the caller of a relationship that does not threaten its regional aspirations. Both strategies, although different, correspond to a multipolar world view. The contrasts are marked by divergent views: while one is composed by an armed military bias and a strong ideological appeal, the other is defined by the economic development that is part of a diplomatic strategy (Serbin, 2009, p 148-150.). Besides these different views towards the U.S., it is clear the disagreement between Brazil and Venezuela regarding the strategic direction for the fostering of governance in the international context (Arellano, 2009, p. 131).

Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR)

50 years after the treaty envisioned by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs Oswaldo Aranha (Brazil) and Enrique Ruiz-Guiñazú (Argentina), that sought to create an institution that would provide a free exchange, turning gradually into a customs union, Brazil and Argentina integracional intents were materialized by incorporating the Republics of Uruguay and Paraguay, celebrating the Treaty of Asunción (1991) founding, therefore, the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR). The architecture of the regional block suffered mitigating change in 2012, with the suspension of Paraguay, since this broke the democratic clauses in the Ushuaia Protocol (1998), and the accession of Venezuela (Banner, 2005).

MERCOSUR is marked by open regionalism⁷, aiming to extend the trade between its full-members, associate members and third countries. Based on the Protocol of Ouro Preto (1994), highlight the block three institutional pillars: (1) the Common

---

⁷ Open regionalism is not just intra-zone commercial expansion, but also the expansion of trade with third countries (Itamaraty, 2014).
Market Council - which aims to decision making as the bloc's policy, like the elimination of instruments and adoption of policies in a given area; (2) the Common Market Group - which aims to aid CMC in decisions of executive character and (3) the Trade Commission of the MERCOSUR - technical body responsible for supporting the block in regard of trade policies.

For Brazil, the Mercosur project comes as a way to create a more predictable and stable regional system, since it creates a zone of relative peace and cooperation among its Member States and the possibility of convergence in the block at the political level when compared to other institutions. Brazil is interested in projecting its image of political leadership at the regional level and, although it is not a hegemonic pretensions, becoming the block’s reference country in the eyes of the International System (Vigevani and Ramanzini, 2011). Importantly, the MERCOSUR comes as the first bloc proposed by Brazil to serve as mechanism to strengthen its relative position in multilateral forum, thereby streamlining the sharing of power and spending (Grieco, 1997). In the economic sphere, MERCOSUR is a Brazilian alternative to the expansion of market opportunities, the relations of complementarity of the economies-members through the lowering of customs barriers and a negotiating lever, while functions as a bargaining mechanism with other international institutions.

As already mentioned, in 2012 the MERCOSUR underwent a period of change since the Paraguayan Senate coup with, then President, Fernando Lugo, which culminated at Paraguay suspension in three main institutions at the regional level (MERCOSUR, UNASUR and CELAC), due to the violation of democratic clauses presented in their legal texts; and the accession of Venezuela to block, six years after approval of your application for membership therein. One can directly relate the first to the second phenomenon, since Paraguay was the last Member State of the MERCOSUR to leave pendent the full-entry of Venezuela. One can say that fears about the fulfillment of the democratic clauses and how trade agreements by Venezuela, added to the high degree of unpredictability of Venezuela's actions were the reason for the long process of its accession to conduct amid the Paraguayan Senate. From the moment that Paraguay was suspended, and its power of veto over the decision to block relevant issues were also under suspension, accelerating the entry of Venezuela into bloc (CEBRI 2012).
Venezuelan perceptions on regional integration are quite different from Brazil, and its recent accession to MERCOSUR is the result of a process begun in the 90s. Until 2002, there was no predominant position in the design of Chavez's foreign policy in terms of the processes of regional integration, especially MERCOSUR. With the final withdrawal of Venezuela proximity to the United States due to political differences, in 2003, Venezuela's integration strategy becomes clear in the following year. The rise of center-left governments in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay and the decision of the Andean countries to negotiate bilaterally with the U.S., culminated in the withdrawal of Venezuela from the Andean Community of Nations and consequently the intensification of the integration process, culminating in the request to enter as a full member of MERCOSUR. After the victory of Chavez about the Constitutional Referendum in 2009, we have set a new stage of Venezuelan foreign policy, where factors turned the focus on the political dimension of integration processes, intending to create a block that assures South American countries power autonomy, security and influence in global scenarios (Saraiva and Ruiz, 2009, p. 157-161).

Brazil had important contribution in the process of accelerating the entry of Venezuela into the block. Although different visions and narratives across the region, Brazil saw in this movement a chance to confront other emerging regional power (Serbin, 2009, p. 146-149). Institutional moorings of MERCOSUR are able to shape the behavior of a country with huge economic burden due to its energy reserves; Venezuela is thus subject to containment elements. In essence, the Southern Common Market is part of Brazil's strategy to transform the block through the integration of the Member States of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) in a hard core of South American integration. It is worth mentioning that MERCOSUR is highly reflective of the position of the Brazilian foreign policy, in its commercialist and productive bias (Vigevani and Ramanzini 2011). Thus, from the moment that Venezuela is part of the block, it passes to enter indirectly in Brazilian foreign policy, allowing the Federative Republic of Brazil rationalize the use of power as well as the costs of containing a competing regional project (Grieco, 1997).

It is worth mentioning that trade relations between Brazil and Venezuela, have always been marked by a Venezuelan dependence, since a large part of the agenda of Venezuelan exports is destined for Brazil, but the reciprocal is not true, since Brazil has an export list more diverse, both in products and in the context of partners (Chamber of
Commerce Brazil and Venezuela, 2011). Another fact that demonstrates Venezuelan dependency is the pattern of trade between Brazil and Venezuela, where the first mainly exports of capital goods and cars, while Venezuela exports sardines and oil (Chamber of Commerce Brazil and Venezuela, 2011). Thus, we argue that Venezuela to join MERCOSUR, such economic ties tend to increase as well as the relationship of dependence on Venezuelan Brazil. However, in an institutionalized environment, Brazil can rationalize power, as trade costs (Grieco, 1997). In short, Brazil continues positioning defensively, rationalizing power and containing the Venezuelan operations in the region.

**Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)**

The Union of South American Nations comprises the 12 countries of South America is the result of an ambitious project started in December 2004, at the Summit of Cuzco, when was celebrated the 180th anniversary of the battle that cemented the end of the process independence of Spanish America. In Cuzco, Peru, it was shaped the institutional basis of the predecessor of UNASUR, CASA (Community of South American Nations); to its main promoter and former Argentine President Duhalde, this was a historic step, marked by the resumption of dream of the liberators (Marchiori, 2011, p. 162).

CASA’s initial interest was to tackle the European Union, aimed at creating a free trade and cooperation in the defense area. It also provided further context of integration in the infrastructure area. Such integration would occur gradually, from the consistency and convergence of economic, political and legal commitments previously entered into other institutional arrangements, such as the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR). CASA followed economic manner prescribed in ancient ALALC (Latin American Free Trade Association), as they foresaw the creation of a free trade area, and institutional frameworks from ALADI (Latin American Integration Association). In short, CASA came to fill a gap in terms of political articulation in the Latin American continent as a whole (Marchiori, 2011, p. 163-168).

Taking into account the defensive position adopted by the states and the fact that they are constantly concerned about their relative power, they often choose to enter into
regional arrangements in order to maintain their current position, which is a result of its relative amount of power, also helping them in the maintenance of their safety (Grieco, 1997, p.166-168).

The institutional structure of CASA was solidified in 2005, at the Brasilia meeting, and in 2007 it is proposed a name change: CASA for the current UNASUR. This nominal change is adopted, UNASUR comes into existence as institution thus gain legal legitimacy. Concurrently with the nominal change proposals come even more ambitious than those set out in Cuzco, such as: the creation of a development bank of the Member States (South Bank), a parliament (South American Parliament), and a Board of Defense.

It is the responsibility of UNASUR: (1) the creation of a space of articulation in the social, cultural, economic and political among its people; (2) prioritize dialogue, social policies, education, energy, infrastructure, finance and the environment, among others, in order to create peace and security; (3) eliminating socioeconomic inequality, achieving social inclusion and citizen participation; (4) strengthen democracy and reduce asymmetries within the framework of strengthening the sovereignty and independence of States. It is also in the UNASUR agenda the debate about the defense of the territory, as well as the protection of its borders, the fostering of a common strategy for all Member States.

It can be said that UNASUR, or at least its skeleton, was a Brazilian initiative that aimed to deepen the political and military ties between the South American states. Important to note the existence of a more egalitarian distribution of capabilities in comparison with other regional blocks (Flemes, 2008, p. 15-16). Although the institution was initially conceived by Brazil, it is clear that, for the most fragile States, the institution becomes profitable once it offers the opportunity of having a voice in negotiations at the multilateral level. Thus, States assume more institutionalized ties with stronger partners as a tactic that allows the profit and avoids them to become enslaved (Grieco, 1995, p. 33-34). However, when these States, including Venezuela, join in regional arrangements, they are gradually losing its full freedom of action due to legal restrictions institutions. Even if we do not benefit from their freedom of action at full power, States give preference to institutions, since they provide a greater
opportunity of voice and participation in the profits arising from the regional process (Keohane, 1984).

UNASUR is an intergovernmental organization, without supranational pretensions. Thus, we note that no such institution violates the Brazilian autonomy while allowing garner support from smaller member States. From this statement we can infer that Brazil induce such States to act in order to achieve goals, Brazilians and their own, thus notices a match goals (Destradi, 2008). Despite these homogenizing goals, we can distinguish two distinct South American region programs. On one side we have the Venezuela of Hugo Chávez with a geostrategic and military vein, while the other have the Brazil with a project based on economic development (Serbin, 2009, p. 145). It is noticed that Brazil's leadership in integration initiatives for the Americas is not only perceived by the benefits achieved in the region, but also the most robust aspirations, aspirations to regional leadership (Wade, 2010, p. 43). Due to these claims of leadership, the Federative Republic of Brazil seeks to enter Venezuela in institutional arrangements as a way to rationalize power and contain its divergence project.

By applying both Grieco and Gruber as the regional environment, as noted in the attempt to rationalize power, Brazil inserts Venezuela in highly binding institutions, keeping it in its defensive position and contributing to an expansion of its security (Grieco, 1999). Consequently, efforts are reflected in the creation of regional practices that limit the scope of the political process and prevent attitudes, like any threat to the Brazilian regional project (Gruber, 2005, p. 102-104).

As stated previously in the framework of MERCOSUR, one of the ways found by Brazil to contain Venezuela was the postulation of an Additional Protocol to the UNASUR Constitutive Treaty of commitment to democracy (2010). This protocol sets out the full observance of democratic institutions and full respect for human rights. The above mentioned permits the application of punitive sanctions on those who break with democratic standards prescribed by constitutive legal text. Thus, we can notice how Brazil is shaping Venezuela in an arrangement that deprives the full freedom of action, and advancing issues on the agenda that are of Brazilian interests, but are slowly being understood as topics of interest of all members in the regional institution.

However, the Venezuelan option to integrate regional arrangements can be understood both as part of its regional leadership project, exerting influence on other
actors, as well as a way of rationalizing the exercise of its power (Serbin, 2009). But in addition, we can also understand such insertion through Grieco’s argument that institutions can be understood as platforms of projection and rationalization of power (Grieco, 1996).

United Community of Latin American and the Caribbean (CELAC)

The creation of a mechanism for regional integration between Latin America and the Caribbean, is not something new and unusual, existed prior projects that identified the urgent need for a more comprehensive, vehicle integration not only favored economic and commercial aspects as in CALC (Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean), not just a forum for political concentration aimed at politically stable Latin American countries, such as the Rio Group (Aravena 2012, p. 16).

The Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean emerged as a bottleneck of economic and political ties of the countries of the region. In his first conference (1998), the aforementioned objectives was seen mainly in the economic field that sought to formalize intra-regional trade agreements, and monitoring concerns regarding the consequences of the financial crisis. The second meeting of CALC (1999) brings the approval of the Plan of Action Montego Bay. The aforementioned widen cooperation between regional and sub-regional integration, making them more robust, and carry a broad agenda to be implemented. This schedule is incorporated into the process of constitution of CELAC and should actually be implemented in the above.

The Rio Group (1986) was an initiative of important role in the processes of political stabilization among the countries of Latin America. It comprised all the countries of South America (except French Guiana) and the Central American countries, and these had rotary participation amongst this group. The great purpose of the mechanism was cooperation through consultation, marked by its high degree of institutionalization and flexibility. It was also part of Rio Group’s agenda: politics, social, legal rights and strategic character themes (Borges, 2001, p. 60-62).

Despite being a different from previous institution, and having new purposes, CELAC inherits intellectual property, and further, inherits from CALC and from the Rio Group commitments previously entered into with other international forums. Adding to its primary purpose the creation of a convergence mechanism, which the
differences between its members not becoming a hindrance (Aravena, 2012, p. 16-17). Among the differences between the Member States, note the disparity of objectives, where countries like Venezuela, by entering into such arrangements, seeking a greater "voice" in order to change their relative position in the system. This search affects the Brazilian state, which in turn stimulates the inflow in the same institutions as the CELAC as a way of rationalizing power, restricting the performance of this and threatening their pretensions to Brazil.

The creation of CELAC, only happened thanks to the joint efforts of the major regional actors: Brazil and Mexico, and this effort is the integration of Latin America, combined with a political will that there be a new regionalism without letting difficulties of dealing with differences between the States hinder the development of the organization (Aravena 2012, p. 16).

The main points of the CELAC are: (1) establishment of intergovernmental policy dialogue (by permeating many areas, such as economic, social, cultural, etc.); (2) the creation of a South American energy strategy, which brings integration in terms of energy infrastructure as well as in the area of energy from biofuels; (3) the improvement of transport infrastructure and telecommunications, among others.

To corroborate the hypothesis we want to test, there is an effort to draw a South American energy strategy by Brazil, which seeks to create an international market for biofuels making these commodities. In seeking this goal, Brazil search actually streamline the Venezuelan power, a country that has as its base a foreign policy more valuable comoditie: oil. By creating a "sustainable" alternative to this, the leading country in the regional system, Brazil, undermines Venezuela's threatening pretensions in attempt to change its relative position among the system, keeping it under control. To reduce the influence of the pillar of Venezuelan foreign policy, oil, Central America, Brazil decreased Bolivarian action in it and makes room for its own projection of power (Grieco, 1997).

Just as in MERCOSUR and UNASUR, CELAC is endowed with the democratic clause, postulated the Special Declaration on the Defense of Democracy and Constitutional Order in CELAC (2011). One can consider the clause as necessary, once, since the 2000s, the consensus on the importance of democratic regimes has been losing weight in developing countries, these being replaced by nationalist oriented models for
different standards of democracy (Saraiva and Ruiz 2009, p. 151). This statement reiterates the maximum and strict respect for the rule of law, sovereignty and territorial integrity, the defense of democracy and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. These are essential prerequisites for the participation of a State in CELAC and its various organs, not being admitted neither noncompliance nor disrespect any of them. As seen in the framework of MERCOSUR and UNASUR, in CELAC one can also realize Brazil's intention to conform Venezuela into a tether that limits have full power of his performance.

Conclusion

In short, it became evident through the exposed elements; we conclude that, in fact, Brazil uses its relevant interest in recent integration processes in Latin America to project its image of political leadership at the regional level and to maintain their defensive position amid the regional system. To this end, controlling Venezuelan actions to magnification of its own power, ruled in an aggressive and radical leftist politics, is a necessary condition. Thus, Brazil has been making this policy a veiled manner, with the support of international institutions analyzed, MERCOSUR, UNASUR and CELAC.

Then it gives the proposal is confirmed. The approaches used by the authors, Arellano Felix, Sean Burges and Miriam Saraiva, coupled with the theoretical background of Joseph Grieco and Lloyd Gruber, complement, corroborating with the analyzed idea that Brazil is rather in favor of accession to regional institutions by Venezuela, due to the need to restrict the actions of the same, thereby restraining the possible threat to their relatively superior position in the system. In this sense, regional arrangements have to be extremely useful to Brazilian purposes.

It can be observed that with the fostering of MERCOSUR, Brazil has a more active and highlighted participation amid the regional system and construction of a clear leadership image, even without hegemonic pretensions. This role was previously authoritative once facing its continental dimensions corresponding to its strong economy. MERCOSUR turns out to be the crystallization of Brazilian successfully commercialist foreign policy (Arellano, 2009, p. 127), in addition to ensuring the stability and predictability required.
The political and military sphere, with the maintenance of the South American states in UNASUR, Brazil strengthens its favorable position and highlights the realization of its interests in the scope of the institution. Supported by the legal legitimacy of the arrangement, Brazil also can limit the ability of Venezuelan action, since the institution reinforces democratic standards. By entering Venezuela in arrangements of this kind, Brazil ends up distancing it from its aggressive political program, rationalizing the power of the same and, hence, promoting its own safety.

The dissonances between the foreign policies of these two countries have been the main driver of this veiled dispute. Both states seek to enlarge their regional power projection, creating a tension between their governments. However, Brazil opts for policies characterized by the attempt to circumvent the tension, i.e., through cooperation and regional integration, promoting a limitation, legitimized by these institutions analyzed, the Venezuelan freedom of action.

By stimulating increasingly Venezuela's entry into these institutional arrangements of highly binding, Brazil gradually ensures its consolidation as a regional leader, since the other states in the region offer little or no risk to the Brazilian position within the system, it does not perform aggressive and/or expansion policies as those undertaken by Venezuela. Therefore, it appears the Brazilian desire to undermine the energy economy of the same, bringing alternatives to oil and projecting its power. Conforming Venezuela in arrangements as CELAC and developing alternatives said "best" (sustainable) to their main mechanism of foreign policy, Brazil seeks, again, the reduction of Venezuelan influence in the system and close their ability to leverage a system, thus reducing the threat to his own position, since considering oil as the major element of Venezuelan foreign policy.

So, it takes account that Brazil makes use of the body of institutions to reduce the capacity of Venezuela’s action, hitting it in the key-points to its attempt of power projection. This is confirmed regarding the lowering of customs barriers proposed by MERCOSUR, which ends up favoring Brazil, since it acts as a trading mechanism and the Venezuelan economy depends heavily on exports to Brazil, while the opposite is not the case. Apart from such trade dependence, the regional arrangements bind Venezuela to some commitments that go against their attempt to project power, as one can percept in UNASUR, which strengthens democracy and promotes penalties to the breach of it.
This attempt to expand power by Venezuela is also difficult in the context of CELAC, by the Brazilian attempt to incorporate a sustainable energy strategy, doing front of the main means of Venezuela’s foreign policy: oil.

From this, it follows that the Brazilian strategy of resorting to forms of cooperation, translated by forming regional arrangements is therefore not evidence of irrationality of the state, by contrast, shows, along the lines of defensive neorealism of Grieco that Brazil assumes a defensive posture to maintain their relative position in the upper system, projecting its regional power and elevating itself as a leader in the region by the eyes of the international system. The Brazilian State conducts its intent, however, without resorting to an aggressive posture, using his power projection to manipulate and undermine the Venezuelan actions in a veiled manner, without incurring serious risk to their own safety.

During this analysis, it becomes evident why the Brazil conforms institutional arrangements such as MERCOSUR, UNASUR and CELAC, making clear their intention to use these arrangements as a defense mechanism, besides consolidating its position as a regional leader and suffocate the Venezuelan attempts to undertake its own power projection.
References


FLEMES, D. Brazil’s Strategic Options in a Multiregional World Order. GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies. Hamburg, Germany, 15-16 Sept. 2008.


SARAIVA, M. Brazilian foreign policy towards South America during the Lula Administration: caught between South America and Mercosur, 2010. p. 151-168.


