Meddling by consent?

Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion through UNASUR

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the gap in the literature on democracy promotion by regional powers through regional organizations in the Global South. This thesis focuses on the regional power of Brazil and analyses its democracy promotion strategy through the regional organization of UNASUR – the Union of South American Nations. Based on an embedded, single case study design, the study evaluates the willingness and capability of Brazil to promote democracy in three instances of democratic disruption. Thereby, it shows the strengths and weaknesses of Brazil's leadership strategy within the context of UNASUR during three administrations (Lula da Silva, Dilma Rousseff, and Michel Temer).

Brazil's regional power status in South America, its interest in regional stability, and its pivotal role in the creation of UNASUR and its democracy promotion framework stands in contrast to the variance of Brazil's leadership performance within UNASUR's democracy promotion activities in Bolivia, Paraguay and Venezuela. UNASUR's democracy promotion in Bolivia's constitutional crisis (2008) was considered a success, the sanctioning of the impeachment of the president of Paraguay (2012) provoked mixed reactions among analysts and politicians, and efforts to solve Venezuela's political and humanitarian crisis (2013-) have been evaluated as a failure. Because of Brazil's role as the single regional power within a regional organization of multilateral structure, UNASUR's mixed record is associated with Brazil's (lack of) leadership.

Based on the central theoretical concept of consensual hegemony (Burges, 2008), it is argued that Brazil's leadership strategy rests upon consensus creation. UNASUR provided the necessary institutional mantle for Brazil's consensual hegemony, through which Brazil could facilitate joint regional action for democracy promotion. Consensual hegemony offered the opportunity of a low-cost leadership strategy. However, a successful consensual hegemonic strategy rests on at least 2 out of 3 preconditions: the attractiveness of the regional powers vision (domestic factor), the absence of competition for regional leadership and a relatively homogenous ideological regional environment (regional factor), and the absence of intervention by external actors (international factor). Therefore, the variance in Brazil's leadership capacity in democracy promotion can be explained by the degree of Brazil's domestic economic and political strength, the level of ideological coherence between left-wing

and right-wing governments, the varying involvement of external powers in South American affairs; in combination with the degree of power imbalance between Brazil and the target states.

The thesis reveals how leadership in democracy promotion happens in the context of a regional environment where intervention in domestic affairs of neighbouring states is against regional norms, and where states refuse to transfer power from the multilateral to the supranational level. Democracy promotion through (multilateral) regional organizations allowed Brazil to reconcile the norms of non-intervention and national sovereignty with the practice of democracy promotion in South America. The research findings offer an opportunity for further theory building and encourage empirical and theoretical research on regional powers' leadership within regional organizations' democracy promotion activities in diverse regional contexts.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie tesis spreek die gaping in die literatuur aan met betrekking tot demokrasie-bevordering deur streeksmagte in streeksorganisasies in die Globale Suide. Hierdie tesis fokus op Brasilië as ‘n streeksmag en analiseer dié land se demokrasie-bevorderingstrategie in UNASUR - die Unie van Suid-Amerikaanse Nasies. Die studie is gebaseer op ‘n ingebedde, enkele gevallestudie-ontwerp en evalueer Brasilië se bereidwilligheid en kapasiteit om demokrasie te bevorder in drie gevalle van demokratiese ontwrigting. Daardeur toon die studie die sterk- en swakpunte van Brasilië se leierskapstrategie in die konteks van UNASUR tydens drie administrasies aan (Lula da Silva, Dilma Rousseff, and Michel Temer).

Brasilië se status as streeksmag in Suid-Amerika, die land se belang in stabiliteit in die streek, en sy deurslaggewende rol in die skepping van UNASUR, asook dié organisasie se demokrasie-bevorderingsraamwerk, kontrasteer met Brasilië se leierskapsoptrede binne UNASUR se demokrasie-bevorderingsaktiwiteite in Bolivië, Paraguay en Venezuela. UNASUR se demokrasie-bevordering tydens Bolivië se grondwetlike krisis (2008) is as ‘n sukses beskou, die sanksie van die beskuldigingsproses van die president van Paraguay (2008) het gemengde reaksie ontlok vanaf ontleders en politici, en pogings om Venezuela se politieke en humanitêre krisis (2013-) op te los is as ‘n mislukking beskou. As gevolg van Brasilië se rol as die enkele streeksmag binne ‘n streeksorganisaie met ‘n multilaterale struktuur, word UNASUR se gemengde rekord geassosieer met Brasilië se (gebrek aan) leierskap.

Gebaseer op die sentrale teoretiese konsep van konsensuele hegemonie (Burges, 2008), word daar geargumenteer dat Brasilë se leierskapstrategie op konsensus skepping berus. UNASUR het die nodige institutionele mantel verskaf vir Brasilië se konsensuele hegemonie, waardeur Brasilië gesamentlike aksies vir demokrasie-bevordering in die streek kon fasiliteer. Konsensuele hegemonie het die geleentheid vir ‘n lae-koste leierskapstrategie gebied. ‘n Suksesvolle konsensuele hegemoniese strategie berus egter op ten minste twee uit drie voorvereistes: die aantreklikheid van die streeksmag se visie (plaaslike faktor), die gebrek aan kompetisie vir streeksleierskap en ‘n relatiewe homogene ideologiese streeksomgewing (streeksfaktor), en die afwesigheid van ingryping deur eksterne akteurs (internasionale faktor). Die variasie in Brasilië se kapasiteit vir leierskap in demokrasie-bevordering kan dus verklaar word deur die vlak van Brasilië se binnelandse ekonomiese en politiese mag, die vlak van

ideologiese samehang tussen linkse en regse regerings, die wisselende betrokkenheid van eksterne magte in Suid-Amerikaanse belange; in kombinasie met die vlak van die magswanbalans tussen Brasilië en die teikenstate.

Die tesis onthul hoe leierskap in demokrasie-bevordering in die konteks van ‘n streeksomgewing plaasvind waar ingryping in die binnelandse sake van buurlande teen die norme van die streek is, en waar state weier om mag oor te dra vanaf die multilaterale na die supranasionale vlak. Demokrasie-bevordering deur middel van (multilaterale) streeksorganisasies laat Brasilië dus toe om norme van nie-inmenging en nasionale soewereiniteit te versoen met die beoefening van demokrasie-bevordering in Suid-Amerika. Die navorsingsbevindinge bied dus ‘n geleentheid vir verdere teorieskepping en moedig empiriese en teoretiese navorsing aan met betrekking tot die leierskap van streeksmagte binne streeksorganisasies se demokrasie-bevorderingsaktiwiteite in diverse streekskontekste.

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AD	Democratic Action Party (Venezuela) - *Acción Democrática*
ALALC	The Latin American Free Trade Association - *Asociación Latinoamericana de Libre Comercio*
ALBA	Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - *Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América*
APC	Patriotic Alliance for Change (Paraguay) - *Alianza Patriótica para el Cambio*
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
BNDES	Brazilian National Bank for Economic and Social Development - *Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social*
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CAN	Andean Community - *Comunidad Andina de Naciones*
CAMEX	Brazil's foreign trade chamber - *Câmara de Comércio Exterior*
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States - *Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños*
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
IMF	International Monetary Fund
Itamaraty	Brazilian Foreign Ministry
IR	International Relations
MAS	Movement toward Socialism (Bolivia) - *Movimiento al Socialismo*
MCCA	Central American Common Market - *Spanish Mercado Común Centroamericano*
MNR	Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (Bolivia) - *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario*
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market - *Mercado Común del Sur*

MUD	Democratic Unity Roundtable (Venezuela) - *Mesa de la Unidad Democrática*
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PDC	Christian Democratic Party of Paraguay - *Partido Demócrata Cristiano*
PLRA	Authentic Radical Liberal Party of Paraguay - *Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico*
PMDP	Brazilian Democratic Movement Party - *Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro*
PROSUR	Forum for the Progress and Development of South America - *Foro para el Progreso y Desarrollo de América del Sur*
PSDB	Brazilian Social Democracy Party - *Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira*
PSUV	United Socialist Party of Venezuela - *Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela*
PT	Brazilian Workers' Party - *Partido dos Trabalhadores*
R2P	Responsibiliy to protect
RwP	Responsibility while protecting
REC	Regional Economic Community
SACN	South American Community of Nations - *Comunidad Sudamericana de Naciones*
SADC	Southern African Development Community
TSE	Brazilian Superior Electoral Court - *Tribunal Superior Eleitoral*
UN	United Nations
UNASUR	Union of South American Nations - *Unión de Naciones Suramericanas*
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States of America

CHAPTER 1 - Introduction

In International Relations (IR) literature, *regional powers* or "states in the global system that are part of a geographically delimited region of which they are ready to assume leadership" (Flemes & Habib, 2009, p. 138), have sparked increasing interest. This is especially true regarding the growing literature on the BRICS - the emerging powers of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – and their role in global politics (Cooper & Flemes, 2013). Despite this growing interest, the topic of regional powers and democracy promotion has not been granted sufficient attention. Democracy promotion has largely been considered the business of the United States and Europe, in politics and in the academic literature.

With the emergence of the multi-polar world order (Cooper & Flemes, 2013) and the disengagement of the US in international cooperation (Urpelainen & Graaf, 2018) and democracy promotion (Posen, 2018), regional powers in the Global South[1] could become important actors in promoting democracy in their areas of influence. Because of their unique role within a given region, regional powers would have more legitimacy in engaging in regional democracy promotion. Especially in regions where states oppose democracy promotion by "the West" (as in Europe and North America), because they consider it to be illegitimate intervention in domestic political affairs (Carothers, 2006, p. 55), regional powers could play an important role in democracy promotion.

Within the grouping of the BRICS, three democracies – Brazil, India, and South Africa – stand out as suitable candidates for becoming democracy promoters. In contrast to the above-mentioned democratic regional powers, illiberal regional powers, such as China, Russia and Saudi Arabia, are not expected to spearhead democracy promotion efforts, even if they don't necessarily promote autocracy (Risse & Babayan, 2015).

The current body of academic literature tells us that democratic regional powers have become involved in democracy promotion to varying degrees. South Africa has contributed to the

[1] The term "Global South" refers to the regions of Latin America, Africa, Asia and Oceania and should highlight these countries' power imbalance towards the "Global North" comprised of Europe or North America. The term differs from other concepts that are often associated with countries of the Global South, such as developing countries, periphery or the third world, which focus on economic and/or cultural differences between regions (Dados & Connell, 2012, p. 12).

development of democratic frameworks in the African Union (AU), but its leadership in regional democracy promotion has been inconsistent (Breitegger, 2018) and limited due to the prioritization of South Africa's national interests over democracy promotion in Africa (Khadiagala & Nganje, 2015). India, the largest democracy in the world in terms of population size and largest regional power in South Asia, would be an ideal candidate to promote democracy. However it has not played a substantial role in democracy promotion in its region of influence yet (Destradi, 2010a). Indonesia has incorporated its democratic identity into its foreign policy agenda, but is constrained by the nature of its own democracy and the regional resistance to democracy promotion in South East Asia (Sukma, 2011). Efforts by Indonesia to advance democracy promotion in the context of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) were met with heavy opposition (Halans & Nassy, 2013).

Brazil stands out as a regional power that has demonstrated both an interest and the ability to promote democracy. Brazil has been instrumental in strengthening regional organizations' democratic frameworks in South America (Santiso, 2002). Brazil also played the role of "regional peacemaker and conciliator" (Armijo & Burges, 2009, p. 27) in some cases of democratic disruptions in the context of a collective regional response for democracy promotion under Brazilian leadership. However, Brazil's track record of democracy promotion is not without flaws. Brazil's role in promoting democracy varies from case to case. Feldmann et al. (2019) argue that Brazil's approach to democracy promotion has been inconsistent due to conflicting norms of democracy promotion (as inscribed in regional organizations' democratic clauses) and non-intervention in domestic affairs (as part of Brazil's foreign policy tradition). Since Brazil played a central role in building democratic frameworks within regional organizations, this apparent mismatch of norms and practices demonstrates that Brazil's role in democracy promotion needs more scrutiny. Especially the relationship between Brazil's regional power status and Brazil's role in democracy promotion through regional organizations requires in-depth analysis.

This thesis analyses Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion in South America through the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) during the administrations of Lula da Silva (2003-2010), Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016) and Michel Temer (2016-2018). Because of UNASUR's decline in 2018 (which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9, where the author highlights the discrepancy between Brazil's vision for UNASUR, and its unintended

outcomes), this thesis does not analyse Brazil's foreign policy under the Bolsonaro administration (since 2019).

This introductory chapter explains why the analysis of Brazil as democracy promoter through regional organization requires attention by IR scholars. The chapter discusses the central research question, the research design, methodology, ethical considerations, and the limitations of this study. Finally, the chapter gives an overview of the structure of this dissertation.

1.1. Background and research motivation – regional powers, regional organizations, and democracy promotion

Democracy promotion is a sensitive foreign policy issue since it involves meddling in internal affairs of another state. External democracy promotion is an act that requires action by an agent (such as a state or a regional organization) which promotes democracy "from the outside-in" (Pevehouse, 2002). While some scholars have explained the global democratization as a process that happened as a graduation process within a state, others have argued that external actors have played an important role in the "third wave" of democratization (Huntington, 1993) in the 1970-1990.

During this time, democracy promotion became an accepted foreign policy strategy of states. In this context, democracy promotion also found its way into the responsibilities of regional organizations. In the Global South, many regional organizations - meaning inter-governmental organizations whose membership is confined to a region[2] - established democratic clauses since the 1990s (Closa Montero et al., 2016, p. 11). Regional organizations therefore provided a legal framework that defined measures for democracy promotion and offered the opportunity for regional cooperation in the domain of democracy promotion. This step was an important sign that member states of regional organizations in the Global South shared a common interest in promoting democracy as a public good. This is a remarkable development, since some regional organizations had been previously accused of being a "club of dictators", as in the case of the Organization of African Unity (Pease, 2018, p. 33), which was replaced by the African Union in 2002, which has an elaborate framework for democracy promotion (Mangu, 2014).

[2] A region is understood as an area of geographical proximity whose boundaries are the result of a social and political process of region building. A more detailed discussion of regions and regionalism can be found in "The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism" (Börzel & Risse, 2016).

Despite the growing literature on democracy promotion by regional organizations[3], few scholars have analysed the leadership of their most powerful member states regarding the domain of democracy promotion in the Global South. Regional organizations are an important forum for regional powers to promote democracy in an environment where intervention into domestic affairs goes against norms of national sovereignty. Regional organizations hence provide the institutionalized framework for democracy promotion that renders democracy promotion legitimate.

In the context of regional organizations, which possess very limited agency because they do not dispose of any supranational power (which is characteristic of regional organizations in South America), the leadership role of regional powers within these institutions raises interesting questions. In the absence of supranational mechanisms, regional powers can be important leaders that facilitate decision-making within these multilateral institutions.

The analysis of democracy promotion by regional powers through regional organizations in the Global South is an interesting subject that uncovers how regional powers' leadership in democracy promotion can work in a context of regional norms of non-intervention in domestic affairs. The topic addresses the interesting intersection of regional norms and practices that create friction: regional norms (of non-intervention), legalized practices of intervention in domestic affairs regarding democracy promotion through institutions, and leadership in the context of weak institutionalized regional organizations.

So far, the academic literature has offered limited theoretical insights into the relations of regional powers, regional organizations, and democracy promotion. Central research questions that must be answered are why and how regional powers promote democracy through regional organizations, and under which conditions their democracy promotion strategies can be successful.

Because of Brazil's involvement and (inconsistent) success in the domain of democracy promotion through regional organizations, it offers itself as a valuable object of study. The next section therefore discusses what we know of Brazil as a democracy promoter through regional organizations, and which questions arise from the preliminary literature review.

[3] The literature on democracy promotion by regional organizations will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

1.1.1. Preliminary literature survey on Brazil, UNASUR, and democracy promotion – developing a problem statement

Brazil's capacity to promote democracy within its neighbourhood is linked to its role as a regional power. While Brazil used its status as a regional power to increase its influence in global governance, its status is contested by its peers in South America (Flemes, 2009; Flemes & Habib, 2009; Andrés Malamud, 2011). Brazil has to be careful not to openly voice leadership ambitions within the region of South America, in order not to be accused of hegemony. Other obstacles to Brazil's regional leadership are Brazil's limited military strength and its unwillingness and inability to pay for regional integration costs. Hence, Brazil had to develop a foreign policy strategy that allows for a low-cost and minimally invasive regional leadership approach. Multilateral regional organizations in South America offer a useful platform for this type of leadership since they offer the institutional structure for consensus-based regional cooperation.

Among the regional organizations in South America available to Brazil for potential democracy promotion, the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) seems the most useful organization. While there are other regional organizations that have developed democratic clauses[4], UNASUR's creation was heavily influenced by Brazil's vision of political integration in South America. While other regional organizations offered a platform for economic integration and trade (such as MERCOSUR), UNASUR's model for regional cooperation was geared towards political integration.

Through UNASUR Brazil created a political region in which it could strengthen regional cooperation in a variety of domains without the intervention of the United States (Gratius & Gomes Saraiva, 2013) and without competition for leadership with Mexico. Under the Worker's Party (PT), Brazil pushed for the creation of a South American regional identity, in contrast to advocating for an integration of Latin America as a whole.[5]

[4] Examples are the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Andean Community (CAN) in South America, and the Organization of American States (OAS) in the wider region of the Americas (including North America, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean).
[5] Chapter 4 will discuss Brazil's foreign policy towards South America in detail.

The creation of UNASUR served Brazil's regional and international foreign policy agenda. As Flemes (2009) points out, a united region was a better base for Brazil to project its power in international affairs. In contrast to other regional integration initiatives that focused on economic integration and trade facilitation, UNASUR's agenda of political integration dealt with issues of security, social policy and democracy (Riggirozzi & Grugel, 2015). With its 12 founding member states (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Paraguay, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela), UNASUR united South American nations[6] under the umbrella of one institution, in which Brazil was the only regional power.

Figure 1 – Map of UNASUR member states (2008)

© Source: Map outline retrieved from https://www.needpix.com/photo/download/27874/south-america-map-political-latin-countries-borders-brazil-argentina

[6] With the exception of French Guiana, which is an overseas territory of France.

Since its creation in 2008, UNASUR became active in regional democracy promotion in several cases (Bolivia in 2008, Ecuador in 2010, Paraguay in 2012, and Venezuela from 2013 to 2017). In 2010, UNASUR added a democratic clause to its Constituent Treaty, which was invoked two years later in the case of Paraguay. UNASUR's swift response to the political crises in Ecuador and Paraguay has led researchers to praise UNASUR as "an effective player in international conflict resolution and mediation" (Kersffeld, 2013, p. 193). UNASUR's engagement in the crisis in Venezuela has been less celebrated, as it has been argued that UNASUR promoted regime stability instead of democracy (Closa & Palestini Cespedes, 2015).

This thesis contributes to the analysis of UNASUR's processes and internal procedures in the domain of democracy promotion. It looks at the procedural aspects of how UNASUR handles transgressions and the conditions under which democracy promotion mechanisms are invoked.

Democracy promotion as practiced by UNASUR concerns mainly the defence of the constitutionality of democratic systems, rather than the defence of human rights, and therefore promotes a rather narrow understanding of democracy promotion. However, UNASUR's track record in democracy promotion needs to be judged with reference to the involvement of its most influential member, Brazil.

Analysing Brazil's strategy within UNASUR, and its engagement and disengagement in regional democracy promotion leads to two interesting research questions which have yet to be answered by international relations scholars. First, what role do regional powers play within regional organizations? Second, under which conditions are regional powers willing and capable to lead democracy promotion efforts through regional organizations?

The next section highlights how this research project has been designed to contribute to the above-mentioned theoretical debate through its focus on Brazil and UNASUR.

1.2. Research design and research methodology

This dissertation is based on a single case study research design that aims to answer the central research question: *How and why has Brazil acted within UNASUR to promote democracy in South America?* The following section elaborates on the case study research approach and the qualitative research methods, that have been applied to answer the main research question.

While the case study design was used as a means to structure the research process, qualitative research methods (qualitative analysis of secondary data and primary data acquired through semi-structured interviews) have been used to gather the relevant data for analysis. This section therefore first discusses the research design and follows with a discussion of the research methods.

1.2.1. The case study approach

The case study design has been chosen based on the merits of this research design for the conduct of research on complex contemporary events over which the researcher has no control. A case study is defined as an "empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real-life context" (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Case study designs hence allow for the in-depth analysis of variables within the context of complex, real-world scenarios. Case study research goes beyond the analysis of isolated variables, but allows to study political phenomena within the economic, social, and historical context in which they are unfolding. This approach demands and allows for the inclusion of data that derives from a variety of different sources (Yin, 2011, p. 4), to give justice to the inherent complexity of the multi-faceted cases under scrutiny. Case study research is especially useful to answer "how" and "why" questions (Yin, 2009, p. 9), that is explanatory questions, as in this research project.

This research is based on a single case study research design. The single case study allows the researcher to analyse the Brazilian case in-depth, based on a rich empirical foundation. Critics of the case study approach point to the limited generalizability of results, especially regarding single case designs. However, external validity of the case study is generated through analytical abstraction and theory building. Hence, generalizations are analytical not statistical (as in surveys and other quantitative methods) (Yin, 2011, p. 19).

The case of Brazil's democracy promotion through UNASUR was selected a "critical case" (Yin, 2003, p. 38) to study democracy promotion by regional hegemons through regional organization in the Global South. The case was selected based on Brazil's role as the single, consensual regional hegemon within a (multilateral) regional organization in the Global South.

Following Yin's approach on case study design (Yin, 2009, p. 20), there are five key components to the design of the research: The research question, the research propositions,

units of analysis, the linking of the data to the propositions and the criteria for the interpretation of research findings. These five components are discussed in this order.

1.) Research question

The main research question that this dissertation addresses is the following:

- ***How and why has Brazil acted within UNASUR to promote democracy in South America?***

As highlighted by the research question, this study involves an explanatory research quest, that tries to unravel motivations for Brazil's foreign policy strategy and behaviour within the context of a regional organization, concerning democracy promotion. In order to come to the conclusion on explanatory factors for Brazil's actions, the research design also includes descriptive and exploratory elements and questions, that must be addressed before explanations can be given. Therefore, the main research question is broken up into smaller research questions that will be answered in the process of the conduct of this project.

- *How* did Brazil promote democracy?

This question needs to be answered in a descriptive way, looking at which strategies Brazil applied in each case. Relevant aspects concern the foreign policy actors involved, the type of foreign policy action, the tools and structures used for democracy promotion (for example concerning the use of multilateral organizations and the applications of democratic clauses), and the extent to which Brazil assumed a leadership role.

- *How* did Brazil act *within UNASUR* to promote democracy?

This question addresses how Brazil acted in terms of UNASUR's democracy promotion efforts and whether Brazil assumed a leadership role within UNASUR.

- *Why* did Brazil promote democracy (in each issue area)?

This question investigates Brazil's motivations for getting involved in democracy promotion in the first place, i.e. why Brazil has an interest in democracy promotion in general. As a next step, the question addresses specific motivations for democracy promotion in each issue area.

- *Why* did Brazil promote democracy *through UNASUR*?

This question relates to the question of why Brazil promoted democracy in a specific way and through specific institutions, by placing an emphasis on why UNASUR was chosen as a platform for Brazil's democracy promotion strategy.

Linked to this question is the question whether UNASUR provided a useful platform for Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion. In this context, the enabling and constraining factors for Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion through UNASUR are discussed (as they relate to Brazil's leadership capability within UNASUR). Indirectly, the question also addresses the conditions under which Brazil can promote democracy through UNASUR successfully.

2.) Propositions

This research uses *consensual hegemony* as the central theoretical concept[7] and applies it to the study of Brazil's democracy promotion strategy within UNASUR. According to Burges (2008), Brazil's regional leadership strategy is based on an approach of *consensual hegemony*, which can be understood as an ideas-driven form of leadership. Consensual hegemony works through inclusion and co-option, through the creation of common projects, dissemination of ideas, fostering dialogue and consensus creation. Followership is not created by force, but through the cost of non-followership.

The concept of consensual hegemony explains why Brazil has been active in building regional organizations, which it can use to lead regional affairs through consensus creation. Especially concerning the domain of democracy promotion, which is a sensitive policy area due to the involvement in domestic affairs of member states, regional organizations are a valuable platform for regional powers like Brazil.

[7] The concept of consensual hegemony will be described in detail in Chapter 3.

By conceptualizing Brazil as a *consensual regional hegemon* in South America, the proposition is that Brazil is expected to play a leading role within UNASUR, in building its regional democracy promotion framework and in leading the implementation of democracy promotion through a strategy of consensus creation and persuasion. Based on the theoretical underpinnings of consensual hegemonic leadership, the researcher intends to extract explanatory factors that explain the variation in Brazil's willingness and capability to lead regional democracy promotion in each specific case. Brazil's capacity to pursue a successful strategy of consensual hegemony will be analysed by looking at four levels of analysis: the domestic, bilateral, regional, and international level (as discussed in Chapter 3).

Democracy promotion by regional powers through regional organizations has not been theorized sufficiently by International Relations theory. This dissertation applies a neo-Gramscian approach to the study of a regional hegemon's democracy promotion strategy. Thereby, it offers an approach to analysing democracy promotion as a foreign policy strategy of regional hegemons that can bring insights into how leadership happens within regional organizations in the Global South. In doing so, this dissertation builds a starting point for rigorous theory building in this field.

3.) Units of analysis

The research is based on an embedded, single case study design that involves the analysis of *three issue areas* of Brazil's involvement in democracy promotion in *Bolivia*, *Paraguay*, and *Venezuela through UNASUR*. The issue areas have been chosen to analyse Brazil's foreign policy actions in different contexts. How and why Brazil has intervened in different instances of democratic disruptions is analysed regarding four levels of analysis: the domestic, bilateral, regional, and international level. The three issue areas of democracy promotion have been selected for their theoretical relevance. The aim was to select issue areas that offer "useful variation on the dimension of theoretical interest" (Seawright & Gerring, 2008, p. 296), in order to describe and explain different outcomes regarding Brazil's democracy promotion activities. The issue areas are sometimes referred to as "cases" or "cases of democratic disruption" in this thesis. The issue areas represent the relevant units of analysis within the single case study. In this sense they are "cases within the case".

To make an informed choice about choosing the relevant units of analysis, the researcher needs an in-depth understanding of the possible issue areas that stand up for selection. The next section therefore discusses the selection of issue areas for in-depth, comparative analysis.

Issue areas

In the 10 years of UNASUR's existence (2008-2018)[8], five political crises required UNASUR's attention and/or intervention regarding democracy promotion. While all cases of democratic disruptions merit analysis and investigation, only three incidents have been selected as relevant units of analysis. This section provides a short description of all the five instances of political crises and explains the motivation for the selection of three issue areas for further analysis.

- Bolivia (2008)

The first incident of domestic political instability occurred in 2008 in Bolivia. The process of the drafting of a new constitution led to clashes between the Bolivian government and local government (led by the opposition) in the Eastern provinces. In the Bolivian case, UNASUR became an important mediator between the government and the opposition. UNASUR did not have a framework for democracy promotion at this point. The Bolivian case was an important test case for whether UNASUR could substitute the OAS in its role as the main regional organization promoting democracy in South America (Aruguay & Moreno, 2014), since both organizations had sent teams to Bolivia in an attempt to solve the crisis. Furthermore, the case was an important test for Brazil's leadership in democracy promotion in competition with the United States. Given that UNASUR managed to bring the conflicting parties to the negotiation table, which resulted in the adoption of a new constitution, this case has been regarded as a success story of UNASUR's democracy promotion (Menéndez del Valle, 2008; S. C. Santos, 2012).

[8] In 2018, six member states announced the suspension of their membership from UNASUR due to a continued political deadlock. This dissertation therefore concerns itself with the period of 2008-2018, when UNASUR was operating under full membership (with the exception of a temporary suspension of Paraguay in 2012). UNASUR's decline is discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

- Ecuador (2010)

In 2010 Quito, Ecuador, where the UNASUR headquarters were based, experienced a political crisis. Police forces protested against the government's austerity measures. During the protests, President Rafael Correa was attacked and a state of emergency declared (Carroll, 2010). The conflict led to clashes between the police and military personnel loyal to the president, which led to the arrest of police officers and civilians before order was restored (Torre, 2011, p. 25).

The Ecuadorian case led to different reactions by different regional organizations. Since the events were dealt with internally in Ecuador within a day, there was no need for regional organizations to become involved. However, both the OAS and UNASUR issued official statements in support of Correa, that differed in their interpretation of the events. While the OAS asked Ecuador to report on the situation in order to prevent further escalations (OAS, 2010), UNASUR recognized the events as a coup attempt against Correa, thereby following the argument that had been made by the Ecuadorian president himself. UNASUR also stressed the possibility of invoking sanctions if the constitutional order should be violated (El País, 2010). In this sense, UNASUR took a less neutral position in the conflict, compared to the OAS.

Since the crisis ended the same day, and Correa served two terms without interruptions until 2017, there was no need for UNASUR to get involved further. However, as a response to the situation in Ecuador, heads of state of UNASUR held an emergency summit in Buenos Aires and proposed to incorporate a democratic clause into the constitutive treaty of UNASUR.

While the issue of Ecuador is not an example of an enduring crisis that illustrates how UNASUR acted within a member state to promote democracy, it highlights an important step in UNASUR's graduation as a regional organization committed to democracy promotion. The situation in Ecuador is therefore discussed as a trigger for the formulation of UNASUR's democratic clause in Chapter 5.2.2.

- Paraguay (2012)

In 2012, two years after the adoption of the democratic clause, Paraguay's president Fernando Lugo was impeached. Accused of handling public protests inappropriately, he was only given 24 hours to prepare his defence in a short impeachment trial. After a brief debate in the Senate he was impeached (Lambert, 2012b). Because of the rushed process, the impeachment was

considered fraudulent by some governments in the region. However, even within some member states (including Brazil), there was disagreement as to whether the impeachment process was legitimate or not (as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7). Despite this ambiguity, MERCOSUR and UNASUR reacted by invoking their democratic clauses and suspending Paraguay from both organizations.

Paraguay therefore presents an interesting opportunity for analysing UNASUR's democracy promotion and Brazil's role in it, concerning the invoking of the democratic clause against one of UNASUR's smallest member states. The case offers potential for comparison given the hard measures (including the suspension from the organization) that were implemented against Paraguay, compared to other cases of democratic disruption.

- Venezuela (2013-2018)

In 2013, UNASUR became involved in mediating between government and opposition in an increasingly protracted political conflict in Venezuela in the context of a deteriorating humanitarian situation. The Venezuelan political crisis proved to be the main challenge for UNASUR's efforts to promote democracy among its member states. While the political crises in Bolivia, Ecuador and Paraguay had been relatively short in nature, the economic, political, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela was a huge challenge for regional efforts to solve the crisis and posed a threat to regional stability.

The crisis in Venezuela can be described as a gradual decline in democratic practices. Venezuela under president Hugo Chavez (1999-2013) increased its authoritarian tendencies and further decreased its democratic practices under president Nicolas Maduro's government (since 2013), and turned into an autocratic regime (Corrales, 2016). The political crisis went hand in hand with an economic and humanitarian crisis, leading to food shortages, shortages in medical supplies, hyperinflation and increasing migration of Venezuelans into neighbouring countries (BBC, 2018c).

UNASUR started to get involved in Venezuela in 2013 when it tried to mediate between the government and the opposition in several missions with different delegates. After mediation efforts had not been effective in 2014, UNASUR stopped its engagement temporarily but reengaged with Venezuela in 2015 and 2016. UNASUR's member states were increasingly divided over the strategy towards Venezuela, with some member states becoming more critical

of Maduro, while other member states continued to support Maduro. The regional divide also caused an operational crisis for UNASUR, as the organization was too divided to take any decisions, for which it required consensus.

The Venezuelan case offers an opportunity to assess UNASUR's and Brazil's limits to promote democracy. It is also an interesting case to evaluate Brazil's (in-) ability and (un-) willingness to promote democracy in one of the larger member states in the region (in contrast to Bolivia and Paraguay), considering the threat to regional stability and the direct economic and security impact of the crisis on Brazil.

- Brazil (2016)

In 2016 Brazil itself was hit by a domestic political crisis concerning a contested impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, which happened at a time when corruption charges were investigated that encompassed a large part of the political elite.

Brazil had already struggled with corruption scandals before, such as the *mensalão* (monthly bribes) scandal in 2005. In 2014 investigations started concerning *lava jato*, or *Operation Car Wash*,[9] which led to the conviction of senior politicians, including Lula in 2018, who was sentenced to 12 years in prison.

Corruption turned out to be one of Brazil's democracy's major challenges. Some have attributed the blatant corruption to the structure of Brazil's democratic system. In a fragmented multiparty system, the (minority) presidency needs to win a majority in the legislative branch through coalition building with other parties. In this system of *coalitional presidentialism* (Power, 2010) the centralized budgetary power in the executive is linked to a network of clients in the legislative, to which the executive needs to distribute resources to secure ongoing support. Loyalty is bought through the provision of " 'pork', cabinet positions, patronage, and other coalition worthy goods" (Mello & Spektor, 2018, p. 115).

The sitting president Dilma Rousseff was not implicated in the "lava jato" scandal itself. However, in the context of corruption investigations and domestic political turmoil, Rousseff

[9] Read Fuentes (2016) for more details on the corruption scandal "lava jato", which implicated Brazil's oil company Petrobras, the construction company Odebrecht and many senior politicians in Brazil.

was charged with violating the federal budget rules and was impeached in a process that started in December 2015 and was completed in August 2016. Vice-president Michel became Brazil's next president and served the rest of Rousseff's term until December 2018.[10]

Some heads of governments in South America supported Rousseff, as they saw the charges against Rousseff as relatively minor, and the impeachment as politically motivated (Taub, 2016). UNASUR's Secretary General Ernesto Samper officially criticized the impeachment process, as he argued that Congress had moved forward with the impeachment proceedings despite the absence of proof of alleged crimes (Samper, 2016).

When the Brazilian Senate voted to impeach Rousseff on September 1st, UNASUR announced a meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in order to review the impeachment. However, no other steps were taken and the official discourse of UNASUR was that it would not get involved in the domestic affairs of Brazil. Responding to the question of why UNASUR did not get active in the case of Rousseff's impeachment, the Secretary General of UNASUR stated in an interview that half of the member states were in favour of the impeachment, and half were against it. Therefore, the Secretariat did not have an official position (Ernesto Samper, 21.11.2016, Quito).

While the inaction of UNASUR in Brazil's political crisis is an interesting example that demonstrates UNASUR's incapacity to sanction its most influential member state, and illustrates the limited agency of UNASUR, it is not a fitting case to evaluate Brazil's leadership capacity and willingness to promote democracy in South America through UNASUR.

- Selection of issue areas

Out of the five incidents of political crisis, only three offer the opportunity to study UNASUR's involvement in detail and Brazil's strategy within UNASUR more specifically. As argued before, Ecuador did not require any action by UNASUR that was targeting the situation in Ecuador directly (but rather led to a general regional response for the adoption of a democratic clause). The impeachment in Brazil does not constitute a case in which one can analyse Brazil's

[10] Temer was arrested on corruption charges linked to lava jato in 2019 (Magalhaes et al., 2019).

external democracy promotion practice. Therefore, the researcher chose to focus on the issue areas of Bolivia, Paraguay, and Venezuela.

The three issue areas of Bolivia, Paraguay and Venezuela offer a great opportunity for comparison because of their variety. They concern different types of conflicts which occurred in different member states, who have different levels of power and influence within the region and within UNASUR. Furthermore, each conflict had a different potential implication for Brazil and the cost and benefits of intervention varied (thereby implicating Brazil's willingness to intervene). Moreover, the three issue areas featured different levels of intervention by actors outside the region (such as the US), which affected Brazil's leverage in the region. In addition, the three issue areas spanned over different domestic administrations in Brazil (Lula, Rousseff and Temer), which enables a comparison of different presidencies and sheds light on the impact of Brazil's domestic instability on its foreign policy actions. Hence, in comparing the three issue areas, the domestic, bilateral, regional, and international factors that implicate Brazil's leadership capacity in democracy promotion can be studied. This is important to analyse the overall capability of Brazil to adopt a consensual leadership strategy in a successful manner, while facing different hurdles.

As highlighted by the differences of the issue areas on four levels (domestic, bilateral, regional, international), the selection promotes diversity of outcomes. The aim is to analyse Brazil's foreign policy strategy and behaviour in the context of a maximum of variance along relevant analytical dimensions (Seawright & Gerring, 2008, p. 300). However, it has to be noted that the issue areas do not fall neatly in the characteristic of "most-different" as in Mill's method of difference (Mill, 1843, pp. 450–470). The issue areas do not differ in all aspects (for example the Paraguayan case and the Venezuelan case both happened during Rousseff's administration, while the Venezuelan spans over the Rousseff and Temer administrations). As Bennett points out Mill's model demands unrealistic assumptions about cases and does not allow for the incorporation of multiple causes for the same outcome. Because of these shortcomings, case study research can benefit from a method of process tracing (Bennett, 2004, pp. 31–32). The aim of this study is therefore to link a certain outcome (Y) to explanatory factors (X1, X2, etc.) which have been identified based on the theoretical framework and which will be examined through case study analysis.

4.) Linking the data to the propositions

The issue areas are analysed based on an analytical framework which was developed by applying the central theoretical concept of consensual hegemony to the analysis of regional powers' democracy promotion strategy. The analytical framework will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

The issue area chapters are structured in the following manner: The first part of analysis concerns the question of how Brazil has acted in each case of democratic disruption. This concerns the question of how Brazil worked through UNASUR. The second part concerns the finding of explanatory factors for Brazil's actions. The study adopts an approach of process tracing that tries to link a specific outcome (Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion through UNASUR) to explanatory factors and conditions.

A shortcoming of a process tracing approach is that there is no guarantee that a researcher will uncover all the relevant variables that can explain a certain outcome. However, "process tracing backward from observed outcomes to potential causes – as well as forward from hypothesized causes to subsequent outcomes – allows researchers to uncover variables they have not previously considered" (Bennett, 2010, p. 209).

5.) Criteria for the interpretation of the research findings

The research findings of the case study analysis are used to confirm or deny the propositions that were developed based on the theoretical concept of consensual hegemony. Based on the interpretation of the results, the thesis produces a theory regarding the role of consensual regional hegemons and their strategy of democracy promotion through regional organizations. The theoretical findings are linked to broader theoretical debates surrounding regional powers' role in democracy promotion in Chapter 10.

In this context it is important to highlight the limitations of the research and the fact that the case study of Brazil as an actor within UNASUR can only be interpreted as a first step towards theory building in the domain of regional powers' democracy promotion in the Global South.

1.2.2 Research methodology

The case study research design allows for the inclusion of different sources of data and the possibility of combining research methodology in the process of gathering empirical evidence. In the following section the researcher explains which research methods have been applied and how they have been used to inform this thesis, starting with the secondary data collection, followed by a discussion of the primary data collection process.

1.) Secondary data collection

Secondary data has been used in several stages of the research project. The following section highlights how academic literature, Brazilian foreign policy documents, and other sources (such as news and reports) have been used.

- *Academic literature*

First, an initial literature review was conducted on the existing literature on democracy promotion by regional organizations and regional powers, in order to identify gaps in the literature (as noted in Chapter 2). Second, academic literature on theories of the role of regional powers in regional organizations and democracy promotion as a foreign policy strategy were used to develop an analytical framework (as described in Chapter 3), which has been used to analyse the issue areas of Brazil's democracy promotion. Third, academic literature has informed the analysis of Brazil as a regional hegemon in South America (Chapter 4) and the analysis of Brazil's role as democracy promoter (Chapter 5). Fourth, recent literature on each of the issue areas (regarding democracy promotion in Bolivia, Paraguay, and Venezuela) have been incorporated into the description and analysis of the cases of democratic disruption.

Because the existing academic literature has been insufficient to provide the necessary information on UNASUR's democracy promotion practice and Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion, the gaps in the literature have been filled by drawing on other sources of information (which included the analysis of primary and secondary data, as discussed below).

- *Brazil's foreign policy documents*

Brazil's foreign policy documents have been analysed in order to get a better understanding of Brazil's foreign policy discourse during the three administrations relevant to the issue areas: the administrations of Lula, Rousseff and Temer. The central aim was to identify Brazil's foreign policy interests in South America and the guiding norms of Brazil's foreign policy actions as voiced in Brazil's official foreign policy discourse.

The material used in the analysis was retrieved from Brazil's foreign policy website and the "Cadernos de Política Exterior" (IPRI, 2018), a collection of speeches, articles, statements made by members of the Itamaraty, the President or the Foreign minister, as made available by the Institute for International Relations Research (or Instituto de Pesquisa de Relações Internacionais - IPRI), which is part of a foundation of Brazil's foreign ministry, the Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão (FUNAG). The analysis concerns the content published in the cadernos during the timeframe of 2008 until 2018 (which corresponds to the time of the three issue areas), spanning over the administrations of Lula da Silva, Dilma Rousseff, and Michel Temer.

The analysis of the foreign policy discourse was aimed at identifying important continuums and changes in foreign policy norms and foreign policy strategies towards South America during the three administrations. The study does not attempt to provide an all-encompassing analysis of Brazil's foreign policy discourse (which would go beyond the scope of this dissertation), but rather to incorporate key foreign policy documents as sources for the analysis of Brazil's foreign policy priorities. The documents provide an added layer to the analysis of Brazil's foreign policy as found in the academic literature.

- *Other sources (news, governmental reports, non-governmental reports)*

In addition to the academic literature and Brazil's foreign policy documents, this research drew information from a variety of other sources to build the issue area chapters. Because the events discussed in each case of democratic disruption were relatively recent, only a limited amount of academic research on these topics were available.

Information on political events was taken from quality news reports and cross checked. Furthermore, reports by respected non-governmental organizations and think tanks (for

example by the Council of Foreign Affairs and by the German Development Institute), governmental reports (US Congress Research Reports) and reports by international governmental organizations (such as the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance IDEA, the World Bank or World Economic Forum) were used. Press statements by UNASUR or the Itamaraty were also part of the sources used to identify relevant actions taken by UNASUR or Brazil in each case. Blog posts by researchers in the field of International Relations were also used when appropriate.

The sources mentioned above were primarily used to account for relevant foreign policy actions, in other words, to determine "what happened". The information was not used to delve into any explanatory analysis just yet.

2.) Primary data collection: Expert interviews

Expert interviews served as a method to gather primary data. Interviews provided an important addition to the information provided in official documents, which is often limited in the analysis of political decision-making. As pointed out by Beyers et al. (2014, p. 176), interviews are particularly useful to uncover informal interactions in policy-making that are not part of the official discourse or final outcome. However, interviews were not the main source of data used in the thesis. They provided a crucial complement to verify, further explain and expand on the secondary data through the provision of diverse perspectives. The information provided by the interviewees was interpreted with caution. As has been pointed out by Bogner et al. (2009, p. 6), experts are not an objective source of information that are contacted for the collection of facts, but rather they allow for "the reconstruction of latent content of meaning." Interviews hence provided an important value in the process of triangulation of data, where data from different sources is incorporated in order to strengthen and provide depth to the analysis (Flick et al., 2004, p. 179).

Based on a strategy of purposive sampling and snowball sampling, relevant participants for expert interviews were selected. Purposive sampling refers to "selecting units (e.g., individuals, groups of individuals, institutions) based on specific purposes associated with answering a research study's questions" (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, p. 77). Snowball sampling refers to the

selection of participants based on the referral of previous participants (O. C. Robinson, 2014).[11] The sample size was guided by the concept of "information power" (Malterud et al., 2016), meaning that the adequacy of sample size was measured by the contributed (relevant) knowledge of the participants rather than the number of participants. Based on this concept, the researcher conducted 17 expert interviews.

The interviewees included three types of experts who were able to reveal specialized knowledge relevant to this research. The first category were Brazilian government officials and diplomats who provided "insider information" regarding Brazil's foreign policy strategy and its motivation. The interviewees were selected based on their role within the Itamaraty, their knowledge of Brazil's foreign policy within UNASUR, and based on referral by IR scholars. The second category involved UNASUR officials who provided information about Brazil's role within the organization and about the decision-making processes within UNASUR from an institutional perspective. The third category comprised researchers with specialized academic knowledge on Brazil's foreign policy in South America and on Brazil's practice of democracy promotion. This third group provided a critical academic perspective on Brazil's foreign policy, and thereby complemented the political and policy perspective and the institutional perspective provided by the first and second category of interviewees.

The interviews were conducted during field research trips to Quito (November 2016), Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Brasilia (July and August 2017). Interviewees were contacted by email and the interviews were conducted face-to- face, except in cases when face-to-face interviews were not possible.[12] In this case, interviews were conducted via skype or a questionnaire was sent via email, depending on the preference of the interviewee. The list of interviews is attached in Annex I of this dissertation.

Empirical research always relies on the collaboration of research participants. It has to be remarked that the return rate of requests for interviews was very high. More than 50 percent of the selected experts participated in the interviews. The experts from UNASUR, the Itamaraty

[11] Without giving away the identity of the interviewees, it can be noted, that the following institutions have been contacted for research collaboration or for participation in interviews during the field research period: the UNASUR headquarters in Quito, Ecuador, the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) Ecuador, the Institute of International Relations (IRI) at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), the Institute of Social and Political Studies (IESP) at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), the Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV) in Sao Paulo, the Delegation of the European Union to Brazil, and the Brazilian Foreign Ministry (Itamaraty) in Brasilia.

[12] Referring to situations when participants were not in office during the field research period; or in the case when follow-up questions were posed at a later stage of the research process (for example questions regarding the decline of UNASUR).

and from research institutes have been very forthcoming and willing to offer their time to participate in this study. In only a few cases, interviews could not take place because the contacted experts did not reply, or because they could not find the time to schedule an interview date.

Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish, using the semi-structured interview questionnaire, listed under Appendix III (in English) and Appendix IV (in Spanish). The questions covered topics such as the structure of UNASUR, the democracy promotion framework of UNASUR, the norm of non-intervention and the respect of national sovereignty, the democratic crises in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela and the role of Brazil in UNASUR and in promoting democracy. The interviews were intentionally based on open-ended questions that allowed the interviewees to bring in their specialized expertise.

The duration of the interviews varied from half an hour to one and a half hours. The interviews are cited in this dissertation by indicating the "(name, date, location)" of the interview or by indicating "(affiliation, date, location)", depending on how the interviewees wished to be identified.

In addition to the interviews, the researcher was invited to attend an event at the UNASUR headquarters, the "Mesa de Convergencia" in November 2016. In this meeting, representatives of South American regional organizations discussed the overlapping architecture of regional integration in South America, possibilities to collaborate and ways to avoid duplication of efforts. While not directly quoted in this dissertation, the attendance of the "Mesa de Convergencia" informed the research process indirectly, as it allowed the researcher to gain a sense of the discursive context within which UNASUR officials make their statements.

1.2.3. Ethical considerations

Since this research involved the participation of interviewees, special attention was given to research ethics in order to ensure the dignity, safety and well-being of all participants. The interviews were conducted based on the ethical guidelines of the University of Stellenbosch. The research process was approved by the Ethical Research Committee of the University of Stellenbosch.

In line with the ethical guidelines of the University of Stellenbosch, the interviews were started by informing the participants about the research project and asking them for their informed consent, using the verbal script listed under Appendix II.

The interviewees were informed about the purpose of the research project and the use of the interview data. Interviewees were asked to give their consent to participate in this doctoral research and they were informed that they could revoke their consent at any stage. Furthermore, all interviewees were asked if they would wish to be identified by their name, their institutional affiliation or if they would prefer to remain anonymous. While some interviewees agreed to be identified by name, the majority of interviewees asked to be identified only by their institutional affiliation. The interview questions were sent out to the interviewees before the interviews upon request.

Since the interviewees were either senior officials within the Itamaraty or UNASUR or established researchers in the field of Brazilian foreign policy analysis, the participants had a good understanding of potential implications of participating in the interviews. However, given the fact that the mediation in the Venezuelan crisis was still ongoing at the time when the interviews were conducted, sensitive information regarding the Venezuelan crisis had been dealt with particular care. Information disclosed "off the record" has not been used in this dissertation and the interview data has been stored safely on a password protected private laptop.

1.3. Limitations of the study

This dissertation faces certain limitations in its theoretical and empirical scope. This study in an in-depth analysis of Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion in three issue areas through one regional organization. An in-depth analysis of such a specific phenomenon allows for the necessary detail required in a qualitative single case study design, however it also brings about a narrow research focus. Therefore, this thesis cannot provide detailed analyses of Brazil's actions in other regional organizations, or of democracy promotion strategies of other regional powers in different regional contexts. This dissertation and its theoretical findings are intended

to provide a starting point for further research on regional powers, regional organizations, and democracy promotion.

This doctoral dissertation is limited in the extent to which it can uncover all relevant aspects of regional diplomacy that happened behind the scenes. The study of detailed processes in regional organizations and the study of diplomatic processes and individuals involved are a difficult research endeavour. Access to information of what gets negotiated behind closed doors is usually not available to the public and often considered confidential. This is especially true with regard to ongoing negotiations (as in the case of Venezuela). Some of the more sensitive information has been disclosed "off record" and has therefore not been cited in the dissertation. The information gathered through expert interviews allows access to some of the actions behind closed doors. There is however no guarantee that all relevant actors and actions have been covered. However, despite these limitations, the dissertation includes new information that has been provided by the interviewees, which was corroborated by other sources, and thereby led to an in-depth analysis of the issue areas.

Because of the research focus on Brazil as an actor in UNASUR, the main targets for interviews were UNASUR and Itamaraty officials in addition to specialized researchers in this field. A broader empirical analysis of democracy promotion by UNASUR and by Brazil as an actor in UNASUR could also include interviews with government representatives of the other eleven (former) member states. Such an analysis would expand the regional perspective on Brazil as a regional power in UNASUR. Especially interviews with government officials of the target countries of UNASUR's democracy promotion (Bolivia, Paraguay, and Venezuela) could provide interesting insights. However, because of time and budget constraints, the expert interviews have been limited to the above-mentioned group of experts.

1.4. Structure of the dissertation - Overview of chapters

This thesis is divided into ten chapters. This introductory chapter is followed by a literature review and a theoretical framework. Then, two contextual chapters provide the reader with the necessary background to the three issue area chapters. The issue area chapters are complemented by a short chapter on the decline of UNASUR. Finally, the thesis ends with the conclusion.

The literature review in Chapter 2 is divided into two main sections: First, the literature on democracy promotion by regional organizations, and second, the literature on democracy promotion by regional powers in the Global South. The literature review identifies the gap in the literature concerning the analysis of regional powers' democracy promotion through regional organizations, which this dissertation will address.

A theoretical framework for the analysis of regional powers' democracy promotion strategy through regional organizations is developed in Chapter 3. The framework is based on the central theoretical concept of consensual hegemony. Drawing on the theoretical framework, the chapter outlines the analytical framework, which was used for the analysis of the issue areas of Brazil's democracy promotion.

The necessary background for the issue area chapters is laid out in the Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 analyses Brazil's role as a regional power in South America in general, while Chapter 5 introduces Brazil as a democracy promoter with special emphasis on UNASUR as the institutional context for Brazil's democracy promotion strategy. It will be argued that UNASUR's structure and its democracy promotion framework was based on Brazil's consensual hegemonic leadership strategy for South America.

The three issue area chapters of Bolivia, Paraguay and Venezuela are the heart of the dissertation. The issue areas are discussed in the Chapters 6, 7 and 8, respectively. Each chapter follows the same structure. First, the domestic democratic conflict is laid out. Then, the regional intervention, and more specifically the intervention by UNASUR is described. In the next sections the researcher then discusses and analyses Brazil's strategy and motivations in democracy promotion through UNASUR, followed by an analysis of the enabling and constraining factors of Brazil's democracy promotion strategy.

The issue area chapters are followed by a complementary Chapter 9. In it, the researcher discusses the political deadlock within UNASUR and Brazil's response to it, which marked the end of UNASUR's operability and therefore also constituted the termination of UNASUR's involvement in regional democracy promotion. The chapter is an addition to the Venezuelan issue, during which the political deadlock of UNASUR happened.

The comparative analysis of the issue areas and the conclusion regarding the central research findings of the dissertation are presented in Chapter 10. The chapter embeds the study into a

wider theoretical debate on democracy promotion by regional powers through regional organizations and discusses the possible theoretical generalizations of the case study analysis. Finally, pathways for future research are laid out.

CHAPTER 2 - Literature review on democracy promotion

What do scholars refer to when they talk about democracy promotion? Definitions vary from author to author and are often fuzzy, which has to do with the diverse empirical nature of the phenomenon of democracy promotion, and with the pluralistic understanding of what constitutes a democracy, in theory and in practice.

Democracy is a contested concept. While there is a popular understanding of democracy as "rule by the people" which is administered through free and fair elections, the conceptualization of democracy is challenging. In the academic literature, there is a plurality of definitions of democracy. Generally, one can differentiate between definitions that focus on democratic processes and institutions (such as elections, separation of powers, rule of law), and definitions that focus on democracy as a system of norms and values (fundamental freedoms and human rights). Differences can be witnessed regarding the extent to which political, economic, and social rights are considered an essential aspect of democracies (Landman, 2018).

A democratic process according to Dahl and Shapiro (2008) is based on five pillars, which are deemed necessary for guaranteeing the political equality of members of a democratic system: Effective participation (members must have equal and effective opportunities to express their political views), equality in voting (regarding equal access to voting; votes are counted as equals), enlightened understanding (members must have equal and effective access to information concerning policies and alternative policies), control of the agenda (members control which policies are up for debate), and inclusion of adults (i.e. permanent residents should have the full rights of citizens). Dahl (2020) recognizes the plurality of democratic systems, which he ties to the historical and geographical context in which they developed (for example regarding the systems of parliamentary democracies in Europe and of presidential democratic systems in the Americas).

While some authors focused on the processes and institutions of democratic system, others understand democracy as a universal value (Sen, 1999). According to Sen, societies form their norms and values through democratic processes. He therefore focusses on democracy as a discursive practice. Sen argues that political participation is an intrinsic value for human well-being and has an instrumental value in allowing people to communicate their economic needs.

In this sense, Sen argues that democracy is not a Western tradition, but a universal value regardless of the regional context.

The understanding of democracy influences the types or aspects of democracy that are at the core of democracy promotion efforts. Democracy promotion as practiced by the United States, Europe, international financial institutions, is based on a liberal democratic paradigm (even though the interpretations of liberal democracy vary slightly among practitioners) (Kurki, 2013). Liberal democracy is linked to a liberal economic outlook and based on a global hegemonic capitalist system. Liberal democracy prioritizes civil and political rights over social and economic rights, which are more predominant in social definitions of democracy (Landman, 2018, p. 50).

In the case of Brazil, we can witness a focus on the constitutionality of democracy (as will be discussed in Chapter 5). While the researcher considers human rights to be an integral part of democracy, the concept of democracy as used in the thesis is centred on the respect for constitutional order rather than human rights, as the thesis analyses democracy promotion as practiced by Brazil.

Like to the conceptualization of democracy, the understanding of what constitutes *democracy promotion* and how democracy gets *promoted*, varies among authors. The academic literature features several terms associated with democracy promotion, such as democracy defence, democracy protection, democracy assistance and the enforcement of democracy. While these terms are often used interchangeably with democracy promotion, they generally refer to specific forms or aspects of democracy promotion. The terms democracy defence (Capoccia, 2001; Farer & Farer, 1996) and protection (Closa Montero et al., 2016; Hawkins, 2008) are used in contexts when democracy is understood as a present (or at least recent) state of affairs that needs to be protected from democratic backsliding. Democracy assistance (sometimes also referred to as democracy aid) often refers to efforts of international actors to support specific aspects of democratic institution building, most commonly in the context of development assistance (Carothers, 1997), when target countries are considered to be in a transition towards democracy. The term enforcement of democracy is used in a case in which collective democratic norms have been violated, and actors such as international or regional organizations

are imposing sanctions on the norm-violating government (Van Der Vleuten & Hoffmann, 2010).

Democracy promotion is often used as an umbrella term that encompasses democracy defence, protection, enforcement, and assistance. In this dissertation, democracy promotion is understood as any action taken by external actors to strengthen, defend, or reinstate democracy in a state. If we understand democracy promotion from this perspective, democracy promotion activities can take many forms. As Schraeder (2003, pp. 26–27) shows, democracy promotion can range from less intrusive activities such as election observation, the funding of pro-democratic civil society and democracy as a political conditionality for participation in bilateral or multilateral cooperation, to more interventionist activities such as the imposition of sanctions and military intervention in the case of grave violation of democratic and human rights.

While the author proposes a broad definition of democracy promotion, this thesis concerns itself with democracy promotion as a foreign policy action carried out by Brazil. As will be further discussed in Chapter 5, Brazil's activity in democracy promotion regards mainly the safeguarding of the constitutionality of democracy and does not focus on the promotion of human rights. Despite the narrower focus within the case study, the literature review will encompass academic debates on democracy promotion in a broad sense.

The following literature review on democracy promotion is divided into three main sections that reflect the main academic debates and perspectives over time. First, democratization as an international phenomenon is discussed, pointing to early scholars that investigated why and how democracy became a dominant political system globally in the late 20th century. Second, the literature review discusses scholarly contributions that reviewed regional organizations as actors in democracy promotion, thereby evaluating regional organizations' willingness and capacity to promote democracy among their member states. The third part of the literature review concerns academic work on the role of regional powers in the Global South in the domain of democracy promotion.

This literature review on regional organizations and democracy promotion deals with democracy promotion by *intergovernmental* regional organizations, since it concerns itself with the field of research that this thesis is contributing to. This is not to negate the relevance of non-state actors or non-governmental organizations in international democracy promotion,

which is recognized by scholars who have produced a rich body of literature on this issue. Examples include contributions by Beichelt et al. (2014), Robinson and Friedman (2005), Scholte (2002), Ottaway and Carothers (2000), and Abrahamsen (1997) to name only a few. While the author recognizes the importance of civil society in democratization, an in-depth discussion of the role of civil society goes beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Based on this literature review it will be argued that while there is a growing body of literature on regional organizations' and regional powers' democracy promotion respectively, the literature fails to explain what role regional powers play in the democracy promotion efforts of the regional organizations that they are a part of. Henceforth, the researcher will discuss how this dissertation contributes to closing the identified gap in the literature.

2.1. The international dimension of democratization

During the "third wave" of democratization (Huntington, 1993) in the 1970-1990s, when many countries in the Global South transitioned into democracy, academic research focused on domestic factors rather than international factors that contributed to democratization of transition countries (Pevehouse, 2002). However, in practice, many democratic countries started to include democracy promotion in their foreign policy agenda. Building on the premise of democratic peace theory (Dixon, 1994; Maoz & Russett, 1993; Weart, 1998), (which stipulates that democracies do not fight wars against each other) and the premise that democracy furthers social and economic development (Sen, 1999), democracy promotion has found its way into the practice of foreign policy, development cooperation and into the academic literature. In the post-Cold War era democracy promotion became increasingly relevant to the development aid sector which tied aid to good governance practices (Abrahamsen, 2000).[13]

While the 1990s had high hopes in democracy promotion, democratization through external action proved to be a difficult endeavour with mixed results. In the 2000s, scholars attested a "democratic rollback" or democratic recession, in which democracies were overthrown or

[13] As criticized by Abrahamsen (2000), democracy promotion and development aid did not lead to substantial democratic reforms but increased the dependency of African countries on Western donors (and the World Bank), thereby undermining domestic democracy und reinforcing international power imbalances.

performed poorly (Diamond, 2008), and hybrid regimes (Levitsky & Way, 2010) were on the rise. This thinking marked a change in academic thought, which had often assumed a gradual, inevitable global development from autocracy to democracy. It also gave rise to a large amount of literature on the effectiveness of democracy promotion (which will be discussed in more detail in section 2.2.3. of this chapter).

The 2000s saw a rise of academic literature on the international dimension or external dimension of democratization, spearheaded by Whitehead's (2001) book *The International Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the America*s. While Schraeder (2003) attested that the international dimension of democracy promotion was underrepresented in the literature, the body of literature on this topic has been growing in recent years, especially regarding literature on democracy promotion as a foreign policy or development policy by Western democracies. Most commonly the United States (Carothers, 2010; M. Cox, 2003; Scott & Steele, 2005) and the European Union (Ethier, 2003; Freyburg & Richter, 2010; Schimmelfennig & Scholtz, 2008; Youngs, 2009) were at the centre of academic debates. Regarding US strategies of democracy promotion, and its use of military force (as in the case of the war on Iraq in 2003), a scholarly debate was sparked concerning the question of whether or not democracy should be promoted, and by which means (Mesquita & Downs, 2006)?

Empirical studies on the impact of democracy promotion focused on the recipient countries of democracy promotion rather than the actor or promoter of democracy, which has been criticized by Wolff and Wurm (2011, p. 78), who argue that the analysis of the actors who drive and implement external democracy promotion has been largely descriptive. Moreover, what has been missing in this body of literature is an embedding of empirical research on democracy promotion in IR theory. Given the wide spectrum of literature dealing with democracy promotion and democratization, this literature review will focus on two agents of democracy promotion, which are most relevant to this study: regional organizations and regional powers.

2.2. Democracy promotion by regional organizations

Democracy promotion by regional organizations has become a global phenomenon. While regional organizations can serve many purposes, democracy promotion became one of several

public goods that regional organizations around the globe provide since the 1990s, with the exception of Asia (Closa Montero et al., 2016, p. 11), where regional organizations were mainly geared towards enhancing economic cooperation.

Corresponding to this empirical reality, scholarly debates are trying to answer three main research questions. First, *why* do regional organizations (try to) promote democracy? Second, *how* can regional organizations promote democracy? And third, *how effective* is democracy promotion by regional organizations? Linked to the third question, is the question regarding the conditions under which democracy promotion by regional organizations is more or less effective.

The following section discusses how different theoretical schools (such as realism, liberal institutionalism, constructivism and critical theory) have answered some or all of the above-mentioned research questions, and which empirical cases and regional foci have been used to illustrate their points.

As some scholarly contributions discuss international organizations' democracy promotion, rather than focusing on regional organizations more specifically, their contributions will be included in the literature review. In this thesis, regional organizations are considered to be a special type of intergovernmental organization with membership that is limited to a region. Theoretical discussions on international organizations' democracy promotion can therefore also be relevant in the context of analysing regional organizations.

2.2.1. Why do regional organizations promote democracy?

There are several different theories that try to explain why regional organizations develop mechanisms to promote democracy. The two main arguments stem from realist and constructivist scholars, whereas the former focus on states' interests and the latter focus on the role of norms in international relations.

The realist perspective

Realist theory is based on the assumption that international relations are taking place in an environment of anarchy in which states are the main actors who are pursuing their interests of

power accumulation and/or security (Cristol, 2017a). From this perspective international organizations are a reflection of their powerful member states' interests (Mearsheimer, 1994, p. 7). From this same perspective international organizations (or their bureaucracies) have limited agency themselves. The question that needs to be asked, is therefore why member states of an international organization have an interest in promoting democracy?

Pevehouse (2002, p. 522) argues that there are several reasons why member states would pressure other member states in regional organizations to democratize. First, young democracies might seek to boost their international status and to distance themselves from authoritarian neighbours. Established democracies, such as the United States, might want to promote democracy abroad to increase the legitimacy of the domestic democracy. Moreover, promotion of democracy can be seen as motivated by economic interests, if one assumes that democracies prefer to trade and form coalitions with each other. More democracies mean more partners in trade and security.

Pevehouse (2002, p. 523) also asks why states would choose regional organizations as a platform for democracy promotion. He points to several advantages: high visibility, low transaction costs and higher legitimacy than unilateral action.

One can therefore expect that democracy promotion is strong in the context of democratic density of a regional organization (op.cit.). The stronger or more numerous the democratic systems among the member states, the stronger the framework or urge for democracy promotion through the regional organization.

The theory of democratic density is contested by Montero, Cespedes and Ortiz (2016, p. 16). While they agree that democratization (of regions) and the establishment of (regional) mechanisms for democracy promotion are interrelated, they claim that there is no clear evidence of whether democratization leads to an increase in the development of institutionalized (regional) democratic frameworks, or vice versa, the development of those mechanisms leading to an increase in (regional) democratization.

Closa and Palestini (2018) argue that both weak and strong democracies have an interest in establishing regional democratic clauses, linked to regime survival. While stable democracies believe they are too strong to be sanctioned, they regard democracy clauses as useful tools for democratization in weaker states. Governments that perceive their own democratic system to be weak, adopt democracy clauses as a regional support to counter potential domestic

democratic recession. They identify domestic threats as the trigger for the development of democratic clauses in regional organizations in South America.

Empirical evidence shows that democracies do not always or consistently promote democracy, and contrary to official rhetoric, democracy promotion is not the primary foreign policy interest of (northern industrialized) democracies (Schraeder, 2003, p. 33).

Schraeder (2003, p. 35) argues that a state's approach to democracy promotion depends on a state's principal foreign policy interest and its perception of a democratic environment. States with strong security interests (such as the United States) and an assumption that democratic states are more peaceful (democratic peace hypothesis) focus on political liberalization (through fair elections and strong institutions). States with strong economic interests (such as Germany), who believe in the link of democracy and economic prosperity focus on economic liberalization (free market and good governance).

Differences in approaches or inconsistencies in democracy promotion are hence understood as the result of foreign policy interests of nation states, which also affect the democracy promotion strategies of the regional organization in which they are powerful members.

The constructivist perspective

Constructivism is based on a vision of a socially constructed reality, where norms, identities and ideas play a key role in shaping actors' perceptions of reality as well as their interests. (Cristol, 2017b). Constructivist scholars have argued for the thesis of "diffusion" of democracy, as regimes change and adopt democracy by following the example of democratic neighbours (Wejnert, 2005), the example of the US (Brinks & Coppedge, 2006) or following a global trend of democratization (Starr, 1991).

From a constructivist perspective, the international acceptance of democracy as a norm has led regional organizations to develop democracy promotion frameworks. According to McFaul (2010), democracy promotion has become an accepted foreign policy goal among the majority of the international community. Based on democracy as an established international norm, democracy promotion is practiced by states, NGOs, and international organizations.

If democracy promotion is an accepted international norm, how does it become an established norm in the regional context? Acharaya (2004) argued that international norms become localized through the reconstruction of foreign norms by local agents. In the context of regional organizations, local agents reconstruct international norms in a way to better fit with existing local norms. Whether and how international norms become incorporated into local norms (and are institutionalized in regional organizations) depends on the ability of those local agents to reconstruct international norms.

Jetschke and Lenz (2013) argue that regional organizations are interdependent and norms get diffused between regional organizations, pointing to the similarities of institutional design and policies of organizations in different regional contexts. While many scholarly contributions focus on the role of elites as norm shapers, Elkink (2011) points to the relevance of public opinion, and pro-democratic action of the masses in shaping regional norms.

To summarize, constructivist scholars differ in their opinion of how exactly norms get diffused (from the international to the regional level, between regions or from the local to the regional level). However, there is a consensus that democracy promotion is an accepted international norm, also present in many regional contexts and regional organizations.

Combination of realist and constructivist perspectives

While realist and constructivist approaches offer explanations for why regional organizations have adopted democracy promotion frameworks, and why they sometimes act to promote democracy, they cannot fully explain why regional organizations promote democracy in some cases, while remaining inactive in other cases.

In an attempt to bridge the gap in the discussion of norms versus interests as explanatory factors for democracy promotion, Wolff, Spanger and Puhle (2013) combine the two theoretical approaches. They discuss the (sometimes) conflicting foreign policy objectives of national interests and democratic norms, by drawing on the example of Germany's and the United States' practices of democracy promotion. They highlight that, while the literature describes the inconsistencies of democracy promotion around the world and by one and the same actor, it does not offer systematic knowledge on the causes for these inconsistencies (op. cit. p.8). The interplay of norms and interests could potentially explain some of these inconsistencies.

How norms and interests regarding democracy promotion interact in the context of regional organizations is an important question that has not been sufficiently discussed in the literature. While the constructivist approaches focus on the relevance of democratic norms in regional organizations, realist approaches focus on the interests of member states within regional organizations. A more rigorous research approach could take into consideration the potential existence of regional norms (whereas democratic norms are only part of a set of regional norms), as well as the foreign policy interests of the member states of a regional organization to provide answers for why regional organizations promote democracy in specific circumstances.

2.2.2. How can regional organizations promote democracy?

The question of if and how regional organizations can promote democracy (in their member states or elsewhere), relates to divergent theoretical understandings of the agency of regional organizations and their influence on member states' behaviour as well as the type of influence that regional organizations can assert. Pevehouse (2002, p. 516) stressed that International Relations theory offered little insight into how international organizations influence domestic politics. This gap has been filled by different scholars, who used different theoretical approaches to answer this question. In the section below the most important perspectives are discussed, including realism, neo-liberal institutionalism, constructivism, and critical theory.

Realism

From a realist perspective, regional organizations, or international organizations are not expected to change member states' preferences or behaviour. From this perspective, regional organization' democracy promotion would seem a pointless endeavour. However, powerful member states could use regional organizations as a formal framework through which they can force or incentive democratic behaviour. What matters are hence domestic interests and power relations of member states, with limited to no relevance of the institutions themselves. In contrast to realism, neo-liberal institutionalism emphasized the importance of organizations in international politics.

Neo-liberal institutionalism

Neo-liberal institutionalism believes in the relevance of institutions that help to mitigate the negative effects of an international system of states that act in self-interest. States need international organizations for collaboration and coordination. Hence, to solve problems that they cannot solve on their own. The creation of institutions is therefore in the interest of the member states (Stein, 2008, p. 208).

Neo-liberal institutionalists are optimistic about the positive effects of institutions and their role in international affairs. The theory is based on the premise that states operate in the context of supranational governance, in which international organizations are (increasingly) relevant actors (Stein, 2008).

The membership in international organizations can change member states' preferences (Keohane & Martin, 1995). Regarding democratization, it has been argued that participation in multilateral institutions can (and frequently does) enhance the quality of domestic democracy:

> "Involvement with multilateral institutions often helps domestic democratic institutions restrict the power of special interest factions, protect individual rights, and improve the quality of democratic deliberation, while also increasing capacities to achieve important public purposes. Under some plausible circumstances international cooperation can thus enhance the quality of democracy even in reasonably well-functioning democratic polities" (Keohane et al., 2009, pp. 1–2).

Regime theory, which derived from neo-liberal institutionalism, also contributed to the analysis of international organizations and democracy promotion. Based on the neo-liberal understanding of international relations, regime theory recognizes the power of regimes to modify states' behaviour, which would otherwise only be guided by the pursuit of their own interests (as in realist theory). Regimes are defined as "principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area" (Krasner, 1982, p. 185). Regime theory thereby includes an ideational element to international relations.

Regarding democracy promotion, Levitsky and Way (2006) argued that strong economic, political and social ties between target countries (linkage) and the West, and, to a certain extent vulnerability to pressure by the West (leverage) contribute to democratization of the former. By including social and political ties as explanatory factors for democratization, they include an ideational component and thereby move away from the realist perspective that only focusses on economic or security benefits and/or sanctions. Moreover, they explain how democracy promotion can be promoted externally to non-members.

The concept of linkage and leverage helps to explain how the EU can promote democracy in partner countries, which have an interest in economic and political cooperation with the EU. This regards especially potential accession countries, and the EU policy of democracy as a pre-accession conditionality.

What matters is the extent to which a regional organization (in which the member states remain the main actors) can force or incentivise democratic behaviour. Means to achieve this end are tied to the capabilities of an organization to impose sanctions or other economic/political pressure on the one hand, or to reward democratic behaviour by offering economic or political trade-offs.

While neo-liberal institutionalism recognizes the importance of ideas and norms, it does not concern itself with how these norms get developed in the first place. Constructivists in contrast put their focus on the process of national and international norm diffusion.

Constructivism

From a constructivist perspective, democratic norms of an international or regional organization get transferred to member states through a process of socialization. The democratic norms become internalized in the domestic context. This can happen in the case of international human rights norms (Risse & Sikkink, 1999) or regional democratic norms. The democracy promoter relies only on the power of norms which "persuade, shame, or praise actors into changing their policies" (Kelley, 2004, p. 428). Socialization of norms changes what is perceived as appropriate behaviour within a community of states (Ambrosio, 2008, p. 1323).

The EU has been regarded as an example of a norm shaper in its neighbourhood and abroad. Freyburg (2011) for example argues that cooperation of the EU and authoritarian regimes helps to spread democratic values among the authoritarian regime's civil servants. While the EU has been labelled a norm entrepreneur, norm maker, normative power (Manners, 2002) and a regional normative hegemon (Haukkala, 2008), the EU's normative power has also been questioned (Pace, 2007).

The normative power of a regional organization and the strength of its democratic norms might vary from organization to organization. The applicability of constructivist theories might therefore be limited to regional contexts with a strong democratic identity.

Critical theory

Based on a critique of societal power structures, critical theory as developed by the Frankfurt School in the field of sociology (with popular scholars such as Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse and Max Horkheimer) has provided a counter thesis to positivism, which focused on explaining and understanding society, rather than changing it (Linklater, 1990, p. 1). Critical theory is therefore also critical of itself because it reflects on the role that science plays or should play within society.

With regard to democracy promotion, more recent contributions by critical theory in the field of international relations are relevant. While there is no critical theory of democracy promotion, critical theory scholars have pointed to the relevance of hegemons in socializing less powerful states into adopting their world view. The concept of hegemony therefore needs central attention regarding democracy promotion.

Certain aspects of democracy promotion, such as democracy promotion through conditionality and democratic assistance rely on consent generation and therefore need to be investigated with regard to the applicability of the concept of hegemony, as argued by critical theorists (Bridoux & Kurki, 2014, p. 16).

Critical theory attempts to reveal the "hidden" power aspects at work in democracy promotion. While there have been scholars discussing democracy promotion as a hegemonic project of the United States (Lazarus, 2014; Markakis, 2015; W. I. Robinson, 1996), and as part of EU's foreign policy and hegemonic normative power (Diez, 2013) there is no clear contribution that would assess the influence of regional hegemons within regional organizations in the Global

South. This thesis intends to close this gap by applying the neo-Gramscian concept of consensual hegemony to democracy promotion, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Combination of approaches

As regional organizations adopted different approaches to promote democracy, scholars needed to become more open in their theoretical perspectives on how regional organizations promote democracy.

In his prominent book *The International Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas* Whitehead (2001) categorizes international democracy promotion into three modes of analysis: contagion, control and consent. These three perspectives, or modes of analysis, can be of explanatory value depending on the unit of analysis. Democratization through "contagion" describes a process where democratic values get passed on (unintentionally) to other states in a region through economic, social, political, and military links between states. Democratic "control" concerns the process of imposition of democratic order by external foreign powers through (military) force. Democracy promotion through consent works through an interplay of domestic and international factors through which (domestic) consent to democratization is created, including strategies of incorporation, convergence, or imposition. An example of democratization through consent would be a requirement of adhering to the EU's democracy standards before joining the union, which incentivises states to reform their domestic political systems (Whitehead, 2001, pp. 22–24).

The three dimensions highlighted by Whitehead resonate with central concepts mentioned by different theoretical schools. While the process of contagion was emphasised in constructivism, the process of control can be linked to realist explanations of how democracy can be forced. The process of democracy promotion through consent taps into different theoretical schools, such as Neo-Gramscian perspectives of consensus creation through hegemony (which will be used in this thesis) or a more realist interpretation in the sense of Levitsky's and Way's (2006) concept of linkage. Even though Whitehead did not develop his categorization specifically for democracy promotion through regional organizations, he demonstrates how different theoretical frameworks are useful to analyse different empirical contexts.

Pevehouse (2002, pp. 519–520) combines realist and constructivist approaches when he argues that democratization can be promoted through economic sanctions and diplomatic pressure by international organizations on the one hand, while membership in international organizations can socialize domestic elites and therefore enhance their openness to democratization processes. Similarly, Kelly (2004) argues that both, socialization efforts and conditionality by European institutions made an impact on democratization in Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

Legler and Tieku (2010) argue that how a regional organization promotes democracy is specific to different regional organizations. They compare the AU and the OAS and argue that the "unique constellation of actors that are members of each respective organization have reinforced two distinct democracy promotion and defence paths." They state that the state-centric regionalization process of the OAS created a democracy promotion system based on multilateralism and national sovereignty that minimizes the role of civil society. In contrast, the expert-driven regionalization process of the AU created a democracy promotion framework that is legalistic and allows non-state actors to play a central role.[14] Legler (2012, p. 856) claims that the OAS' approach to democracy promotion is based on a longstanding diplomatic tradition of "elitist, 'club' multilateralism" in the Americas.

The theoretical discussions on how regional organizations can promote democracy is often based on the specific empirical dimension of a given regional organization or based on a theoretical paradigm. Either way, given the variety of regional organizations, corresponding democracy promotion mechanisms and cases of democracy promotion, it is difficult to make general theoretical assumptions about *how* regional organizations promote democracy. Hence, the study of regional organizations and democracy promotions needs to account for the specific regional context.

2.2.3. How effective is democracy promotion by regional organizations?

If we agree that regional organizations can, in principle, promote democracy in states from the "outside in" (Pevehouse, 2002), the next question that needs to be asked is, how *effective* are regional organizations at democracy promotion?

[14] Legler and Tieku (2010, p. 472) give the example of how bureaucrats of the Organization of African Unity further developed principles for democratic governance based on criticism by civil society organizations.

Several authors investigated the effectiveness of external democracy promotion by regional organizations around the world. Studies include analysis of specific regional organizations, comparative analyses, and comparative case studies of democracy promotion by a certain organization in a certain target country. While the largest bulk of literature concerns the European Union (Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2011; Schimmelfennig & Scholtz, 2008; Youngs, 2009) and the Organization of American States (Arceneaux & Pion-Berlin, 2007; Boniface, 2007; Shamsie, 2004), more and more authors have recently made contributions concerning regional organizations in the Global South (including regional and sub-regional organizations in Africa, Latin America and, to a limited degree, in Asia).

While a complete listing of every publication on this issue would go beyond the scope of this chapter, the following section will give an overview of important contributions on different regional organizations around the world. The main aim here is to highlight how scholars have evaluated regional organizations' effectiveness very differently, depending on the specific case study in question.

Europe and the European Union

Evaluations of the democracy promotion strategy of the EU are mainly positive when they assess the EU strategy of conditionality. Other forms of democracy promotion by the EU have instead been labelled high on rhetoric, while low on impact:

Dimitrova and Pridham (2004) argue that the EU model of democracy promotion through integration has been more successful than models of other regional organizations (such as the Council of Europe, OSCE, NATO), although this strategy is limited to targeting potential accession countries. The EU strategy of conditionality has also been deemed successful by Ethier (2003), who states that other strategies, such as incentives of aid programmes, have had modest or no impact. Schimmelfennig and Scholtz (2008) come to the same conclusion when they state that EU policy of conditionality had strong effects if the EU offered membership, while incentives of partnership and cooperation did not promote democracy in a reliable way. Regarding EU democracy promotion in Central Asia, Crawford (2008) argues that self-interests trump lofty principles, thereby strengthening authoritarian regimes. A similar position is taken by Warkotsch (2006), who states that EU democracy promotion in Central Asia does not match its ambitious rhetoric. Seeberg (2009) highlights inconsistencies in the EU's efforts to promote democracy in Lebanon, while Van Huellen (2012) credits the EU with supporting domestic political reform in Morocco and Tunisia in 2000-2010.

While most studies focus on the EU's democracy promotion in its neighbourhood, some authors have looked at the role of the EU as a democracy promoter in Africa. Olsen (Olsen, 2002, p. 323) noted that EU policy makers themselves were sceptical about the impact of aid related democracy promotion in Sub-Sahara Africa. Crawford (2005) illustrates that the EU policy for democracy promotion in Ghana is high on rhetoric but low on delivery. Fioramonti (2004) discusses the positive and negative impacts of the EU's support for grassroots organizations in South Africa.

Other European regional organizations that have been studied regarding the impact of their democracy promotion activities are the Council of Europe and the OSCE. Mcdonagh (2008) for example argues that the two organization's democracy promotion in Moldova was less effective than the EU's approach because the two organizations relied on a socialization based approach, rather than on an incentive based approach. A study on the OSCE democracy promotion efforts in Georgia also revealed its limited impact, arguably due to the lack of political will for reform on the domestic level (Jawad, 2008).

South and Central America

Democracy promotion in the Americas usually deals with the Organization of American States' (OAS) efforts. Books such as "21st Century Democracy Promotion in the Americas" by Heine and Weiffen (2014) or Cameron's (2009) article "Strengthening checks and balances: Democracy defence and promotion in the Americas" mainly discuss the OAS's democracy promotion framework, while the respective titles would suggest a more comprehensive discussion of democracy promotion on the continent. While the OAS is an example of an organization that has been very much involved in democracy promotion on the continent, it is by far not the only organization dedicated to this cause.

Regarding the study of the OAS's effectiveness in democracy promotion, there are many scholarly contributions. Arceneaux and Pion-Berlin (2007) argue that the OAS's capability to defend democracy increased. Detailed case studies look at the OAS record of democracy promotion in Haiti (1990-2000) (Shamsie, 2004), in Peru (2000) and Venezuela (2002) (Cooper & Legler, 2005) among others. While some have pointed to the successful examples of the OAS democracy promotion (Muñoz, 1998), others assess the limitations of the OAS approach (Bloomfield, 1994). Boniface (2007) highlights the mixed record of the OAS in its democracy promotion efforts in various countries over time.

More recent scholarly contributions have examined other regional organizations in South America and their role in democracy promotion. Examples are the analysis of Mercosur's (contested) suspension of Paraguay in 2012 (Vidigal, 2013) or UNASUR's role in democracy promotion in Bolivia in 2008, that demonstrated the success of UNASUR and the failure of the OAS's approach (Aruguay & Moreno, 2014). In the case of the democratic crisis in Venezuela (post-Chavez), Closa and Palestini (2015) highlight the limitations of UNASUR's approach, which they argue promotes stability rather than democracy. Concerning the regional organization ALBA, Torre (2017) highlights the ambiguous approach of Bolivarianism[15] and ALBA's role in autocracy and democracy promotion.

While the literature on regional organizations in South America is still limited and fragmented, it demonstrates that these regional organizations can potentially play an important role in democracy promotion in the region. However, as the few examples demonstrate, democracy promotion is not straightforward, and the regional mechanisms are not guaranteed to actually promote democracy.

African cases

On the African continent, regional organizations are usually analysed with regard to their capacity to foster peace and stability. In this sense, democracy promotion in Africa is often linked to a security component. The main regional organizations that are discussed in the literature are the AU, ECOWAS and SADC.

Tieku (2009) argues that the AU has been successful in intervening in the case of coups, but has been less effective in dealing with authoritarian backsliding. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) has been criticized, since many member states failed to comply with the good governance principles of the APRM (Mangu, 2014). Similarly, Cowell (2011) argues that in the case of the ECOWAS protocol for good governance, this instrument has been more useful in preventing coups than in fostering good governance practices. ECOWAS' efforts to promote democracy in Gambia have been evaluated as a success (Hartmann, 2017).

Another sub-regional organization that gets attention in the literature is the Southern African Development Community. The SADC intervention on Lesotho in 1998 has been criticized as illegitimate (Likoti, 2007), SADC diplomatic efforts to restore democracy in Zimbabwe were

[15] For more details on Bolivarianism and the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela consult Buxton (2019).

ineffective (Pallotti, 2013). More generally, member states of SADC and ECOWAS have been criticized for basing their decision on military intervention on national interests rather than humanitarian reasons (Tavares, 2011).

Asian cases

Regional organizations in Asia either do not promote democracy or have only recently tapped into the domain of democracy promotion. Ambrosio (2008) for example highlights that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is an example of a regional organization that promotes authoritarian norms in Central Asia, rather than democracy. However, ASEAN is an example of a regional organization in Asia that has slowly started to incorporate democracy promotion into its agenda, which has been called a symbolic success (Sukma, 2009, p. 139). However, ASEAN's efforts to promote political change in Myanmar have been evaluated as ineffective, due to the incoherence of ASEAN's strategy (Davies, 2012). The divergence of political systems and ideologies of ASEAN's member states have kept the organization from becoming an active promoter of democracy (Dosch, 2008). The inability of ASEAN to become a more assertive organization for democracy promotion is also linked to its institutional structure. As highlighted by Koga (2016, p. 28), the consensus-based decision-making process has limited the effectiveness of ASEAN in addressing regional security issues.

As this overview demonstrates, the effectiveness of democracy promotion by regional organizations varies across organizations, regions, and particular cases. Despite these inconsistencies it needs to be acknowledged that regional organizations do have the potential capability to promote democracy. While the EU and the OAS are the two regional organizations that are most discussed in the literature, there is a relatively recent but growing literature on democracy promotion by regional organizations in the Global South.

2.2.4. Under which conditions do regional organizations promote democracy successfully?

A central question is not only how effective a particular regional organization was in promoting democracy in a particular state, but also which factors limited the impact of democracy promotion efforts, and under which conditions democracy promotion was or can be more

effective? These research questions arose from the empirical reality of variance in effectiveness of democracy promotion.

The potential factors hampering democracy promotion by regional organizations can be grouped into two main categories: internal and external. Internal factors refer to the organizations' capability and willingness to act in the face of democratic disruptions. External factors refer to international, regional, or domestic factors in the target country to hamper the implementation of a democracy promotion strategy of a regional organization. While many regional organizations do have democracy promotion frameworks, their implementation is often selective and inconsistent.

Regarding EU democracy promotion in Africa, del Biondo (2015) argues for a prevalence of ideational factors that can explain in which cases the EU imposed sanctions (or refrained from doing so). In the cases of Guinea and Niger (on which the EU imposed sanctions) and two cases in which the EU did not impose sanctions (Ethiopia and Rwanda), ideational factors were important to influence the EU's decision-making. Hence, the EU is more likely to impose sanctions in the case of grave violations of democracy and human rights, in cases of political instability, economic issues and if there is pressure from regional organizations and domestic actors, for the EU to take actions. This finding goes against Schraeder's (2003, p. 39) argument, who proposes that EU democracy promotion is mainly constrained by the interests of its member states. From his realist perspective, the EU democracy promotion actions are the result of an effort to extract the least common denominator of different states' foreign policy interests. He also notes that the leadership of particular states in shaping the EU democracy promotion response in specific circumstances is important. An example is the role of the EU in Algeria and France's interests as a former colonial power, which led the EU to embrace rather than criticize the military leadership under General Liamine Zeroual in the 1990s.

Comparing EU, Mercosur and SADC, Van der Vleuten and Hoffmann (2010) argue that whether the democratic clauses are put into practices, depends on the ideational cost of third party pressure and the interests of regional powers. However, third party pressure is only effective if non-intervention is shamed by a third party with a matching regional identity. They attest that these regional organizations differ in the strength of their democratic identity. The democratic identity of a regional organization is strong if it has a democratic clause and if it is comprised of a majority of democratic member states. Based on these criteria they argue that

the EU has a strong democratic identity while the organizations of Mercosur and SADC have an intermediate democratic identity, compared to ASEAN, which has a weak democratic identity (Van Der Vleuten & Hoffmann, 2010, p. 740).

Arceneaux and Pion Berlin (2007) state that democracy promotion by the OAS has been selective, depending on whether the democratic problem is perceived as a threat to the offender and other states or not. If this was not the case, the OAS responded timidly unless there is a strong call for action by actors within the offending state or if the US decided to push for a strong response. Arceneaux and Pion Berlin's argument is therefore also based on the premise that national security interests and the leadership of the regional hegemon matter the most, in addition to concrete calls for intervention from the affected state.

The African Union has also been criticized for intervening selectively. Abantan and Spies (2016) have raised their concern regarding the AU's limited willingness to implement its responsibility to protect human rights norms in cases when humanitarian atrocities are committed by member states' governments.

Looking at regional organizations' democracy promotion efforts in Latin America and post-communist countries, Donno (2010) argues that the enforcement of democracy is hampered by competing geopolitical interests and uncertainty regarding the nature and scope of the violation of democratic norms. Focusing on cases of electoral misconduct, Donno states that the presence of electoral monitoring increases the likelihood of regional organizations taking action.

Once a regional organization decides to become active, there are several factors that can potentially implicate the success of such interventions. Collins (2010) compares the ability of the EU, Mercosur, NAFTA and ASEAN to promote democracy and extracts three factors that impact the organization's possibility of success: first, material benefits of membership, second, the level of integration, and third, the level of democratic consolidation. Collins' explanatory factors relate to structural components of the relationship between target countries and regional organizations.

Legler and Cooper (2001) argue that the OAS is hampered in its democracy promotion by a combination of factors such as organizational issues, incomplete regional democratic

solidarity, lack of resources and lack in collective and national leadership. In a later paper, Legler (2012) argues that the context for democracy promotion has changed, which hampers OAS's efforts to defend and promote democracy. The contextual changes are related to power structures, material conditions, regionalism, ideology, and discourse.

Using the example of the AU's strategy in Libya in 2011, De Waal (2013, p. 379) argues that the AU failed to come up with a united position and failed to provide the necessary financial, military and diplomatic means to support an effective roadmap for solving the crisis in Libya. The diplomatic efforts of the AU were then surpassed by the UNSC resolution 1973 and NATO military intervention.

Since the AU sometimes teams up with the UN and Regional Economic Communities in peace missions, criticism emerged regarding the lack of harmonization of joint missions (Vines, 2013) The AU and the UN have different capabilities, a different approach towards risking casualties, diverging geopolitical interests and are rivals over leadership (Weiss & Welz, 2014). Challenges mentioned by Williams and Boutellis (2014) also include operational and financial challenges and bureaucratic constraints.

Grimm and Leininger (2012) point to the issue of conflictive objectives in democracy promotion. As a multitude of international actors (such as regional organizations, international organizations, multilateral peace missions and governments) pursue different interests in a target country of democracy promotion, they state that "not all good things go together". Conflicting objectives emerge when either different aspects of democracy promotion clash, or when democracy promotion objectives clash with other foreign policy goals. The two authors argue that how actors manage conflicting objectives has an impact on the effectiveness of democracy promotion (Grimm & Leininger, 2012, p. 407).

While most debates focus on states and governments as actors within regional and international organizations, Hawkins (2008) argues that democracy promotion is more robust when civil society has better access to regional organizations. He focuses on the institutional permeability of regional organizations and argues that democracy promotion by the Council of Europe (CE) is more robust than the OAS, because it is more accessible to non-state actors.

Summary: Which factors influence democracy promotion effectiveness?

The question of which factors influence the effectiveness of democracy promotion of regional organizations can be divided into two categories: internal factors, that relate to the regional organization, its structure and political processes on the one hand, and external factors, which relate to the regional, international or domestic context in which democracy promotion is embedded.

Internal factors that have been mentioned in the literature are: ideational factors (such as a regional identity or the prevalence of regional democratic norms), (missing) leadership of regional powers, member states' interests, the relationship between regional organizations and target state (and thereby the potential of the regional organization to assert pressure), the organizational structure of the regional organizations, and availability of resources.

External factors that have been mentioned in the literature are: third party pressure, the domestic political climate in the target state, applicability of existing democracy promotion instruments in changing empirical context, the presence of (and potential rivalry with) other regional organizations.

The difference in explanatory models for the successful implementation of regional organizations' democracy promotion frameworks can be explained mainly by the different empirical realities under investigation. Whether internal or external factors are emphasized, or whether a combination of internal and external factors is mentioned, is influenced by the nature of the conflict, the characteristics of the regional organization, the relevant (domestic, regional, international) circumstances in which democracy promotion takes place and how these three aspects interact.

Most often, authors have pointed to a combination of factors. This hints at the complexity of the environment in which regional organizations' democracy promotion takes place. A comprehensive analysis of democracy promotion needs to take into consideration the domestic, regional, and international circumstances that shape the potential of regional organizations' actions.

2.2.5. Gap in the literature

Regional organizations' role in democracy promotion has increasingly been rewarded with attention from IR scholars. However, theoretical discussions of why, how, when and how effective regional organizations promote democracy have been fragmented and largely based on narrow empirical analyses that explain specific cases but cannot be translated into a general theory on regional organizations' democracy promotion. This is problematic since certain regional organizations (such as the EU and the OAS) have a stronger representation in the literature than other regional organizations in the Global South. Given the diversity of regional organizations and the diverse regional contexts in which they operate, we only have a very limited understanding of how democracy promotion potentially works in less researched regions in Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

The academic literature has focused on some general questions, such as why regional organizations promote democracy, and how they can potentially influence domestic politics in target countries. While these discussions helped to underline the relevance of regional organizations in the domain of democracy promotion, they do not explain how the process of democracy promotion works from an intra-institutional perspective. What is missing here is a detailed analysis of how decision-making takes place within regional organizations in cases of democratic disruption. However, in order to understand these processes, we need to investigate the power dynamics within regional organizations.

Scholars disagree on the relevance of different actors within the process of democracy promotion (such as regional powers, governments, bureaucracies, domestic actors and civil society). This can be attributed to the empirical context investigated and the underlying paradigms that guided the research process. If we want to know more about the internal decision-making processes within intergovernmental organizations, the primary focus is on the member states that are the main actors within these organizations. In the context of regional organizations, regional powers, secondary powers, and small member states deserve detailed attention. Especially regional powers should be under closer investigation, since their influence

in regional politics is often taken as a given.[16] While some authors have hinted at the perception that larger member states are expected to have a higher enforcement capability of regional democratic frameworks (Closa & Palestini, 2018, p. 23), the relevance of regional powers within regional institutions' decision-making is often assumed instead of analysed and explained. The question therefore remains, which role do regional powers play in the domain of democracy promotion by regional organizations?

2.3. Democracy promotion by regional powers in the Global South

While the literature has discussed the role of "Western" regional powers in democracy promotion, such as the United States and Germany, few authors have looked at the role of the regional powers in the Global South with regard to this topic. However, with the rise of emerging powers in an increasing multipolar world order in the first quarter of the 21st century (Cooper & Flemes, 2013), the analysis of the international role of "would-be great powers" (Hurrell, 2006), the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) or, more generally, regional powers of the Global South, became a relevant issue in international relations.

The domain of democracy promotion has only very recently been discussed with regard to regional powers in the Global South. In this context, emerging regional powers can be divided into two categories: democratic regional powers (usually associated with Brazil, India and South Africa) and "illiberal regional powers" or "non-democratic regional powers" (mostly associated with Russia and China). Interestingly, a lot of attention has been paid to the influence of non-democratic regional powers in the domain of international democracy promotion. The main research questions related to this field are: Do non-democratic regional powers promote autocracy? Do non-democratic regional powers interfere with Western democracy promotion efforts? Do democratic regional powers promote democracy? And if so, are they ready to fill the gap of the declining US influence on international democracy promotion?

Given the rise of emerging powers, among which China is the most significant, and based on the premise that democracy is in decline worldwide, Burnell and Schlumberger (2010) highlight the importance of studying the influence of autocratic powers in the promotion of

[16] For a detailed discussion on the conceptualization of regional powers please refer to Chapter 3.

autocracy. While the hypothesis would be that autocratic powers promote autocracy, various studies have hinted at a more complex picture. Risse and Babayan (2015) compared Western powers and so called illiberal regional powers with regard to their democracy promotion efforts and concluded that while Western powers are not automatically active promoters of democracy and human rights, illiberal regional powers are not automatically autocracy supporters. Furthermore, Boerzel (2015) argues that illiberal regional powers sometimes promote democracy, albeit unintentionally.

Way (2015) looked at the effect of Russia's "autocracy promotion" and attests that it had limited effect on the quality of democracy in its neighbourhood, i.e. the countries of the former Soviet Union. When Bader et al. (2010) analysed China's and Russia's foreign policy towards democratization in their region, they concluded that autocratic regional powers do favour autocratic systems within their neighbourhood, but this interest is weighted against an overall interest of political stability. Bader et. al's findings concord with Soest's (2015) argument that "authoritarian powers' motivations to provide support to fellow autocrats are self-serving rather than driven by an ideological commitment."

Babayan (2015) argues that Russia hampered Western democracy promotion efforts in Russia's neighbourhood, based on its motivations of restoring its great power status and countering Western influence in the region. Similarly, Chen and Kinzelbach (2015) ask if (and under what conditions) China countervails democracy promotion efforts by the United States and Europe in its region. Attention has also been drawn to China's role in Africa, and its potential to undermine Western and US democracy promotion efforts. Contrary to the expectations, China's potential to counter democracy promotion efforts in Africa has not been found to be very high (Hackenesch, 2015).

With regard to democratic regional powers, there are a few candidates that seem predestined to play a greater role in democracy promotion. India, the largest democracy in the world in terms of population size, and largest regional power in South Asia, would be an ideal candidate to promote democracy. However, India has not yet played a substantial role in democracy promotion in its region of influence according to Destradi (2010a). As argued by Mohan (2007, p. 99), democracy promotion as a foreign policy objective remains largely absent in India. This can be attributed to India's solidarity with developing countries and the prioritization of its own security interests over democracy promotion. Recent attempts of India to engage in limited

forms of democratic assistance in South Asia can be attributed to India's foreign policy shift towards closer cooperation with the US and concerns over China's growing influence in the region (Hall, 2017).

Another potential candidate in the region of Asia is Indonesia, which has incorporated its democracy identity into its foreign policy agenda. As argued by Sukma (2011), Indonesia's democracy promotion is constrained by the nature of its own democracy and the constraints to democracy promotion in South East Asia. Efforts by Indonesia to advance democracy promotion in the context of ASEAN met heavy opposition, therefore it created the Bali Democracy Forum in 2008, where members could share experiences on democracy, rule of law and human rights (Halans & Nassy, 2013). Overall, the mechanisms for democracy in Asia remain weak, which leaves Indonesia with limited room for democracy promotion manoeuvres.

South Africa post-Apartheid has been vocal about promoting democracy on the continent. However, South Africa's foreign policy actions concerning democracy promotion have been criticized as contradictory (Landsberg, 2000), inconsistent (Nathan, 2005) and have been hindered by South Africa's national interests (Khadiagala & Nganje, 2015). Moreover, South Africa struggles with contradicting regional and international foreign policy objectives concerning democracy promotion in Africa (Breitegger, 2018).

Stuenkel (2013) looked at Brazil and India as potential candidates to support the US and the EU in their democracy promotion efforts and assessed their reluctance to play that role. However, what needs to be investigated is whether democracies like Brazil and India spearheaded their own democracy promotion efforts within their neighbourhood.

Brazil's role as promoter of democracy in its region is not clear in the literature. On the one hand, Brazil has been labelled the "democratic BRIC", with democracy as one of its core public policy preferences (Armijo & Burges, 2009). Moreover, Brazil has been instrumental in strengthening regional organizations' democratic frameworks in South America (Santiso, 2002). On the other hand, Brazil is said to remain committed to principles of national sovereignty and non-interference that potentially limit Brazil's willingness to defend democracy (ibid.). Feldmann et al. (2019) argue that Brazil's (as well as Argentina's and Chile's) approach to democracy promotion has been inconsistent due to the conflict between norms of regional democracy clauses and foreign policy tradition based on a preference for

non-intervention. This finding seems rather surprising given that these countries are also believed to be instrumental in establishing regional frameworks for democracy promotion.

Given Brazil's preferences for democracy promotion through the framework of regional organizations, the question that needs to be asked is, what role does Brazil play within these organizations when it comes to the implementation of democracy promotion frameworks? Especially the tension between non-interventionism and a commitment to regional democracy promotion is worth exploring further. These questions are especially interesting, since they pose a dilemma seldom experienced by established powers, such as the United States, Germany or France. As highlighted by Cooper and Flemes (2013, pp. 955–956), many questions arise as one tries to understand the relation between emerging powers and democracy promotion:

> "Emerging powers often criticise efforts by the USA and Europe to promote democracy, yet in several cases emerging democracies have overcome their qualms about sovereignty and defended democratic regimes abroad. Were these incidents part of an emerging doctrine, a belief system, or mere ad hoc interventions to be decided on a case-by-case basis? Is defending democracy and political pluralism part of emerging powers' national interest? If so, what are the best means to go about it? How do emerging powers deal with the tension in their world-views between the notions of sovereignty and intervention, and what does this mean for the future of democracy promotion?"

This dissertation hence tries to shed light on the role of regional powers in democracy promotion, and more specifically their role in democracy promotion by regional organizations, which provide a platform for regional power projection and offer established frameworks for democracy promotion, by focussing on Brazil's role within UNASUR.

2.4. Democracy promotion through regional organizations - the role of regional powers

The literature on democracy promotion through regional organizations has one apparent gap: the role of regional powers in democracy promotion through regional organizations in the Global South. This gap is placed at the intersection of several shortcomings of the literature.

An analysis of the role of emerging regional powers within regional organizations' democracy promotion addresses several gaps in the literature. First it is an important step towards

deepening the analysis of "non-Western" regional organizations' capability to address democratic issues in member states. Second, it addresses a gap in the literature on the role or potential role of emerging regional powers in the domain of democracy promotion. Third, it is an important contribution to the very limited literature on power dynamics and processes within regional organizations concerning democracy promotion. Fourth, it contributes to the study of foreign policy strategies of emerging powers within their region of influence.

While a great deal of literature focuses on the engagement of regional powers, or regional emerging powers within established international organizations (Stephen, 2012), *little is known about how emerging regional powers behave within, or use, regional organizations as part of their regional foreign policy strategy*. As highlighted by Feldmann et al. (2019, p. 454): "While the existing literature has contributed greatly to enhancing our understanding of the role of regional organizations in democracy support, it has largely sidestepped the critical role of national foreign policies." Feldman et al. argue that the literature has overestimated the role that regional organizations play compared to the influence of states within these institutions (ibid). This is especially true if we look at regional organizations with limited supranational authority.

Democracy promotion is a tricky subject for regional powers in the Global South, as they find themselves as advocators of sometimes contradicting norms: democracy on the one hand, national sovereignty on the other hand. The focus on regional powers and regional organizations in the Global South allows a widening perspective on democracy promotion through regional organizations, which have been heavily influenced by empirical studies of Western organizations and Western states. The examples of literature on regional organizations from the Global South (such as Mercosur and UNASUR) remains descriptive and lacks in explanatory value (Closa & Palestini, 2018, p. 13). The unique regional challenges, diverse organizational structures, the influence of regional and international norms, interplay of domestic, regional, and international actors, constitute a complex but fascinating context in which democracy promotion takes place.

Among the emerging powers discussed in the literature, Brazil is an intriguing and ambiguous regional democracy promoter. While Brazil is known to have been an advocate for regional democratic norms and frameworks and is known for its preference for working through regional organizations, its actual strategy of democracy promotion through these organizations is unclear. UNASUR, a regional organization set up by Brazil to promote regional political

cooperation, is the ideal platform for Brazil to promote democracy hypothetically. At a first glance however, Brazil's role within UNASUR's democracy promotion missions seems to vary substantially. Through understanding Brazil's strategy and role within UNASUR, its motivations and its challenges, one can get a better understanding of how a democratic regional power of the Global South promotes democracy through regional mechanisms.

CHAPTER 3 – Theoretical framework: Regional powers, regional organizations, and democracy promotion

> "When we say that we don't want to be the leader, we don't want to impose... The idea is to strengthen our own positions and to have a better possibility for negotiating something that is favourable for everybody, but good for us too."
>
> Osmar Chohfi, Secretary General, Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2002[17]

The academic literature has produced a magnitude of concepts related to the rise of countries like the BRICS in regional and global politics. They have been classified as emerging powers (Abdenur, 2014; Browne & Weiss, 2014; White, 2013), rising powers (Constantine & Pontual, 2015; Kahler, 2013; Stephen, 2012), (emerging) middle powers (Flemes, 2007; Huelsz, 2009), new powers (Narlikar, 2010), would-be great powers (Hurrell, 2006) and regional powers (Destradi, 2010b; Flemes & Habib, 2009; Nolte, 2011; Stephen, 2012).

While these concepts have value in their own right, depending on the research focus, this thesis concerns itself with the study of regional powers, and more specifically, regional hegemons. The reason for this choice is the focus on leadership within regional affairs as part of the regional power's foreign policy. While the concepts of rising powers, emerging middle powers, new powers, and would be great powers, refer to the rise of these states in global affairs, the concept of regional powers refers to the power status in a perceived region of influence.

In the following chapter, the concepts of regional power and regional hegemony are introduced, followed by a detailed discussion on the concept of consensual hegemony, which will be adopted as the core theoretical concept in this thesis. The concept of consensual hegemony is then applied to the theorization of the role of regional hegemons in regional organizations and the role of regional hegemons in democracy promotion (through regional organizations).

3.1. Conceptualization of regional powers and regional hegemons

Regional powers are defined as "states in the global system that are part of a geographically delimited region of which they are ready to assume leadership" (Flemes & Habib, 2009, p.

[17] As cited in Burges (2016, p.170).

138). Based on this definition regional powers have the capability of regional leadership and have also a demonstrated interest in regional affairs.

Nolte (2011, p. 57) lists eleven core criteria that define regional powers, which can be summarized as follows: 1) self-conceptualization of a regional leader; 2) material, ideational, and organizational capacity for regional power projection; 3) great influence in regional affairs; 4) interconnectedness with the region (culturally, economically, politically); 5) great influence on the geopolitical and ideational-political construction of the region; 6) power projection through regional governance mechanisms; 7) articulation of a common regional project/identity; 8) provision of regional collective goods; 9) definition of regional security agenda; 10) recognition of regional power status by states inside and outside the region; 11) representation of regional interests in international fora.

While Nolte's criteria offer a useful description of an ideal-type of regional power, emerging regional powers, or regional powers in the Global South often do not fit Nolte's criteria of an ideal-type regional power neatly. This relates especially to the expectation of regional followership and the provision of public goods and regional security.

Problems in the conceptualization of regional powers arise because theories developed in the North Atlantic region sometimes fail to be applicable to the study of regional powers in the Global South (Burges, 2016, p. 8). Moreover, theories developed for the analysis of interstate relations in the global system are sometimes applied to the regional context where they have limited explanatory power. An example is the theory of hegemonic stability, which argues that the international system is most stable when there is one dominant state (Webb & Krasner, 1989, p. 183). Based on this assumption, regional powers are often assumed to provide stability in their region of influence. However, in contrast to a global hegemon, regional powers operate in an international system of power distribution as well as in a regional system which is linked to the international system. Theories of hegemonic stability therefore cannot be readily applied to the regional context (Prys, 2012, p. 3).

In addition to the lack of military dominance, regional powers in the Global South often do not provide the expected public goods (for example by refusing to unilaterally pay the costs for regional economic integration) nor have the expected regional followership that would be traditionally associated with regional power. This leads to what Prys describes as an "achievement-expectation gap" (Prys, 2010, p. 484).

Prys differentiates between different kinds of regional powers – detached regional powers, regional dominators, and regional hegemons - depending on the means by which a regional power asserts its interest in the region. While detached regional powers show a lack of interest in their region, regional hegemons and regional dominators are engaged with the region, albeit through different means of leadership. Regional dominators tend to draw more on hard power strategies (threat, military force) to advance their interests. In contrast, regional hegemons use their soft power capabilities and work through regional cooperation projects.[18] As defined by Nye (1990, p. 166) "this second aspect of power - which occurs when one country gets other countries to want what it wants - might be called co-optive or soft power in contrast with the hard or command power of ordering others to do what it wants." According to Prys (2010, p. 494), regional hegemons project their preferences and values by using material incentives and through socialization and persuasion. The projection of power therefore happens through shaping preferences of other states in the region.

The classification of regional powers based on their regional foreign policy strategy is a useful tool to categorize different types of regional powers within their specific regional context, without imposing a-priori theoretical assumptions that do not fit the regional context or the leadership strategy of the regional power. In this dissertation, the researcher adopts the classification of regional powers by Prys, who uses regional power as an umbrella term that includes regional hegemons and other types of regional powers (such as regional dominators and detached regional powers) as sub-categories. In doing so, the aim is to put more clarity to two concepts - regional power and regional hegemon – which are often used interchangeably in the literature.

In addition to the inconsistent conceptualization of regional powers, the study of regional powers (and regional hegemons) also poses an analytical challenge. Nolte argues that an analysis of regional powers needs to be based on a combined (instead of a singular) theoretical approach (Nolte, 2011, p. 56). As he argues, regional power is based on several aspects that tap into the terrain of different theoretical strands. First, regional power is linked to an international system of distribution of power resources, as pointed out in realist thinking. Second, regional power is linked to the social construction of a region and a vision for regional order, which has been underlined by constructivists. Third, the domestic political and economic situation within the regional power plays a role in determining the capacity of a regional power

[18] Based on this classification China, Russia, or the US are considered regional dominators, while states like Brazil and South Africa are examples of regional hegemons.

to exert regional leadership, which relates to a neo-liberal interpretation of regional power. Because of these complex intertwined factors that impact regional power, many approaches on regional powers "include the internal power base (liberal), the power resources (realist) and their application (realist), role definitions and strategies (constructivist), and interaction patterns in the region with a special emphasis on the role of regional institutions" (Nolte, 2010, pp. 883–884).

While the researcher agrees with Nolte that the analysis of regional powers is complex and relates to different layers of regional power (domestic, regional, and international), the challenges of choosing an appropriate theoretical foundation for the analysis of regional powers can be overcome by focusing on the type of regional power, its preferred foreign policy strategy and the relevant theoretical underpinnings of that strategy.

Following this reasoning, the researcher chose Burges' concept of consensual hegemony (Burges, 2008) as the central theoretical foundation for the analysis of Brazil's foreign policy towards South America. Burges developed the concept in order to explain Brazil's regional foreign policy strategy during the Cardoso administration (1995-2002) and its global foreign policy during the Lula presidency (2003-2010) (Burges, 2008, pp. 65–66). The concept, which relies on a neo-Gramscian reading of hegemony, enables us to explain Brazil's reluctance to project power in a coercive way.

In realist thinking, hegemony is linked to regional or global dominance based on materialist capabilities such as military strength (Mearsheimer, 2013). In neo-liberal institutionalism the hegemon diffuses norms and socializes other states into a hegemonic order, but also relies on strategies of coercion and manipulation of material incentives. The socialization process is triggered by coercion and economic incentives (Ikenberry & Kupchan, 1990). Constructivists focus on the social construction of states' identities, interests, and the power of ideas and discourse. However, the discursive power also has roots in economic and military resources (Hopf, 1998). While realist, liberal-institutionalist, and constructivist concepts of hegemony and leadership focus on relational power, the neo-Gramscian perspective allows to shift the focus to the pursuit of structural power, which is central to Brazil's foreign policy strategy (Burges, 2016, p. 3), as will be discussed in the next section.

3.2. Consensual hegemony as a foreign policy strategy of regional hegemons

Consensual hegemony as described by Burges (2008, p. 66) is "an oblique application of pressure or the advance creation of conditions that would make a future policy appear a self-interested move by other countries". Consensual hegemony can be understood as an ideas-driven mode of leadership that works through inclusion and co-option, using means such as the creation of common projects, dissemination of ideas, fostering of dialogue and consensus creation.

Followership is not created through the use of force, but through the cost of non-followership. In this sense, consensual hegemony does not work through coercion, but rather through co-option and inclusion. The focus is therefore on consensus creation. The concept is closely linked to hegemony in a neo-Gramscian sense. Burges understands hegemony as an international system or structure which is built consensually by multiple states under the leadership of a predominant state (op. cit. p. 70).

While the concept of hegemony as developed by Gramsci was used to describe a system of the manufacturing of consent within the fascist regime in Italy in the 1920s to 1940s (Gramsci, 2011), its use for the analysis of power relations within the international system has been demonstrated by Cox. The key concept here is that a hegemon projects its ideas to its followers who incorporate his or her ideology (subconsciously), which helps to legitimize a given order (R. W. Cox, 1983, p. 164). Hegemony can be seen as a structure of values and understandings of the international order as perceived by states and non-state actors. The hegemonic order (if successful) is seen as the "natural" order by most actors. However it is based on a specific value system that has been created by the hegemon (Robert W. Cox & Sinclair, 1996, p. 151).

The key aspect of a neo-Gramscian perspective on hegemony, is that hegemony is related to structural aspects of power. The hegemon therefore does not look for power over others, but for the power to shape the underlying structure of international or regional politics. In developing the concept of consensual hegemony, Burges has enabled a translation of the Coxian reading of Gramsci to the regional context.

Cooperative versus consensual hegemony

The neo-Gramscian approach allows scholars to account for a lack of neo-realist interpretations of hegemony to explain regional foreign policy strategies of regional hegemons in the Global South. In this sense, the concept of consensual hegemony is a reaction to Pedersen's concept of co-operative hegemony (Pedersen, 2002).

Based on a theoretical foundation of ideational–institutional realism[19], Pederson developed the concept of co-operative hegemony to explain why regional powers create regional institutions. He argued that regional integration is driven by declining or relatively weak regional powers. Through the creation of regional institutions the regional power agrees to share its powers with other states in the region and accepts to cover a large part of the costs associated with regional integration (Pedersen, 2002, p. 678).

While the regional integration process can be costly, Pedersen argues that it has clear advantages for the regional power. Through the regionalisation process, power is aggregated. This might be an advantage especially if the regional power wants to increase its international role. Furthermore, regionalisation increases regional stability and decreases the chance of counterbalancing from secondary powers (i.e. states that rank second in a regional hierarchy of power) in the region. Through regionalisation, the regional power also gets easier access to resources, such as for example scarce raw materials. And lastly, the regional institution provides a platform for the regional power to diffuse its ideas (op.cit. p 685-686).

In contrast to the concept of co-operative hegemony developed by Peterson that was derived from an analysis of regional powers in Europe, Burges argues that the concept of co-operative hegemony by Peterson fails to explain how states like Brazil, who do not want to pay the costs of integration, still happen to lead regional projects (Burges, 2008, p. 72). The concept of co-operative hegemony also does not apply to the creation of regional institutions that do not have any supranational authority and lack the level of institutionalization of the European Union.

[19] Ideational-institutional realism as defined by Pedersen is a variation of realism. Pedersen's theory is based on the premise that regionalism is driven by the security and power interests of the most powerful state in the region. However, in contrast to realism, he argues that states differ in their ideational and domestic institutional setup. Ideas hence play a role in influencing a state's grand strategy towards regional institution building (Pedersen, 2002, p. 682).

Despite the centrality of ideas for the construction of a consensual hegemony, Burges stresses that ideas alone are not enough: "a willingness to devote resources – intellectual, economic and security – towards the construction, implementation and dissemination of this vision is also needed" (Burges, 2008, p. 69). Burges stresses that consensual hegemony is a leadership approach that can be adopted by hegemons that do not have a strong economic or military dominance in the region (ibid).

Consensual hegemony is closely related to leadership. Burges leans on Arrighi's conceptualization of a hegemon as a dominant state that "leads the *system* of states in a desired direction and, in so doing, is perceived as pursuing a universal interest" (Arrighi, 1990, p. 367). However, despite the initial leadership of the hegemon, *the hegemonic project takes on a life on its own and ownership becomes diffuse* (Burges, 2008, p. 73). This means that in the case of regionalism as a hegemonic project, the provision of collective goods also potentially becomes a collective endeavour that does not rest solely on the shoulders of the regional hegemon but also requires the 'buy-in' of other regional players (op. cit. p. 74).

While an idea-driven leadership style is less costly than an approach of co-operative hegemony, a foreign policy strategy of consensual hegemony has its limitations. As pointed out by Burges in a later paper (Burges, 2015), the reluctance to adopt a more assertive leadership strategy and of providing concrete public goods can result in a decline of followership and an increase in strategies of counterbalancing in the region. In Burges' words, "there is an exhaustion point to consensual hegemony after which concrete leadership goods must be delivered" (Burges, 2015, p. 194).

Besides regional contestation, Burges also points to international factors that might challenge a consensual hegemonic approach, such as international actors (or an international hegemon) that provide an alternative vision or direct economic or security incentives (op.cit. p.196). An idea-based leadership can hence blossom only in the absence of more assertive leadership approaches.

What remains to be noted, is that consensual hegemony is a strategy that does not need to lead to an end-goal of hegemony. As pointed out by Burges, "it is the pursuit of consensual hegemony, not its full attainment that is ultimately important because the encompassed actions work to disseminate an ideational approach that, when effective, quietly embeds Brazilian interests in institutions and other countries" (Burges, 2016, p. 5).

Burges concept of consensual hegemony does not solely rely on a neo-Gramscian approach on hegemony, but also rests on the perspective of critical International Political Economy regarding the pursuit of structural power. While the strategy pursued by a consensual hegemon rests upon an idea-based leadership in a neo-Gramsican sense, the motivations for this approach derive from the hegemon's interests in advancing its structural power.

Drawing on Strange's concept of structural power (Strange, 1996), Burges argues that the hegemon hence does not have an interest in power over others (as in a relational concept of power) but in setting the rules of the game, which benefits the architect of the structure. (Burges, 2016, p. 11). Burges then links the quest for structural power to Brazil's often described quest for national autonomy (Vigevani & Cepaluni, 2007). Burges argues:

> "By avoiding the overt and forceful exertion of power, which would likely require a violation of a neighbouring country's sovereignty, Brazil seeks to prevent the creation of precedents that might later be used to curtail its own freedom and autonomy. Viewed from this angle, Brazilian foreign policy is fundamentally about questions of structural power, be it through the obstruction of institutions and norms that might impinge autonomy, or through the development and support of new patterns of bilateral and multilateral relations that weaken the embedded Northern structural power" (Burges, 2016, p. 12).

While Brazil's end-goal is not domination or power over others, the strategy of consensual hegemony does have the goal of advancing Brazil's interests regionally and internationally. Burges identifies Brazil's interest in national socio-economic development as the main driver of Brazil's foreign policy (Burges, 2016, p. 3).

To summarize, consensual hegemony can be described as an idea-based leadership approach that works through consensus creation and attempts to advance the regional hegemon's structural power. Based on the structural power, the regional hegemon keeps its autonomy and does not need to provide extensive public goods in order to lead. The approach of consensual hegemony does have its limits when it is faced with competition by more assertive leadership strategies. Consensual hegemony is a "cheap" approach to leadership, but it is not cost-free. It involves the provision of political capital and relies on diplomatic resources.

Before applying the consensual hegemony approach to the role of regional hegemons within regional organizations, the next section provides a short overview of what the main IR theories have argued on this issue, to highlight the shortcomings of the various approaches.

3.3. Regional powers in the context of regional organizations

Leading IR theories have theorized the relationships of states and institutions in the context of international organizations. The main issue regarding their applicability to the analysis of regional organizations, is that these theories do not account for the specifics of diverse regional context.

Realism argues that international organizations are built on states' interests and reflect power structures that already exist in world politics. From this perspective international organizations are only as strong as their most powerful member states. The organizations are used by the powerful states to assert their interests. Hence, the institutions themselves have very little influence over their member states' behaviour (Mearsheimer, 1994, p. 7). International organizations are used by states to achieve common goals that they cannot achieve on their own. This concerns the solving of global problems (for example in the domain of security, poverty, and the environment) (Mearsheimer, 1994, pp. 5–6).

In contrast to the realist position, liberal institutionalists see international organizations as actors in their own right, who play an increasing role in supranational governance (Stein, 2008). While states are seen as rational actors as in realist theory, liberal institutionalism claims that they do not operate in an international system of anarchy. Liberal institutionalism argues that cooperation between states is enhanced through international organizations, thereby changing states' preferences (Keohane & Martin, 1995).

In rational choice theory, international organizations and powerful member states are seen as opposing forces. International organizations offer centralization and a stable infrastructure for collective activities and therefore make actions more efficient. The independent action of the organization is however limited by powerful states who can "interfere with their operations, ignore their dictates, or restructure and dissolve them" (Abbott & Snidal, 1998, p. 5). States grant international organizations some level of independence if the value of the functions that the organization provides is higher than the cost of the constraint in the autonomous unilateral action (ibid). Hawkins et al. (2006, p. 13) state that powerful states do not need international

organizations for international cooperation. However, delegation can have several benefits, such as division of labour and specialization, increase of legitimacy, the possibility to facilitate collective decision-making, to manage policy externalities, to resolves disputes, and to create policy bias. Based on this premise, the institutional structure of international organizations is the result of decisions made by states that try to solve specific cooperation problems (Koremenos et al., 2001).

While realism and liberal institutionalism and rational choice theory focus on states or organizations as actors, other international relations theories have focused on the structural aspects of international politics in institutional settings. Constructivist theory emphasises the social structure in which international politics are embedded. It is argued that the structure of international politics is based on social rather than material components. Said structure shapes actors' interests and identities (Wendt, 1995, p. 71).

Constructivism highlights the importance of norms that shape the ideas and interests of actors (Adler, 2013). According to constructivist theory, states' ideas and interests are subject to change. Power politics are not a causal effect of anarchy. If states act in self-interest, this is due to a (constructivist) process not an inherent structure (Wendt, 1992). Finnemore (1996) argues that the interests of states are shaped through a socialization process by international organizations. According to Abdenur (2014), this process of norm negotiation is interdependent, as norms of international organizations are also shaped by member states. Moreover, international organizations are perceived to create their own ideas and agendas. They therefore behave in ways unanticipated by their creators (states). International organizations can be seen as bureaucracies that have an internal logic (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004, p. 3).

IR theory hence differs in the extent to which it focuses on states or institutions as relevant actors, and whether the focus is on actors versus the structure in which the actions are embedded. What is problematic about all the approaches is that they cannot simply be translated into the regional context. Regional organizations are embedded in regional and international power structures, and different regional organizations have varying degrees of institutionalization. As highlighted by Acharaya and Johnson (2007), regional organizations range from highly bureaucratic institutions to informal organizations and vary in their decision-

making structure and level of supranational authority. It is therefore almost impossible to create a general theory of the relation of regional powers and regional organizations without taking into consideration the specific aspects of regionalism and institution building in a given region.

Another branch of IR theory has set out to specifically deal with the building of regional organizations in what has been termed "old" and "new" regionalism. The differentiation between old regionalism, that studied regional integration in Europe, and new regionalism that studied regional integration in the Global South (Federik Söderbaum, 2016), points to the core differences between regionalism in different parts of the world. Moreover "old" regionalism focused on state-centric regional integration, while new regionalism also included perspectives on the roles of non-state actors, such as civil society and businesses, in regional affairs (Fredrik Söderbaum & Shaw, 2003). While the theories on regionalism give different explanations for *why* regional institution building occurs, they offer limited insights into the power politics within regional organizations, or *how* states use these frameworks for the pursuit of their interest. As stressed by Hurrell, the power-political aspects of regional governance and their respective institutions have been relatively neglected in the literature (Hurrell, 2005, p. 186).

To bridge the divide between old and new regionalism, scholars have tried to unify the study of regions under the umbrella of comparative regionalism (Boerzel, 2013; Börzel & Risse, 2016; Federik Söderbaum, 2016; Warleigh-Lack, 2006). The problem with this approach is however, that despite growing empirical research, there is no consensus on the conceptual or theoretical approach that such an endeavour entails (Lombaerde et al., 2010).

In applying the concept of consensual hegemony to the study of regional powers and regional organization, this thesis works towards a theorization of the role of states within regional organizations that can be applied in the context of regionalism in the Global South.

3.3.1. The consensual hegemony approach applied to regional organizations

The advantage of a consensual hegemony approach is that it allows for an analysis of the strategy of a hegemon's foreign policy within the region, and by extension, within a regional organization. The consensual hegemonic approach is therefore centred on the state, as a relevant actor within structure of the regional organization, whereas the structure of the regional organization is considered to be the result of the hegemon's aim for structural power. This approach therefore differs from the approaches discussed above, which often start by

looking at the institutional structure first, and then place states as actors within the context of these institutions.

While Burges did not create the approach of consensual hegemony specifically to address the relationship of regional hegemons and regional organizations, the approach of consensual hegemony can explain important aspects of this relationship. It can explain why (consensual) regional hegemons create weak regional organizations, and what role regional hegemons are supposed to play within the regional organizations that they have created. Furthermore, it can point to strategies that the regional hegemon can apply in order to lead the regional organization in a given direction. The following sections re-visit these questions in more detail.

1.) Why do regional hegemons build regional organizations?

The concept of consensual hegemony explains why regional hegemons (like Brazil) create "weak" regional institutions.[20] The aim is to create regional cooperation mechanisms that are less costly than a co-operative hegemonic approach on the one hand, and do not threaten national sovereignty on the other hand. The regional organization is set up as a platform for a strategy of consensual hegemony, i.e. for an indirect or not directly visible power projection, where influence is created through the dissemination of ideas and through creating situations in which it is too costly to deviate from the hegemon's position (Burges, 2008, p. 66).
Regional organizations help the regional hegemon to increase its structural power. If the approach of consensual hegemony is successful, the institutional structure of the regional organization, its decision-making mechanisms, its goals, and policies should mirror the consensual hegemons vision for the region.

From a neo-Gramscian perspective, international organizations are the normative expression of a world hegemony. As pointed out by Cox, the norms of a hegemonic order get enshrined in the organization's structure and rules. Cox views international organizations as the product of a hegemonic order that help to legitimize that order. International organizations and their rules are usually initiated by the dominant state (R. W. Cox, 1983, p. 172). In the regional context,

[20] Regional organizations are "weak" in the sense that they have limited agency compared to their member states. In other words, "weak" regional organizations are multilateral fora instead of supranational bodies. They lack a strong institutional architecture, budget, and mandate.

the regional organization should therefore mirror the regional order and the regional vision of the regional hegemon. The advantage of creating a regional organization compared to other forms of regional cooperation is that the regional organization offers a more institutionalized and therefore stable structure.

Since the consensual hegemonic approach is built on the goal of not infringing on the regional hegemon's autonomy, one can assume that the institutional framework does not have supranational power and that the institutional structure puts the regional hegemon in a position to navigate the work of the regional organization. As argued by Burges (2015, p. 202), "Brazil is only interested in creating regional mechanisms it can control and (quietly) bend to its will."

2.) How does the consensual regional hegemon assert its interests in the regional organization?

Based on the consensual hegemonic approach, the premise is that the regional hegemon uses the framework of the regional organization to lead the region through inclusion and co-option. The regional hegemon can be expected to take a leading role through agenda setting and through consensus creation in discussions and negotiations if it wishes to do so. By leading the process of decision-making within the organization, the hegemon can sell the outcome as a collectively agreed decision, rather than an imposition of its own will.

As pointed out by Burges, leadership in a neo-Gramscian sense involves the ability to persuade others that they have the same interests as the hegemon as well as to assure their support and participation in a collective endeavour. The hegemonic project becomes an inclusive project that absorbs diverging opinions. The leadership therefore does not rely on either sticks or carrots to pursue a project (Burges, 2006, p. 26). Burges points to Gramsci's teacher-student dialectic, that he interprets as a process in which the leader comes up with the initial vision of a project, encouraging others to participate in a process of dialogue that creates the sense of ownership in the group. As a result, the group will continue with the project based on the guiding principles set out by the leader, which does not require the leader to control the process that follows (ibid).

Consensus creation is therefore the key aspect of the consensual hegemonic approach. The question that rests here is whether the hegemon is willing to initiate a teacher- student style

process of leadership. What has to be noted here, is that there are realist underpinnings to the strategy of consensual hegemony. The hegemon is not a benevolent actor. It pursues a strategy of consensual hegemony to serve its own interests and to pursue the aggregation of structural power. While the hegemon does not act or lead overtly, it does assert its interests in the region and through the regional organizations (Burges, 2015, p. 201).

While the theory of consensual hegemony sheds light on the foreign policy strategy of regional hegemons in the context of regional organizations, it offers limited insights into how the hegemon acts once the ownership of the hegemonic project has become diffused. As argued by Burges (2008, pp. 73–74): "While in the initial stages of this process the would-be consensual hegemon may be required to do the majority of the innovating, in later stages it is possible that other actors, having internalized and embraced the priorities and aspirations in question, may autonomously work to advance and entrench the nascent hegemonic order."

There is however an issue to this approach in the context of weakly institutionalized regional multilateral organizations. If the regional organization is not given sufficient autonomy, it is restricted in its capacities to act. In this multilateral setting, expectations of more direct leadership on specific issues might be demanded by the members of the organization. Burges hinted at presidential diplomacy as one way in which the regional hegemon can take up a leadership role (Burges, 2016, p. 14). However, this type of leadership cannot be taken for granted and might be inconsistent.

As Burges (2016, p. 155) argues, once the regional hegemon established its overarching goal (such as establishing regional organizations based on its vision), the regional hegemon invests in further regional management based on cost-benefit calculations.

3.3.2. Conditions for an approach of consensual regional hegemony (to be successful)

Burges highlights that there are limitations to the success of a consensual hegemonic approach. He stresses that wider systematic structural factors play a role as to whether a consensual hegemonic approach can be pursued. Because the consensual hegemonic approach relies on the power of ideas, consensual hegemony is fragile. The hegemonic vision can be challenged by a competing vision or a by more assertive leadership approach that offers economic or security incentives (Burges, 2015, p. 196).

On a practical level, Burges names certain conditions for the success of a consensual hegemony: a dynamic leader that can generate ideas (but has limited resources), a region that is relatively isolated from an international pole of power, and the willingness of states in the region to follow the hegemon's vision (Burges, 2015, p. 204). This observation leads to three levels of potential hurdles for the consensual hegemonic approach: domestic, regional, and international.

1) The domestic level

As the consensual hegemony rests on the provision of ideas, the regional hegemon must have the ideational capacity to generate attractive regional projects that can generate followership. While the regional hegemon might not need an abundance of economic resources for its consensual hegemonic project, the hegemon needs to be capable of a strong foreign policy, which has to be grounded in a stable economic and political domestic climate (at least to a certain extent). As Burges (2016, p. 17) argues, domestic economic and social issues in Brazil have traditionally limited Brazil's foreign policy capacity.

The consensual hegemonic approach does rely on political and diplomatic resources. A regional hegemon caught up in domestic turmoil will have difficulty in providing a convincing regional vision. This also relates to Nye's (1990, p. 167) conceptualization of soft power, which is based on the attractiveness of ideas or of an ideology which encourages followership. More specifically, in the context of democracy promotion, the domestic democratic system needs to be a positive example that deserves followership.

At this point, it must be noted that Brazil's democracy has experienced serious legitimacy issues regarding wide-spread corruption scandals,[21] and regarding the illiberal tendencies of the Bolsonaro administration (since 2019), which pose a threat to Brazil's democracy. Bolsonaro appointed military officers to senior positions within his cabinet, which now features more ministers from the military than during the times of military rule (Anderson, 2019, p. xiv). While the analysis of Brazil's foreign policy under the Bolsonaro administration goes beyond the scope of this thesis, Bolsonaro's election and presidency raises questions about the

[21] As discussed in Chapter 1.

quality, robustness, and durability of Brazil's democracy, and therefore also about Brazil's capacity to promote democracy in the long term.

2) The regional level

Consensual hegemony depends to a strong degree on the extent to which it can rally states in the region behind its regional vision. As Burges points out, the consensual hegemony rests upon the "acceptance by regional countries of the would-be consensual hegemon's project" (Burges, 2015, p. 204). Neither this acceptance, nor its followership can be taken for granted. Especially in the case where there is more than one regional hegemon in one region, the chances of competing regional projects are high. Regional projects that offer concrete public goods (in pursuing a co-operative hegemonic approach) are especially challenging for a consensual hegemony that solely rest upon an idea-based leadership. A consensual hegemon would therefore need to try to isolate the region from the influence of another regional power.

In the literature on regional powers, a lot of attention has been paid to the contestation by secondary powers as a response to regional powers' leadership intentions (Ebert et al., 2014; Flemes & Castro, 2016; Flemes & Wehner, 2015). Secondary powers are states that have a secondary regional hierarchy of power, occupying the spot behind regional powers but before smaller states. Authors have described two different strategies of contestation: soft-balancing and hard-balancing. Soft balancing strategies described by Flemes and Wehner (2015) include institutional binding, economic buffering, and the building of alternative regional projects and institutional contestation (Flemes & Castro, 2016). Hard balancing can range from direct military conflict to military cooperation with partners outside the region, described as collateral hard-balancing (Flemes & Wehner, 2015).

Ebert et al. highlight how secondary powers have a great variety of potential strategies towards the regional power: "They balance, bait, buffer, buck-pass, or bind; they contain, evade, or resist; they appease, bandwagon, comply, or withdraw. The strategic portfolio seems infinite" (Ebert et al., 2014, p. 222). From this perspective it is especially important for the regional hegemon to create followership among secondary powers for its regional project.

Merke (2015) argues that the response of secondary powers to the rise of regional powers is more complex than a binary choice between balancing or bandwagoning. As pointed out by Lobell et al. (2015), secondary states (as well as tertiary states) can apply a variety of different strategies (such as followership, resistance, or the assumption of a neutral position) on different levels, depending on the costs of a certain strategy.

The (consensual) regional hegemon can face contestation in many forms, as has been pointed out in the literature on regional powers and secondary powers. Contestation can also stem from smaller states in the region. According to Williams, smaller states either support, follow, or challenge regional hegemons depending on their specific interests and strategic capabilities (K. P. Williams et al., 2012).

Since the consensual hegemonic approach is based on creating consensus, it is clear that this is a challenging approach in the context of regional politics in which secondary powers and smaller states all follow distinct strategies as a response to the regional hegemon's leadership aspirations.

3) The international level

Consensual hegemony can blossom in an environment that is free from intervention by external hegemons (i.e. hegemons based outside the region). Burges argued that Brazil's strategy of consensual hegemony could only be successful at a time when the United States neglected South America in its foreign affairs. In Burges words, "benign neglect of the region by the United States amplified the value of Brazil-provided soft leadership goods" (Burges, 2015, p. 194).

The decline of US hegemony (Keohane, 2012) opened space for other external actors, among them emerging powers, to involve themselves in regional affairs outside their immediate region of influence. One prominent example is Chinese investment and the related economic and political influence of China on the African continent (Alden, 2005).

Legro argues that the study of regional powers often neglects the role of a global hegemon in the regional order and does not account for how the international and regional order relate to

each other. He therefore claims that "any effort to map and understand the trajectory of regional orders requires an understanding of the role of the United States therein" (Legro, 2011, p. 175).

While the researcher agrees on the importance of embedding regional orders within a global international order, it is not necessarily the US that is playing the role of the global hegemon. Considering that the international order has been described to be increasingly multipolar (Cooper & Flemes, 2013), one needs to consider other powerful states that have an interest and potential influence in regional issues. As the global system of power is constantly changing, the regional hegemon needs to adapt to a changing world order and the potential interference of external actors in its chosen region of influence.

To summarize, the approach of consensual hegemony can only be successful in the context of an enabling domestic, regional, and international environment. In the next section, the approach of consensual hegemony, and the conditions for its successful implementation, will be applied to the study of democracy promotion as a foreign policy strategy of a (consensual) hegemon.

Before the concept of consensual hegemony is developed to discuss regional hegemons' democracy promotion, the next section will introduce the reader to democracy promotion as discussed in foreign policy analysis more generally in order to highlight the value of the concept of consensual hegemony in this context.

3.4. Democracy promotion as a foreign policy strategy of regional hegemons

As pointed out in the literature review in Chapter 2, there is a gap in the literature on the role of emerging regional powers in democracy promotion. The literature does not offer a compelling theory as to why regional powers or regional hegemons have an interest in democracy promotion. Rather, the literature focuses on the reasons for emerging regional powers not to get involved in this domain (see Chapter 2.3).

Moreover, the literature on democracy promotion has focused on international organizations as democracy promoters and on recipient countries as receivers of democracy promotion, thereby neglecting the perspective on states as democracy promoters. When democracy promotion has been analysed as a foreign policy tool for states, the analysis has been ventured

from a descriptive or policy-oriented perspective rather than from a theoretical one. As argued by Wolff and Wurm (2011, p. 78), the "work on the protagonists of external democracy-promotion policies largely remains of a descriptive nature, and even when making causal claims mostly does so without an explicit theoretical framework."

In an attempt to locate democracy promotion within a state's foreign policy, Wolff and Wurm examine different IR theories for their ability to explain why states promote democracy, as explored in the next section.

3.4.1. Theoretical perspectives on why states promote democracy

Wolff and Wurm identify seven theoretical strands of International Relations theory that can potentially locate external democracy promotion within a country's foreign policy strategy. The authors identify four perspectives that they consider promising, which represent the following key arguments (Wolff & Wurm, 2011, pp. 86–90):

1) a materialist theory of democracy promotion based on a (neoclassical) realist perspective: democracy promotion serves foreign policy interests (such as security or economic interests). Democracy promotion is considered a foreign policy instrument (among others), that is employed based on cost-benefit calculations;
2) a normative theory of democracy promotion (social constructivism): democracy promotion is based on national or international norms that regulate a countries foreign policy strategy. Democracy promotion is considered to be an appropriate behaviour either domestically or internationally;
3) a cultural theory of democracy promotion (actor-centred constructivism): democracy promotion is considered to be part of the identity of a nation and its foreign policy tradition;
4) a critical theory of democracy promotion (neo-Gramscian approach): democracy promotion is considered to be part of a wider hegemonic project, which is only effective if it is seen to be credible.

This overview of theoretical perspectives gives an insight into potential explanations of *why* states promote democracy as part of their foreign policy strategy. These factors might also be

relevant if we look at regional powers or regional hegemons and their motivation for democracy promotion.

Based on the neo-Gramscian perspective adopted in this thesis, the assumption would be that (consensual) regional hegemons promote democracy as part of the hegemonic regional project. A democratic region might have many advantages for a regional hegemon, as it may create a stable regional environment for the assertion of the hegemon's economic, political and security interests. The consensual hegemonic reading would also explain why regional hegemons initiate the development of democratic clauses as part of the regional organizations that they help to create.

Why a regional hegemon promotes democracy in a specific case (as opposed to promoting democracy in the region more generally) can be rooted in specific national interests and cost-benefit calculations of involvement.

In the following sections, the concept of consensual hegemony is used to develop premises for two main questions: how do (consensual) regional hegemons promote democracy? How can regional hegemons promote democracy (successfully)?

3.4.2. Theoretical perspectives on how regional hegemons promote democracy

How a regional power promotes democracy can be linked to the preferred regional foreign policy strategy, which can range from coercion to consensus creation. As has been discussed, a (consensual) regional hegemon would be expected to adopt an approach based on inclusion and co-option.

The selected strategy also needs to be compatible with existing regional norms. Democracy promotion taps into a delicate issue of interstate relations since it requires the intermeddling of external actors in domestic affairs of the target state. A consensual hegemonic approach to democracy promotion needs to pay attention to regional norms on intervention into domestic affairs and create consensus on when it is acceptable to promote democracy, and under which conditions. Regional organizations and regional democratic clauses offer a useful tool for a strategy of consensual hegemony because they offer consensually agreed upon tools for democracy promotion that specify when and how the regional organization should promote

democracy in its member states. A (consensual) regional hegemon would therefore have an interest in playing a leading role in the wording and interpretation of the democratic clause.

3.4.3. Theoretical perspective on how regional hegemons can promote democracy

The question of how states or regional powers and regional hegemons can promote democracy is a question of power projection. Wolff argues that democracy promotion requires relative power of the promoter vis-a-vis the recipient of democracy promotion, which highlights an inherent power imbalance (Wolff, 2015, p. 219). This is true if we see democracy promotion as an action taken by a single nation towards a recipient country. However, in the context of regional organizations, power projection is more complex.

Democracy promotion can take several forms, as pointed out in Chapter 2, ranging from positive incentives, mediation, and political and economic sanctions to the use of force. Moreover, regional powers can choose between bilateral means and multilateral means. Based on the typology of regional powers and their respective foreign policy means, one would assume that regional dominators would apply sanctions and the use of force by bilateral means, while regional hegemons would prefer to work through regional institutions and use diplomatic means.

Wolff argues that democracy promotion needs to work on several levels of power projection. He based his conceptualization of power in democracy promotion on Barnett and Duvall's multi-dimensional concept of power (Barnett & Duvall, 2005, p. 53). They argue that there are four types of power: compulsory, institutional, structural, and productive power. Compulsory power can be understood as direct control over another. Institutional power is control over socially distant others, mediated by institutions. Structural power relates to the social positions that are reinforcing power disparities. Productive power is similar to structural power, but differs in that it works through diffuse constitutive relations such as systems of meanings.

As interpreted by Wolff (2015, p. 222) democracy promotion and power can be conceptualized as follows:

Compulsory power refers to a democracy promoter's capacity to directly shape behaviour in target countries. This concept of power is closest to Dahl's concept of power, which refers to

the capacity of an actor to control the behaviour of another actor (Dahl, 1957) and has been used in realist theories.

Institutional power refers to the democracy promoter's indirect influence over the behaviour of actors in the target country through international organizations and NGOs. Power projection is indirect but deriving from one actor and targeting another through the institutional framework. In this sense, institutional power – like compulsory power – is also actor-centred.

Structural power relates to the power to shape the structure of relations between democracy promoter and target state. This type of power refers to a neo-Gramscian approach to power, in which the hegemon shapes the structures of relations.

Productive power refers to the power to shape the structure of relations, but through indirect means, such as through shaping discourse and knowledge in a Foucauldian sense. In contrast to structural power, where relationships are hierarchical, productive power refers to the diffuse creation of systems of meaning by all social subjects (Barnett & Duvall, 2005, p. 56).

Wolff highlights that the constitutive elements of power (structural and productive) are especially relevant in the domain of democracy promotion, as democracy promoters intend to promote certain democratic beliefs in target countries. To be most effective, democracy promoters need to combine the exercise of several types of power:

> "Democracy promotion, thus, involves the exercise of constitutive power at the level of the target country, but, at the same time, this exercise of power depends on democracy promoters and their targets being embedded in power relations that constitute the material and ideational conditions enabling democracy promotion" (Wolff, 2015, p. 225).

As highlighted by Wolff, the realist perspective on democracy promotion, which focuses only on compulsory power, is too narrow to grasp the empirical reality of democracy promotion. He further argues that neo-Gramscian approaches are too narrow in their understanding of power, as they still understand power from a top-down perspective, in which domination is consensual and the hegemon does not face contestation (ibid). Wolff argues that "a broad perspective on power draws our attention to the structural conditions, material and ideational, both within and beyond the recipient country, that enable and constrain the capacity of external actors to exercise constitutive kinds of power, be they structural or productive" (Wolff, 2015, p. 230).

Based on the approach of consensual hegemony, power projection in democracy promotion becomes less hierarchical. An approach of consensual hegemony shapes the structures of democracy promotion in the sense of structural power. However, once these structures are established, policy actions become diffuse. The structure favours the leadership of the hegemon, but this does not mean that other actors within the institution or the target country do not contest the actions of the hegemon. As pointed out by Burges, consensual hegemony is a strategy. It does not mean, that the hegemon succeeds in creating a system of hegemony.

What can be taken away from Barnett and Duval's model is that regional powers might have different levels of compulsory, institutional, structural, and productive power, depending on the relationship with the target state for democracy promotion and the regional context in which democracy promotion is embedded. With regard to democracy promotion by regional powers through regional organizations, two types of power are relevant: institutional power and structural power. Institutional power refers to the regional power's direct influence within the organization, and structural power refers to the power to shape institutional frameworks for democracy promotion. If democracy promotion through regional organization fails, regional powers might resort to using influence to target a state's behaviour directly if they have the necessary compulsory power to do so.

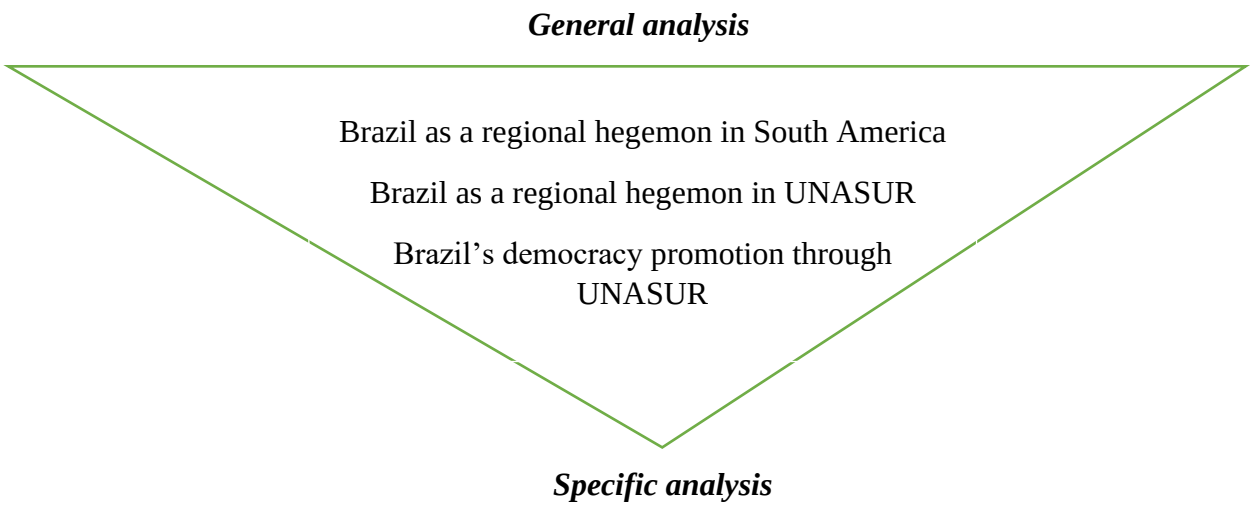
The different types of power are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 - Types of power in democracy promotion based on Wolff 2015	
Compulsory power	The capacity to directly shape the behaviour in target countries.
Institutional power	The indirect influence over the behaviour of actors in the target country through institutional frameworks.
Structural power	The power to shape the structure of relations between democracy promoter and target state.
Productive power	The power to shape the structure of relations through indirect means (by shaping discourse and knowledge)

3.5. Dissertation structure

The analytical framework developed in this thesis rest upon the theoretical framework as discussed in this chapter. The thesis follows a step by step approach to the analysis of Brazil as a democracy promoter within UNASUR, which starts from more general to more specific levels of analysis. The analysis therefore starts with a general analysis of Brazil as a regional hegemon and its role in UNASUR, to a more specific analysis of Brazil as an actor in democracy promotion and as an actor in democracy promotion through UNASUR. Chapter 4 is dedicated to the first two analytical steps, with intend to carve out Brazil's role in the region and its role in UNASUR. Chapter 5 discusses Brazil's track record in democracy promotion and the importance of UNASUR for Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion.

Figure 2 Overview



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Based on this background, the thesis addresses the central research question which is:

- How and why has Brazil acted within UNASUR to promote democracy in South America?

This research question will be addressed by analysing three issue areas (in Chapters 6,7, and 8) based on the analytical framework developed in this section.

The central research question can be broken down into several parts, concerning Brazil's motivation, strategy, and leadership capacity in the domain of democracy promotion. Based on

Brazil's motivation and leadership capacity, one should be able to answer why Brazil chose a certain strategy for democracy promotion. Based on the outcome of Brazil's approach to democracy promotion, the study should also highlight the limitations of Brazil's approach.

The aim here is to look at Brazil's actions generally in cases of democratic disruptions, and Brazil's actions within UNASUR more specifically regarding each incident. The reason for this is that the issue areas should highlight why Brazil opted to - or did not opt to - work through UNASUR instead of working through other multilateral structures or instead of working on a bilateral level.

1a) *How* did Brazil promote democracy in each case?

This question needs to be answered in a descriptive way, looking at which strategies Brazil applied in each case. Relevant aspects concern the foreign policy actors involved, the type of foreign policy action, the tools and structures used for democracy promotion (for example concerning the use of multilateral organizations and the applications of democratic clauses), and the extent to which Brazil assumed a leadership role.

Based on the theoretical framework, the premise is that Brazil acted through multilateral fora, most importantly UNASUR, by applying a strategy of consensual hegemony, i.e. by leading discussions and creating consensus for a joint UNASUR democracy promotion strategy.

1b) How did Brazil act within *UNASUR* to promote democracy in each case?

This question addresses in a descriptive manner, how Brazil acted in UNASUR's democracy promotion efforts and whether Brazil assumed a leadership role within UNASUR. The premise is that Brazil used the structure of UNASUR to unite member states around adopting Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion in each case.

2) *Why* did Brazil promote democracy?

This question looks at Brazil's motivations for getting involved in democracy promotion in each case. Based on the theoretical framework used in this thesis, the premise is that Brazil's democracy promotion is based on its own economic, security and/or political interest. In

addition, it is hypothesized that Brazil's engagement in democracy promotion is also linked to cost-benefit calculations of promoting democracy.

3a) *Why* did Brazil promote democracy *in a certain way*?

This question looks at the explanatory factors for the type of strategy employed. It especially concerns itself with the question of why Brazil opted to or did not opt to work through UNASUR in certain instances of democratic disruption. Based on the theoretical framework, the premise is that Brazil promoted democracy in a specific way, depending on which institutional framework allowed for, or was most conducive to a strategy of consensual hegemony.

3b) *Why* did Brazil promote democracy *through UNASUR*?

This question relates to the previous exploration into why Brazil promoted democracy in a specific way and through specific institutions, by placing an emphasis on why UNASUR was chosen (or not chosen) as a platform for Brazil's democracy promotion strategy.

This question addresses the suitability of UNASUR for Brazil's strategy of consensual hegemony.

4a) What are the *enabling and constraining* factors for Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion?

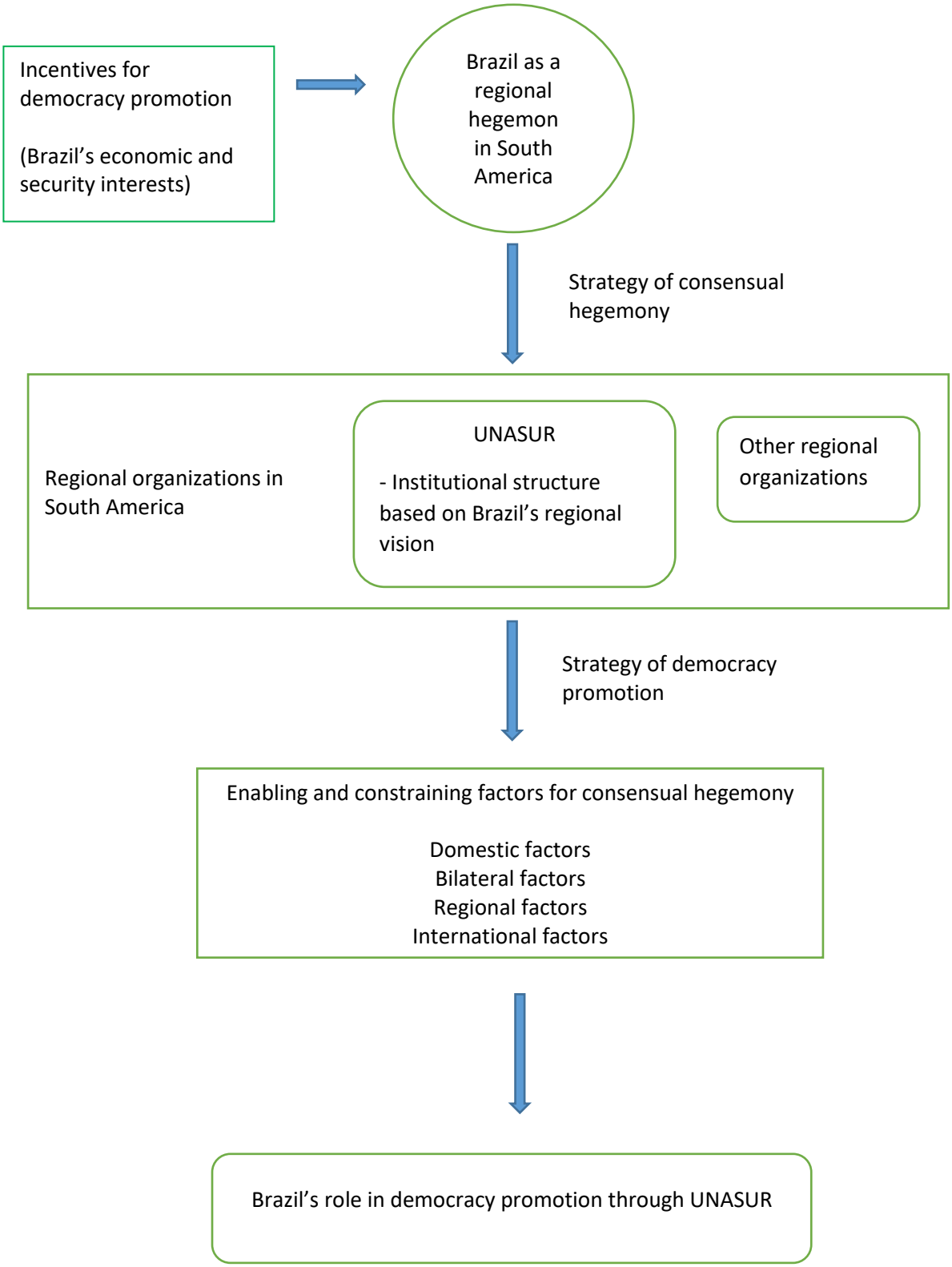
Given that a (consensual) regional hegemon's leadership capability is based on domestic, regional, and international factors (as previously highlighted in Chapter 3.3.2), this question addresses the three different levels that potentially limit a strategy of consensual hegemony. In addition to domestic, regional, and international factors, which refer to the general leadership capacity of a regional hegemon, the researcher looks at the bilateral power dimension of Brazil and the target country, since democracy promotion is considered to be an act of power projection towards a domestic recipient country.

4b) What are the *enabling and constraining* factors for Brazil's democracy promotion through *UNASUR*?

This question addresses the specific (political) circumstances in each case of democracy promotion. While the structure of UNASUR remains constant, the political environment in the region and within the member states is subject to change. The hypothesis is that this change could potentially hamper Brazil's capacity to apply a strategy of consensual hegemony for regional democracy promotion through UNASUR.

To summarize, the analytical framework can be visualized as in Figure 3 on the next page.

Figure 3 - Brazil's role in democracy promotion through UNASUR



© Source: own illustration

CHAPTER 4 - Brazil as a consensual regional hegemon in South America

This chapter explains why Brazil has increased its focus on South America in its foreign policy during the Lula (2003-2011) and Rousseff administration (2011-2016), and to a limited degree during the Temer administration (2016-2018). This chapter showcases how Brazil used a strategy of consensual hegemony in South America to pursue its regional and international foreign policy goals. By exploring Brazil's foreign policy strategy of consensual hegemony in South America, this chapter provides the contextual background for understanding the importance of UNASUR in Brazil's foreign policy strategy.

The approach of consensual hegemony is characteristic of Brazil's foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. While the Cardoso administration (1995-2003) followed a consensual hegemonic approach towards South America, Brazil under Lula (2003-2011) adopted a consensual hegemonic strategy in its global foreign policy (Burges 2008, pp. 65–66). This chapter focuses on South America as a regional space, constructed by Brazil to enhance its regional power status.

The chapter is divided into two levels of analysis: a domestic and regional level. These two levels of analysis allow to demonstrate the relationship between Brazil and South America in depth and from two vantage points: first, from Brazil's perspective towards the region; second, from the perspective of states in the region towards Brazil. The domestic level of analysis explores which actors shaped Brazil's foreign policy strategy and why South America became the central focus of Brazil's foreign policy strategy during these administrations. The regional level of analysis focuses the regional response to Brazil's leadership ambition, and on the enabling and constraining structural factors that explain why Brazil adopted an approach of consensual hegemony towards South America. By looking at the regional constraints, this level of analysis also highlights the limits of the consensual hegemonic approach.

While the domestic perspective is important to understand Brazil's willingness to lead South American regional affairs, the regional dimension demonstrates external factors that limit Brazil's leadership capacity, such as regional contestation, competition for leadership and alternative regional integration projects. Where relevant, intervention in South American affairs by actors outside the region is discussed. This adds a layer of international factors to the

analysis. However, as will be demonstrated, international intervention in South American affairs proved to be limited during the period discussed.

The chapter starts with a discussion of the domestic (i.e. Brazil's internal policies) level of analysis that showcases who shaped Brazil's foreign policy, which norms guided Brazil's foreign policy, and which interests drove Brazil's foreign policy focus on South American affairs. The second part of the chapter discusses the regional response to Brazil's leadership strategy and includes an analysis of the regional enabling and constraining factors for Brazil's strategy.

4.1. The domestic level: continuity and change in Brazil's foreign policy towards South America

The following sections discuss *who* shaped Brazil's foreign policy, *why* South America became the centre of Brazil's foreign policy strategy, and *how* Brazil conducts its foreign policy (based on which principles).

4.1.1. Relevant actors in Brazil's foreign policy from a historical perspective

The first question that needs to be answered is: *who* were Brazil's main foreign policy actors over time? The question relates to the relevance of Brazil's foreign ministry and diplomatic corps versus Brazil's president and advisors on the state level, and the relevance of non-governmental actors (such as civil society groups and business) on a non-state level. This question is central to understand who was responsible for Brazil's foreign policy focus on South America.

According to Brazil's constitution, foreign policy is mainly the responsibility of the executive, and therefore the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - the Itamaraty - and the presidency. However, the responsibilities of both offices changed over time, as will be demonstrated below. Non-state actors have also gained some relevance compared to the early days of Brazil's foreign policy-making that was shaped almost exclusively by the Itamaraty.

The Itamaraty has a long history and had relative independence over the foreign policy domain for a long time. It was founded in 1822 when Brazil declared its independence from Portugal and the Empire of Brazil was created. It remained a relatively independent ministry during the most of Brazil's history, i.e. including during the transition of the monarchy of the Empire of Brazil to the First Republic in 1889, under the rule of Getulio Vargas (1930-1945 and 1951-54) and during the military dictatorship (1964-1985).

The Itamaraty kept its control of the foreign policy domain and trade policy during the military regime and in the following years of democracy (Mullins, 2006, p. 12). However, because of its relative isolation, the foreign ministry had little influence over other policy areas, such as economic policies, which were dealt with at the ministry of finance (M. Webber & Smith, 2014, p. 127).

Since 1985, the so-called New Republic was governed by several elected presidents, who differed in their foreign policy outlook. Fernando Collor (1990-1992) of the Party of the National Reconstruction (PRN) was focused on privatization, free trade, and combating inflation. His successor, Itamar Augusto Cautiero Franco, at that time member of the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), took office in 1992 during the middle of an economic crisis. Brazil was focused on its domestic issues and the implementation of the "Plano Real" to stabilize the domestic economy and did not dedicate many resources to the foreign policy realm. At this point, Brazil can be characterized as an inward-looking country.

In 1994 Henrique Cardoso, a member of the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB), was elected president of Brazil. He served a second term until 2002. During his administration, Brazil's foreign policy underwent several major changes. Under Cardoso, the importance of presidential diplomacy increased, at the cost of decreasing influence of the Itamaraty, according to Cason and Power (2009, p. 119). Moreover, Cardoso emphasised on regional integration in South America. Brazil's foreign policy of the 1990s was characterised by a focus on regional integration in the Southern Cone, which was institutionalized in the form of the trade bloc of MERCOSUR – The Southern Common Market - in 1991.

While the regional focus marked a change in foreign policy outlook, it was just the beginning of the region-centric foreign policy strategy that would follow. However, the emphasis on

regional relations during these times was focused on the Southern Cone and not yet on South America (Spektor, 2014, p. 3).

The trend of presidential diplomacy continued under Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a member of the Workers Party (PT) who was elected president in 2003. His popularity was based on his social programs, such as the Bolsa Familia, which not only set the groundwork for his re-election in 2006 but also catapulted Brazil onto the regional and global stages, as an example of an emerging economy that had lifted large parts of its population out of poverty.

Lula's engagement in foreign policy surpassed Cardoso's foreign policy activities in scope. Moreover, Lula put a stronger focus on South-South cooperation and in developing South America as Brazil's regional space of influence. Brazil's regional engagement under Lula did not stop at the Southern Cone. Under Lula, Brazil worked towards expanding MERCOSUR's membership and incorporated more and more social and political aspects in its regional integration strategy. The culmination of this effort was the creation of UNASUR in 2008, which institutionalized Brazil's vision of South America as a political space under Brazil's leadership.

Researcher Mauricio Santoro highlights in an interview (08.09.2017, Rio de Janeiro) that during Lula's administration: "Brazil's foreign policy was much more ambitious. It used words like leadership, cooperation, integration. UNASUR was the answer to many of these demands: political integration, but without a strong commitment to economic integration". This point is also confirmed by statements by Brazilian diplomats. One Brazilian diplomat highlighted that UNASUR served Brazil as a means to stabilize the region of South America and render regional relations more predictable for Brazil (Brazilian diplomat A, 10.01.2017, online).

The focus on South American integration was not welcome in all parts of Brazil's society and political class. Former foreign minister Celso Amorim (2010, p. 228) stressed that the regional integration pursued by Lula faced strong criticism from the business class, which did not see the value in creating closer economic ties with Uruguay, Paraguay and Argentina within MERCOSUR. This view was also iterated during an interview with a Brazilian diplomat who stated that economic elites in Brazil were not in favour of the regional focus because they

perceived the US and the EU to be more relevant business partners (Brazilian diplomat B, 25.7.2017, Brasilia).[22]

Foreign policy-making under Lula (and to a certain degree under Cardoso) became more democratic (Burges, 2010) in the sense that it allowed for more cross-sectoral cooperation with other state ministries and saw the inclusion of different societal actors (such as business, civil society, academia etc.) in certain foreign policy debates (Cason & Power, 2009), such as trade policy (Doctor, 2017). However, Brazil's foreign policy development still lacked transparency and significant citizen participation (Nader & Waisbich, 2014). Brazilian citizens did not support the idea that Brazil should pay for the cost of regional integration, even though they perceived their country as a suitable leader (Onuki et al., 2016).

The continued dominance of the state in Brazil's foreign policy is an important finding that answers to criticism regarding state-centric IR theory. Scholars claim that researchers often neglect the role of private, transnational, and international non-state actors in international relations (Baumann & Stengel, 2014). The example of Brazil demonstrates that despite the pluralization of actors, Brazil's foreign policy remains a state policy. Efforts to increase the participation of non-state actors (during the Lula and Rousseff presidencies) have been carefully managed by the state. Therefore, the pluralization of actors is still based on an underlying hierarchical structure of foreign policy making controlled by the state (Cardoso, 2019).

What can be witnessed during the Lula administration is the strong involvement of the president, and his party in directing Brazil's foreign policy agenda towards South American integration, despite opposition by business and greater society. Brazil's foreign policy focus on the region of South America can, therefore, be interpreted as a result of the decisions made by the president and his advisors, rather than as a result of an institutional agenda of the Itamaraty (Spektor, 2010, p. 195), or broader societal trends in Brazil.

[22] In 2008, the most relevant trading partners for Brazilian exports were United States, Argentina, China, Netherlands, and Germany (with the United States, China, Argentina and Germany also being the most relevant partners for imports, including Japan). In comparison, the main trading partners for Brazilian exports in 2017 remained China, United States, Argentina, Netherlands, and Japan (albeit in a different order) and in terms of imports, partners included: China, United States, Argentina, Germany, and now South Korea (WITS, 2019).

The importance of the presidency in foreign policy-making is also reflected in Lula's decision to appoint PT members to (diplomatic) advisory functions in the Planalto (the presidency) instead of members of the Itamaraty, as Cardoso had done previously (Burges, 2010). During Lula's first term, the presidential advisor became a relevant actor in regional policy-making, dividing the responsibilities of the foreign minister between the presidential advisor and the foreign minister.

In 2011 Lula was succeeded by his party colleague and former chief of staff Dilma Rousseff who continued Lula's foreign policy direction, although her focus on foreign policy decreased[23] and with it, a reduction in regional activism could be witnessed (Gomes & Saraiva, 2016). Some have pointed to Rousseff´s lack of interest in foreign policy, combined with the domestic political and economic instability in Brazil as factors that explain the shift in attention from regional to national politics (Marcondes & Mawdsley, 2017).
With the impeachment of Rousseff in August 2016 and her new replacement, the vice-president Michel Temer, Brazil´s foreign policy under the PT came to an end. Under the administration of Temer, Brazil's focus shifted towards economic relations within MERCOSUR, with the US and Europe (Frazer & Piva, 2016). This new emphasis was expressed through the revitalisation of talks surrounding a trade agreement between MERCOSUR and the EU, which was signed in June 2019.

4.1.2. Brazil's foreign policy interests in South America

The next question that needs to be addressed, is *why* Brazil under Lula and Rousseff decided to put an increasing focus on South America and their foreign policies. Although Brazil's presence in the region decreased under Rousseff, the administration continued its general foreign policy strategy, with South America as "the primary focus of external action, where in addition to the bilateral relationship with each of the countries in the region, we operate within the framework of integration mechanisms: MERCOSUR and UNASUR" (Patriota, 2013b)[24].

[23] While Lula spent 216 days abroad during his first mandate (2003-2006) and 269 days during his second mandate (2007-2010), Dilma Rousseff only spent 114 days abroad during her first term (2011-2013) (Schreiber, 2015). Some interpret the decrease of international visits of the president as an indicator of her (lack of) interest in foreign policy.
[24] Original quote in Portuguese: "A América do Sul permanece o foco prioritário da ação externa".

While there was an understanding among some members of the Itamaraty that regional integration in South America would improve Brazil's bargaining position in international trade negotiations and would boost Brazilian companies' access to the region (Saraiva, 2010), Lula and his advisors followed a wider political agenda rather than just pursuing purely economic interests in South America. Brazil's foreign policy discourse under the PT administrations underlines this political dimension, which points to three main motivations for Brazil's focus on South American regional affairs: Brazil's global aspirations, regional stability and the importance of limiting US influence in the region. All of these three goals are part of Brazil's quest to establish itself as a regional hegemon in South America.

The following section provides a more detailed description of the three main foreign policy goals under Lula and Rousseff, including references to changes or continuities under the Temer administration.

1.) Brazil's global aspirations

Brazil's foreign policy goals during the Lula administration were ambitious, in that Brazil was aiming to become a global leader in the context of a newly developing multipolar world order. Despite the relatively small military spending, Brazil's status as the 7th largest world economy (World Bank, 2011) in 2010 in terms of nominal GDP, and its participation in groupings of emerging economies (such as the BRICS) increased Brazil's visibility on the world stage. However, Brazil understood that it had to embed its international ambition in the context of regional leadership. Brazil's former foreign minister, Celso Amorim stated that "Brazil recognizes that she is stronger and more influential in global affairs by working closely with her neighbours and by helping to promote peace and prosperity in the region" (Amorim, 2010, p. 227).

In international affairs, Lula officially offered to be the spokesperson for developing countries, emphasising that Brazil would not assume a hegemonic role:

> "Developing countries need to put their issues at the centre of the debate, they must participate in the elaboration of the international agenda. Brazil is willing to act without arrogance, without megalomania, without hegemonic pretensions but with the

> sentiment that we are a great country and that we have something to say to the world." (da Silva, 2008)[25]

To justify Brazil's global aspirations as a spokesperson for the developing world, Brazil had to root its international status in its image as a regional leader. Regional integration was seen as a springboard for Brazil's global ambitions. While Lula specifically focused on South America and UNASUR, a Brazilian diplomat of the Temer administration argued that regional integration in South America was just the beginning of Brazil's global insertion:

> "It seems obvious that Brazil's interests and its instruments of promotion transcend the South American and Latin American regional space. In addition, it could be argued that the strong Brazilian investment in the construction of a regional institutional architecture (MERCOSUR, UNASUR and CELAC) in the last thirty years tends to affirm the global inclination of the country's international ambitions, based on the premise that an actor with a global vocation has a strong regional anchorage."(Nasser, 2017, p. 49)[26]

2.) The stable regional environment

Linked to global aspirations, is the understanding that Brazil needs a prosperous regional environment for its domestic development and its ability to assert itself globally. Therefore, the pursuit of regional stability has two main components: an economic and a security component.

From an economic perspective, the region mattered for the expansion of economic activities of Brazil's parastatal companies. Examples are Brazil's construction company Odebrecht and

[25] Original quote in Portuguese: "Os países em desenvolvimento precisam colocar os seus problemas no centro do debate, devem participar da elaboração da agenda internacional. O Brasil está disposto a atuar sem arrogância, sem megalomania, sem pretensões hegemonicasmas com o sentimento que somos um grande país e que temos o que dizer ao mundo."

[26] Original quote in Portuguese: "Parece óbvio que o cabedal de interesses do Brasil e os seus instrumentos de promoção transcendem o espaço regional sul-americano e latino-americano. Além disso, poder-se-ia argumentar que o decidido investimento brasileiro na construção de uma arquitetura institucional regional (Mercosul, Unasul, Celac) nos últimos trinta anos tende a afirmar o pendor global das ambições internacionais do país, baseado na premissa de que um ator com vocação global conta com uma forte ancoragem regional."

Brazil's petroleum corporation Petrobras, which had a strategy to integrate the gas energy sector in South America (Flynn, 2007, p. 18).[27]

Brazil not only invested in intensified economic tries and increased trade and development with its neighbours, but also in the development of regional mechanisms (most importantly within UNASUR) to provide political stability, democracy, and spaces for peaceful settlements of conflicts. As stated by the former foreign minister, Antonio Patriota (2013b) concerning UNASUR's involvement in democracy promotion: "*In South America, democracy and integration are inseparable. There is no more space for undemocratic adventures*"[28]. This statement must be seen in the context of the flaring up of intrastate conflicts in Bolivia (2008), Paraguay (2012), and Venezuela (2013) in the region.

Through the strengthening of regional organizations, Brazil argued that it would build South America into a peaceful and prosperous region (Patriota, 2011a), which in turn would have economic and political advantages for Brazil.

This discourse, characteristic of the Lula and Rousseff administration, was also continued under Temer, who stated that "We are aware that the prosperity of Brazil is linked to the prosperity of our neighbours - as the Baron of Rio Branco said, what the Brazilian nation aims to be, is 'to be strong among grand and strong neighbours'" (Temer, 2016).[29]

What differed in comparison to the Lula and Rousseff administration, was the Temer administration's focus on the relations with Brazil immediate neighbours within MERCOSUR, rather than with South America as a whole, and with the pursuit of trade agreements with partners outside the region (Moreira Lima, 2016). Thereby, Temer shifted its focus on the economic issues of integration rather than political integration. In the security domain, Temer

[27] The close link between Brazil's parastatal companies, Brazil's political elite and politicians in the region have been unravelled by the corruption scandal of "lava jato" (Fuentes, 2016).
[28] Original quote in Portuguese: "Na América do Sul, democracia e integração são inseparáveis. Não há mais espaço para aventuras antidemocráticas, como demonstrou a resposta unânime da UNASUL à ruptura democrática no Paraguai."
[29] Original quote in Portuguese: "Como sinal do lugar de destaque da região em nossa política externa, minha primeira visita bilateral foi à Argentina; em seguida, estive no Paraguai. Temos consciência de que a prosperidade do Brasil está vinculada à prosperidade de nossos vizinhos – como disse o Barão do Rio Branco, o que a Nação brasileira ambiciona é "ser forte entre vizinhos grandes e fortes."

focused on border vigilance and defence (Brazilian diplomat B, 25.7.2017, Brasilia) rather than on the creation of a united South American security policy.

3.) Countering US influence in the region:

During the PT governments, Brazil put a strong focus on establishing its regional power through keeping US influence out of the region. This strategy relates to Brazil's urgency in creating an independent (or autonomous) foreign policy, but it also is a precondition for the success of a consensual hegemonic leadership approach in the region, that could be easily undermined by US interference. South American integration was seen as a way of creating an alternative power pole in the region (Amorim, 2008)[30], or in other words, a counter-hegemonic project which was supported by left-wing governments in the region (especially by Bolivarian nations) during the pink tide (Chodor, 2015).[31]

During the administration of Dilma Rousseff, the Brazilian foreign minister made positive comments regarding the decrease of US influence in the region. He stressed that the United States was no longer the principal actor in Brazil and other countries. He noted that Europe and China were gaining considerable influence in the country, which eliminated the problem of US hegemony (Patriota, 2011b).

However, with the end of regional solidarity among left-wing nations in South America and the taking of office of Michel Temer, Brazil's stance towards the US changed. Instead of keeping US influence at bay, Brazil welcomed the US as a trade partner and encouraged US military exercises in the Amazon (Fox, 2017).

While the two PT governments and the Temer administration differed in their foreign policy strategies, they both believed in the respect of Brazil's foreign policy traditions and norms, thereby providing some continuity in how Brazil conducted its foreign policy towards South America.

[30] Original quote in Portuguese: "A integração sul-americana cria um centro de gravitação alternativo ao que sempre existiu no Norte. Prepara, assim, o caminho para a integração do conjunto maior latino-americano e caribenho. Sem integração da America do Sul, a integração latino americana nao passa de uma figura de retorica."
[31] The "pink tide" refers to the election of left-wing governments in Latin America. In South America it could be witnessed with the election of Hugo Chavez in 1998 in Venezuela, followed by the election of left-wing or centre-left governments in Chile (2000), Brazil (2002), Argentina (2003), Uruguay (2005), Ecuador (2006) Paraguay (2008) and Colombia (2010).

The election of Jair Bolsonaro – a former military officer - in October 2018 marked a drastic change in rhetoric and foreign policy outlook. It can be argued that the election of Bolsonaro marks the end of the consensual hegemonic approach in Brazil's foreign policy since it disregards some of the core principles of Brazil's foreign policy tradition which have been respected by previous presidents.

Bolsonaro actively worked towards dismantling the influence of the Itamaraty in Brazil's foreign policy making. Senior members of the Itamaraty were excluded from decision-making and less experienced diplomats (loyal to the president) were promoted to high-ranking positions (Casarões & Flemes, 2019). However, the analysis of Brazil's foreign policy under Bolsonaro goes beyond the scope of this dissertation.

The next section, deals with the question of how Brazil (under the administrations of Lula, Rousseff and Temer) conducted its foreign policy towards South America, with a special focus on Brazil's foreign policy norms, as they shaped the adoption of consensual leadership approach.

4.1.3. Brazil's foreign policy norms

This section discusses aspects that explain *how* Brazil conducts its foreign policy towards South America. As has been stated before, Brazil's approach to leadership is based on consensual hegemony, i.e. it works through the creation of consensus rather than the use of force or coercion. While Burges (2008) emphasised Brazil's lack of military resources and limited economic capabilities as a factor in adopting this soft approach to leadership, Brazil's foreign policy norms also play an important role in the development of this approach.

Brazil's foreign policy norms have a long history.[32] The Itamaraty's foreign policy norms are built on the legacy of Barão do Rio Branco, Brazil's foreign minister from 1902 to 1912, who found peaceful resolutions to border disputes with Brazil's neighbours (Bueno, 2012) and which laid the groundwork for Brazil's soft power approach to regional relations (apparent in

[32] Brazil's foreign policy as laid down in article 4 of the Constitution is based on the principles of national independence, human rights, non-intervention, self-determination, equality between states, defence of peace, international cooperation, repudiation of terrorism and racism, the granting of asylum, and the peaceful settlement of conflicts (CONSTITUIÇÃO DA REPÚBLICA FEDERATIVA DO BRASIL DE 1988, 1988).

Brazil's preference for diplomacy, multilateralism, and the absence of the use of force) (Chatin, 2016).

Brazil's foreign policy norms, however, did not develop in a vacuum, but in the context of regional and international norms. In this regard, one can point to the process of norm localization (Acharya, 2004), in which regional or international norms become localized to a specific domestic context. Brazil's approach to foreign policy-making therefore also reflects regional norms, which inform which type of foreign policy behaviour is respectable in the regional context. This point is crucial for an approach to consensual hegemony since states are not likely to follow a regional power that violates regional norms.

In the following section, three foreign policy norms are discussed, which are of particular relevance to Brazil's foreign policy conduct in South America: non-intervention, autonomy, and multilateralism.

1.) The norm of non-intervention

The most important norm relevant to South American regional affairs is the norm of non-intervention in domestic affairs. The principle of non-intervention means that Brazilian diplomats try to intervene in domestic affairs of other countries only when they are invited to do so and that they refrain from other measures such as coercion or open criticism of other governments. Brazil has been particularly reluctant to criticize South American countries (Santoro, 2014, pp. 68–69).

As pointed out by a Brazilian diplomat during an interview, the principle of non-intervention has a long history in Brazilian diplomacy (Brazilian official C, 02.08.2017, Brasilia). One Brazilian diplomat stresses that non-intervention is part of the Itamaraty's "diplomatic DNA" (Brazilian official A, 28.07.2017, Brasilia), especially referring to Brazil's relations with neighbouring countries.

The norm of non-intervention is the generally accepted norm in South America, based on the "collective memories of US intervention" (Brazilian official A, 28.07.2017, Brasilia) in regional and domestic affairs. Therefore, Brazil aligns itself with the regional consensus of accepted diplomatic relations, rather than developing a new norm that conflicts with existing regional principles. However, Brazil worked to soften the principle of non-intervention under

the Lula administration by introducing the concept of non-indifference, meaning the "willingness to collaborate, through legitimate channels, with other countries that find themselves in particularly difficult situations" (Amorim, 2009b)[33].

Regarding South America, legitimate channels refer to the newly founded regional organizations that provide the necessary legal framework for Brazil to justify its engagement in other states' domestic conflicts. As pointed out by a diplomat, Brazil prefers to "apply a consensual diplomacy" with its neighbours through the use of juridical means and mediation because of Brazil's lack of power. He states that "The defence of the law is the carrot and stick of less powerful states" (Brazilian official C, 2.8.2017, Brasilia).

To conclude, Brazil's adherence to the norms of non-intervention in domestic affairs of South American explains why Brazil was eager to create regional organizations in South America to provide a structure in which it can interfere in a collectively legitimized manner.

2.) The norm of autonomy

Autonomy has been a paradigm in Brazilian foreign policy since Brazil's independence. However, Brazil adjusted the concept to its needs, thereby pursuing a strategy of "autonomy through participation" versus "autonomy through distance". Autonomy through distance is understood as Brazil's strategy of distancing itself from the United States (in the 60s and 70s) to pursue independent domestic development. The strategy of autonomy through participation is defined as the participation in international regimes, in which Brazil tries to take influence in the process of formulating the norms and rules that guide the international system (Vigevani & Cepaluni, 2007).

The concept of autonomy through participation explains why Brazil in certain cases opted for the creation of regional organizations, despite its quest for national sovereignty. Brazil increased its autonomy from international power poles by aggregating interests and power on the regional level (Vigevani et al., 2008, p. 7). During the Lula administration, Brazil adopted

[33] Original quote in Portuguese: "O princípio da não-intervenção nos assuntos internos dos outros Estados sempre orientou a política exterior do Brasil. Mas este princípio deve ser matizado pela "nao-indiferença": isto e, a disposição de colaborar, por meio de canais legítimos, com outros países que se encontram em situações particularmente difíceis."

a strategy of "autonomy through diversification" (Vigevani & Cepaluni, 2007, p. 1313) by getting involved in a diverse regional alliance under the banner of South-South cooperation.

The norm of autonomy is crucial to understand the type of regional organizations and regional alliances that Brazil pursues in its consensual hegemony, which is characterized through a weak institutionalization of organizations that do not infringe on but rather increases Brazil's autonomy. A good example is UNASUR, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

3.) The norm of multilateralism

The focus on multilateralism also has a history in Brazil's foreign policy. In the 1990s Brazil was eager to participate in the rule setting of international organizations. During the Cardoso administration, Brazil did not focus on the critique of the international system but on the effort to influence the construction of international rules. This highlights how Brazil used its legal expertise to create a consensus for the modification of international law. During the Lula administration, the focus on multilateralism remained, albeit with a focus on demanding better representation of developing countries in international organizations (Visentini & Silva, 2010) and campaigning for Brazil's inclusion in a reformed UN Security Council.

One example of Brazil's efforts to modify existing international norms is the introduction of the concept of responsibility while protecting (RwP). The aim was to reform the principle of the responsibility to protect (R2P), arguing that the use of force in peace missions needs to be monitored more closely (McDougall, 2014). In modifying the principle of R2P Brazil created a space for its participation in UN peace missions (such as the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti – MINUSTAH) without violating the concept of non-intervention in domestic affairs. Hence, Brazil changed strategy from the rejection of the concept of R2P to developing an approach to peace operations which focused on non-military components (Kenkel, 2012).

As this section demonstrates, Brazil's foreign policy tradition of non-intervention, autonomy and multilateralism provide the normative structure upon which Brazil creates its foreign policy practice towards the region of South America. While these norms have informed foreign policy-making under Lula, Rousseff, and Temer, Brazil´s flexible interpretation of these norms has created more space for Brazil to pursue its foreign policy goals, as highlighted above.

4.1.4. Brazil's strategy of consensual hegemony in South America – a summary of the domestic drivers

Brazil's strategy of consensual hegemony towards South America was driven by several domestic factors, which are summarized in this section. The domestic drivers for Brazil's consensual hegemonic approach towards South America are the PT's foreign policy interests, Brazil's limited leadership capacity (regarding economic and military resources) and Brazil's foreign policy norms.

The focus on South America can be explained through the PT's foreign policy interests in creating South America as a steppingstone for Brazil's global ambitions and in stabilizing regional affairs to foster Brazil's domestic development. This means that regional integration in South America was concerning political integration in the first place, and economic benefits in the second place.[34] Furthermore, the PT had an interest in keeping US influence out of the region to create a regional space in which Brazil was the only regional power.

How Brazil strategized its engagement with the region was influenced by Brazil's leadership capacity (based on limited military and economic resources) and its foreign policy norms, which have a long tradition in Brazil's foreign policy history. Based on the key principles of non-intervention, multilateralism and autonomy, Brazil decided to embed its regional leadership in the creation of regional organizations.

However, Brazil did not invest in regional structures that would harm its quest for autonomy and thereby created regional organizations with limited influence and independence. This meant that Brazil did not invest in strong regional organizations (as would be characteristic in an approach of co-operative hegemony, as highlighted in chapter 3), but in the creation of regional organizations like UNASUR with no supranational power, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Brazil decided to focus on a leadership style that relied on the provision of ideas and of consensus creation in the context of multilateral regional institutions, such as MERCOSUR and UNASUR (of which Brazil was the most powerful member). While Brazil's strategy of consensual hegemony was an efficient tool to meet Brazil's needs and did not require Brazil to

[34] In 2013 China became Brazil's most important trade partner, followed by the United States (Lessa et al., 2020, p. 79). Trade with South American nations remained limited comparatively.

commit extensive economic resources, nor to transfer power from the national to the supranational level, Brazil's regional strategy had to fit into the regional context.

Therefore, Brazil's foreign policy cannot simply be explained by looking at domestic drivers. The regional constraints that Brazil experienced in its foreign policy practice are as important to understand why Brazil adopted consensual hegemony as a foreign policy towards South America, and to what extent this approach could be successful.

As Brazil's approach depends largely on the provision of ideas and on facilitating consensus within regional organizations, it is important to look at the regional structural environment in which Brazil's regional foreign policy takes place. The next section, therefore, looks at the regional response to Brazil's leadership ambition in South America.

4.2. The regional level: Brazil's strategy of consensual hegemony and the regional response to Brazil's leadership ambition

Brazil's foreign policy strategy in South America, and its leadership ambitions, did experience some difficulty in the regional context, where states were at times reluctant to embrace Brazil's envisaged role as a regional leader. Since Brazil's status as a regional power was acknowledged by "the West", but faced contestation by its supposed followers, Malamud (2011) asserted that Brazil was a "leader without followers". Brazil was viewed as a regional power globally, as manifested in Brazil's invitation to the WTO and G7 summits, where Brazil was viewed as a representative of South America (Alden & Vieira, 2005, p. 1081), but its regional leadership faced contestation and lacked the endorsements that would be attributed to a legitimate leader (Vieira & Alden, 2011, p. 508).

Contestation happened not only in the way of balancing strategies by governments in the region (which will be discussed in further detail below) but also through criticism by media outlets and civil society, especially regarding the "hegemonic" economic expansion of Brazil's parastatal companies in the region (da Fonseca, 2015, p. 197).[35] Therefore, Brazil needed to be

[35] For more details on Brazil's economic expansion in the region and the relevance of Brazilian foreign direct investment by the state-owned BNDS – National Bank for Social and Economic Development- see Flynn (2007).

careful about voicing regional leadership aspirations openly, if it did not wish to be criticized as acting as the region's bully.

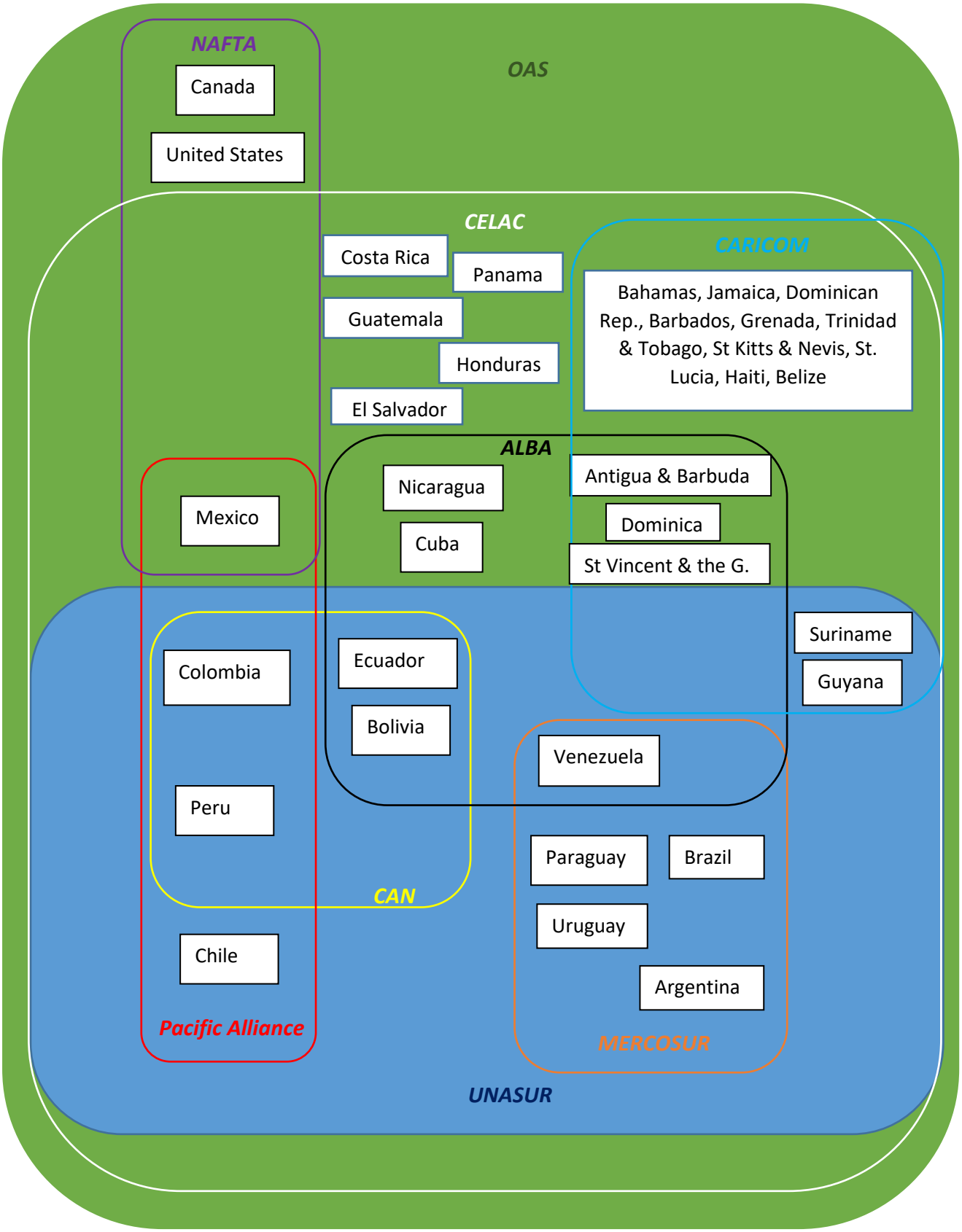
Brazil's regional approach of consensual hegemony and the associated establishment of Brazilian-led integration projects was not without competition or contestation. South America is home to a variety of different regional organizations with sometimes overlapping membership. The following section highlights how Brazil inserted itself in the context of competing for regional integration projects. The first section starts with a historical overview of regional integration projects in South America to highlight Brazil's competition, before moving onto the regional response of states in the region to Brazil's vision for integration in South America.

4.2.1. A short history of regional integration in South America

South America's regional integration structure is characterized by overlapping regional institutions in the domains of trade, politics and welfare, which were driven by different ideologies (Riggirozzi, 2012), ranging from neoliberal and trade-oriented integration projects (sometimes labelled open regionalism) to socialist and developmental integration strategies. Governments in South America seem to prefer this diverse regional integration architecture despite knowing of the potential drawbacks (such as the duplication of efforts) of this "messy outcome" (Andrés Malamud & Gardini, 2012).

The diagram on the next page provides an overview of the regional integration architecture in the Americas, featuring the regional organizations (and their respective memberships) that are most relevant to this thesis.

Figure 4 - Diagram of overlapping regional organizations in the Americas (2013)



© Source: own illustration

Governments in South America are well aware of the institutional overlaps and sometimes duplication of efforts, which were discussed at the meeting "Mesa de Convergencia" at UNASUR headquarters in November 2016, bringing together diplomats and representatives of CAN, MERCOSUR, ALBA, the Pacific Alliance among others. The main issues discussed included which organizations could focus on which issues, how organizations could work together (for example uniting CAN and MERCOSUR under the umbrella of UNASUR), and which organizations had a future. One main concern also regarded the ideological foundations of certain regional organizations (ALBA was mentioned specifically) and whether there was a need to de-ideologize the region.

The dynamic environment of regional integration in South America can be explained by changing visions for regional integration driven by different regional hegemons (such as the United States and Brazil) and secondary powers (such as Venezuela). The creation of new regional organizations can be seen as a fight over structural power in regional affairs. While stronger states, like Brazil, lead the way in proposing new integration projects, secondary powers (like Argentina) and smaller states (like Ecuador or Uruguay) can use the multitude of overlapping regional organizations for a strategy of forum shopping[36] and institutional contestation.[37]

The history of regional institution building in South America demonstrates the dynamics of competing visions for regional integration. From a historical perspective it can be argued that South America went through several stages of regional integration:

In earlier days, regional integration was dominated by the United States. One of the earliest regional organizations - The Organization of American States – was founded in 1948 and included member states on the whole American continent. The OAS was established to fight communism in the Americas after the Cold War and is still considered to be a regional organization that is heavily influenced by the US, despite its large membership base of 35 states.

[36] Forum shopping as defined by Murphy and Kellow involves "actors seeking to realise their policy objectives within preferred policy arenas on the basis of an arena's particular governing characteristics" (H. Murphy & Kellow, 2013).

[37] Institutional contestation as defined by Flemes and Castro (2016, pp. 80–81) is "a subtype of soft-balancing and, therefore, an indirect-revisionist strategy that works through the rules of formal or informal institutions and by way of engaging in limited diplomatic alliances."

Soon, South American and Latin American governments created their own regional organizations, which were influenced by a developmental ideology. In the 1950s until the 1970s Latin American governments created institutions like Central American Common Market (MCCA) in 1960, the Latin American Free Trade Association (ALALC) in 1960 and the Andean Pact (including Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia) in 1969 and CARICOM, the Caribbean Community in 1973, based on an approach of import-substitution for national development (Ayuso & Villar, 2014).

In the 1990s, a new wave of regionalism, so-called open regionalism, took hold in South America and Latin America. Following the oil crisis in 1973 and the external debt crises, an attempt was made to integrate the regional economies into the world economy. MERCOSUR, a South American trade bloc was established in 1991 under Brazilian and Argentinian leadership. The aim was to decrease trade barriers between its member states and to facilitate trade between its members and external states. This development was also a crucial step for Brazil to turn form its inward-facing political orientation to a region-engaging foreign policy. In 1994, the US, Canada and Mexico signed NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement. In 1996, the Andean Pact was transformed into the Andean Community (CAN), creating a customs union for its members Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. In the region of Central America, an example of regional integration included SICA, the Central American Integration System which comprised 8 states and was founded in 1991 (Ayuso & Villar, 2014).

At the beginning of the 21st century, South America and Latin America experienced a new wave of regionalism, which was less focused on economic but instead on political integration. This form of regionalism has been called post-liberal regionalism (Sanahuja, 2012) and post-hegemonic regionalism (Briceño-Ruiz & Hoffmann, 2015) since its goal was to create more regional autonomy and a heterodox regionalism (Vivares, 2016). Countries of South America were united in their rejection of the US initiative for a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) that had been proposed in the 1990s by the Bush administration. In this context, Brazil was a vocal advocate in the regional effort to reject the proposed FTAA (Briceño Ruiz, 2007).

During this time, which has been characterized by the phenomenon of the "pink tide" (Chodor, 2015)[38], several regional organizations were created, among them the Bolivarian Alliance for

[38] The pink tide refers to the election of left-wing governments in Latin America in the 1990s.

the Americas ALBA (2004) – a project realized by former Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez, the Union of South American Nations UNASUR (2008), which was created under Brazil's leadership (during the Lula administration) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States CELAC (2010), which can be understood as the result of a compromise of Brazil's and Mexico's regional integration project for Latin America.

ALBA was created by Cuba and Venezuela to establish an organization for social political and economic integration of socialist governments in Latin America. As the name states, it draws on the ideology of Simon Bolivar, the independence leader. The Alliance is comprised of 11 member states[39] and was generously funded by Venezuela's oil wealth at the time.

UNASUR was planned as an ambitious regional integration project in 2004, when 12 South American states[40] signed the Cusco declaration in Peru, announcing the intention of the foundation of the South American Community of Nations. As it reads in the Cusco declaration, the prospective member states voice their determination to develop South America as an integrated political, social-economic, environmental, and infrastructural space that can strengthen the identity of South America and contribute to its greater weight and representation in international fora (DECLARACIÓN DEL CUSCO SOBRE LA COMUNIDAD SU DAMERICANA DE NACIONES, 2004). Its constitutive treaty was signed in 2008 in Brasilia and entered into force in March 2011 when the 9th member state had ratified the treaty.

CELAC was created after Brazil and Mexico had hosted the summit of Latin American and Caribbean countries for integration and development (CALC - Cumbre de América Latina y el Caribe sobre Integración y Desarrollo) in 2009 and 2010. At the second summit, the creation of CELAC was agreed upon (Covarrubias, 2016, p. 54). CELAC is now an established Latin American mechanism for dialogue and political cooperation, including 33 member states, and thereby including all American states except for the United States and Canada.

More recent organizations include the Pacific Alliance (2012), a trade block of Mexico, Chile, Peru, and Colombia, and PROSUR- an alternative organization to UNASUR that was founded

[39] Member states included Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Grenada, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines and Venezuela.
[40] Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Paraguay, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela.

by Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Colombia, Ecuador, and Guyana in 2019. While the Pacific alliance re-established Mexico as a player in South America, PROSUR was the result of a shift of political orientation of governments in South America from formerly left-wing, to newly elected right-wing administrations.

As this short historical overview demonstrates, regional institution building was strongly linked to the political orientations of the governments who stood behind the creation of these regional organizations, which determined not only the type and goal of the respective regional integration mechanism but also the potential membership that they could attract. This point is crucial to understanding the founding of UNASUR under Brazil's leadership, which is discussed in the next section.

4.2.2. Brazil's strategy of creating UNASUR and the regional responses to it

Brazil's regional hegemony in South America is based on its economic and political dominance compared to other states in the region. Brazil's status as an economic powerhouse (based on its size, population, wealth in natural resources, diversified economy and trade capacity[41]), and the expansion of Brazil's regional economic influence through multinational companies (Parente et al., 2013), infrastructure development (Palestini & Agostinis, 2018) and foreign direct investment (Abreu Campanario et al., 2012) are testimony to Brazil's regional economic influence. Brazil's economic superiority in South America is part of the foundation of Brazil's consensual hegemony, which was increasingly expressed through Brazil's political leadership ambitions through regional political integration.

UNASUR was the cornerstone of Brazil's strategy for South American regional integration during the Lula administration. Brazil's efforts of creating UNASUR demonstrate how Brazil intended to build an institutionalized space and vision for regional integration in South America, which excluded potential rivals for regional leadership (such as Mexico in Central America, and the United States in North America).

The creation of UNASUR was a major step in Brazil's strategy of establishing its role as a regional hegemon within the region of South America and more broadly in creating its

[41] To give an example, Brazil is the third largest agricultural exporter globally (Hopewell, 2016).

international image as a regional leader in South America. Gratius and Saraiva (2013) argue that South America as a geopolitical space with (limited) international influence had come into fruition due to the Brazilian initiative of creating UNASUR. Moreover, UNASUR was the response not only to Brazil's regional leadership ambition and the idea to create South America as a political region but also to a demand for regional cooperation in security and democratic affairs.

UNASUR was created in a moment of history when South American countries were governed by left-wing administrations. The PT government of Lula could take advantage of the ideological coherence during this so-called "pink tide" (Chodor, 2015), to create the regional consensus for the formation of UNASUR. This point is confirmed by a Brazilian diplomat who highlights that the governments in South America were in line with the PT's regional development agenda (Brazilian diplomat D, 4.8.2017, Brasilia).

As the promises of the neoliberal development logic of the 1990s remained unfulfilled in the region, the leftist turn was based on an agenda of social inclusion and the fight against inequality (Levitsky & Roberts, 2011, pp. 2–3). Lula's social program "Bolsa Familia", a conditional cash transfer program even gained international acclaim for lifting millions of Brazilians out of poverty (Wetzel, 2013).

Linked to the political regional environment at the time of UNASUR's creation, the organization was designed to coordinate social policies in the region. As such, UNASUR was a project that resulted in a compromise and was based on the common interests of South American countries (Briceño-Ruiz & Hoffmann, 2015). This communal approach is characteristic of the consensual hegemonic leadership approach. Brazil did not impose its vision, but rather facilitated the consensus creation of a common regional project that would benefit all members, even though it might have benefitted Brazil more. By making sure that the member states had a feeling of ownership of the organization, Brazil also had the advantage of not having to lead all aspects of UNASUR.

The next section will discuss in more detail how Brazil created UNASUR and how it managed contestation in the process.

Contestation and collaboration in the process of creating UNASUR

This section highlights how South American states participated in the creation of UNASUR. Some authors have emphasized the role of Venezuela since it had been very vocal about the creation of a South American regional organization during the Chavez administration. However, as Gratius and Saraiva (2013) argue, in the end, UNASUR was Lula's and not Chavez's child. Venezuelan ideology, situated at the far-left spectrum, had to be acknowledged and balanced with Colombian interests, which diverted especially in the domain of security affairs.

Colombia still had closer ties to the US regarding joint efforts to combat drug trafficking and by receiving US military aid (Nieto, 2007, p. 116) Colombia first objected to Lula's proposition of a South American Defence Council under the umbrella of UNASUR. Colombia's President Uribe preferred to have security issues discussed at the level of the OAS (Chin & Diaz, 2016, p. 61), an organization closer to the US.

While Colombia wanted to keep its ties with the US, the Venezuelan position was to create a strong NATO-like defence alliance within UNASUR. This vision was not only in contrast to Colombia's position but also differed from what Lula had conceptualized as a South American Defence Council. The South American Defence Council as envisioned by Brazil was a body for cooperation in defence matters, and not a military alliance. The main aim of the Council was to coordinate cooperation between members in the domains of military training, sovereign control of natural resources, defence against armed groups, and the prevention of weapons of mass destruction (Sanahuja, 2012, pp. 18–19). Brazil managed to moderate the Venezuelan proposal and bring Colombia on board for the building of a joint Defence Council. Therefore, it was Brazil's accomplishment to unite the diverging interests under one institution, especially regarding regional security cooperation.

Argentina, a secondary power in South America, turned out to be an active supporter of UNASUR, while acknowledging UNASUR to be a Brazilian project. While Argentina had traditionally played the role of a regional rival (Selcher, 1985), it prided itself on taking leadership roles in specific areas of its expertise within UNASUR (Wehner, 2015).

Smaller states in the region played a supportive role in Brazil's vision for UNASUR. As Salgado (2015) argued, Ecuador and Uruguay played an important role in the creation of UNASUR. Salgado characterizes Uruguay and Ecuador as region-engaging small states, as opposed to region-constraining and region-adapting actors, which were relevant in the process of construction and consolidation of the union.[42] Ecuador successfully campaigned for the ratification of the UNASUR treaty in six member states. Uruguay ratified the treaty in December 2010. Through this action, UNASUR's treaty was ratified by the required number of 9 members and thus became a legal body.

While Brazil managed to unite South America under one regional organization through the creation of UNASUR, the founding of UNASUR did not mean that Brazil's leadership would, therefore, be uncontested in the region. The next section highlights which strategies South American states employed to make sure that the Brazilian project would not gain too much influence in regional affairs.

Institutional contestation, soft-balancing and bandwagoning towards UNASUR

While Brazil managed to create consensus for the creation of UNASUR, South American countries employed different strategies to counterbalance the influence of UNASUR, and by extension Brazil's influence in the region. Three common soft- and hard-balancing strategies[43] are explored below, before discussing strategies of followership and bandwagoning.

1.) Institutional balancing through the creation of alternative regional organizations

During Lula's presidency, Venezuela's president, Hugo Chavez launched the competing regional project ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas) that challenged the Brazilian vision of South American regional cooperation. In contrast to Brazil's model of low-cost integration, Chavez's regional integration project was generously funded.[44] It offered an

[42] Region-engaging small states are conceptualized as states that „voluntary support the region-building process" and play the role of "community member". Region-constraining states by contrast „engage in activities that oppose or weaken the process of region-building" (Salgado Espinoza, 2015, pp. 75–80).
[43] Hard balancing refers to military strategies or military alliances to counterbalance a pole of power. Soft balancing refers to diplomatic means of balancing a hegemon's power, which can take many forms. For a more detailed analysis of balancing strategies see for example Paul (2005).
[44] ALBA launched the ALBA bank that initially had financial resources of 1 billion US dollars. Moreover, Venezuela provided off-budget contributions and preferential oil deals to ALBA members (Hirst, 2011).

alternative regional platform for smaller countries like Ecuador and Bolivia, who shared Venezuela's Bolivarian ideology (Torre, 2017).

While ALBA was a potential competition for Brazil's strategy of regional integration, Chavez's main aim was to counterbalance US influence in the region, which made Venezuela and Brazil allies to a certain extent. Lula and Chavez shared the idea of South America as a distinct geopolitical and geo-economic space (Burges, 2008, p. 79). UNASUR was welcomed by Venezuela because it counterbalanced US influence in the region and Venezuela perceived that UNASUR would help it to advance its secondary power status in South America (Wehner, 2015, p. 450). This means that Venezuela's institutional balancing through the creation of ALBA did not prevent it from being an active member of UNASUR.

Another regional organization that challenged Brazil's leadership in the region was the Pacific Alliance, which was used as a means of institutional contestation of Brazil's power in South America by Colombia (Flemes & Castro, 2016) and Chile. By fostering closer relationships with Mexico, the only other regional hegemon in Latin America, within the framework of the Pacific Alliance, Chile, and Colombia were soft-balancing Brazil's influence in South America (P. Saebra, 2012). However, the Pacific Alliance did not provide a threat to Brazil, as Mexico and Brazil agreed to sign a letter of intent to form a trade agreement between MERCOSUR and the Pacific Alliance.

2.) Soft balancing through active membership in other regional organizations

Argentina often adopted the role of Brazil's rival and soft balancer. Argentina tried to counterbalance Brazil's influence in the region of South America by attributing a regional power role to Brazil in the region of Latin America[45] and CELAC, where Brazil is not the only regional power. Moreover, Argentina put more emphasis on MERCOSUR (than on UNASUR), where it perceives itself as a joint leader and partner of Brazil. While Argentina was an active member of UNASUR, Nolte and Comini (2016, p. 546) argue that MERCOSUR remained the cornerstone of Argentina's regional integration strategy.

[45] Latin America is a cultural region that includes countries in the Americas where Latin languages (such as Spanish, Portuguese, and French) are spoken. In contrast to South America, which is confined to the geographic space of the South America continent, Latin America also includes countries of Central America and the Caribbean.

Chile also tried to keep its ties to the rest of Latin America and did not limit itself to the South American project as advanced by Brazil. It sought to keep its trade options open and not to become too dependent on the market of Brazil and MERCOSUR. While Chile wanted to be an active member of UNASUR and to take part in the shaping of the institution, it remained wary of the development of the institution under Brazilian leadership. Therefore, active membership in CELAC and the Pacific Alliance allowed Chile to balance Brazilian influence and prevent Brazil from becoming too influential in the region.

Bolivia under Morales tried to combine his solidarity with the Bolivarian nations, as member of ALBA, with the growth-oriented approach in the Andean Community and MERCOSUR. Thereby the government had to negotiate the conflicting demands of domestic business and civil society (Costoya, 2011). Bolivia was initially supportive of UNASUR, however only during the pink tide, when Bolivia perceived to be among friends.

Because of the overlap of membership within regional organizations in the Americas (as highlighted in Figure 4, on page 103 of this thesis), South American nations have a range of possibilities with regard to soft balancing through membership in alternative regional integration projects.

3.) Hard balancing

Colombia's strategy towards Brazil during President Uribe's presidency (2002-2010) can be described as hard balancing, considering Colombia's military cooperation with the US. Even though these activities were not directly geared towards balancing Brazil, they affected Brazil's capacity to limit US influence in South America. Colombia's close ties with the US lead to the relative isolation of Colombia in the region (Flemes & Wehner, 2015). However, during the Santos presidency, Colombian relations to the region changed, shifting the focus from the US to new regional partnerships, such as the Pacific Alliance, which can be interpreted as a strategy of institutional contestation by Colombia (Flemes & Castro, 2016) as mentioned before.

4.) Bandwagoning and followership

While secondary powers tend to soft-balance Brazil's leadership, smaller states adopted a strategy of bandwagoning, in aligning themselves with the powerful state that poses a threat (Walt, 1987, p. 17).

Among the smaller states, Paraguay is said to be Brazil's most loyal ally that stems from Paraguay's economic dependence. Since the 1960s, Paraguay's strategy has been mainly to bargain and bandwagon (Lambert, 2016, p. 35). While Paraguay depended more on its membership in MERCOSUR than on its membership in UNASUR (because of the importance of trade within MERCOSUR), Paraguay was not in a position to challenge Brazil's leadership in UNASUR.

Uruguay followed a foreign policy approach that was focused on regional integration, which was reflected in Uruguay's active participation in the regional organizations of ALADI (Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración), MERCOSUR, and UNASUR. While the government of Uruguay was very supportive of UNASUR, the opposition criticized it as a hegemonic project of Brazil (Salgado Espinoza, 2015, pp. 175–180). During the administrations of both Tavaré Vázquez (2005-2009) and José Mujica (2010-2015), Uruguay supported Brazil's rise on the global stage and in regional integration, since it expected to benefit from it (Lujan, 2016, p. 90).

Peru's relationship with Brazil has been labelled opportunistic as Peru intensified its collaboration with Brazil as it perceived it to be a rising regional and global power (St John, 2016, p. 145). Peru was a member within UNASUR among others and also left other opportunities open, as demonstrated by its membership in the Pacific Alliance.

Ecuador supported the creation of UNASUR and even offered to host its headquarters in Quito. As argued by Salgado (2015, p. 139), the government of Raffael Correa embraced the idea of UNASUR because it was in line with the party's political ideology. While Ecuador's role in regional politics was insignificant until 2007, Correa adopted a new foreign policy strategy, with a harder line against US military presence in Ecuador and a new focus on South American regional identity. By asking the US to withdraw from the military base in Manta, and Ecuador's

affirmation of Brazil's security architecture in the Amazon, Ecuador set a clear sign for the support of Brazil's regional vision.

As demonstrated above, small states and secondary states employed different strategies towards Brazil's regional integration project, ranging from bandwagoning to soft- and hard-balancing. Brazil's consensual hegemonic leadership approach was successful in that it managed to ultimately unite South American states under the umbrella of UNASUR. However, the existence of alternative regional integration models demonstrated that Brazil did not hold the monopoly in regional institution building and that Brazil's vision for the region could face competition at any time.

4.2.3. The durability of Brazil's regional leadership capacity in South America

As this chapter demonstrated, Brazil's regional power status cannot be taken for granted and is subject to domestic and regional factors that enable or hamper Brazil's leadership capacity. Brazil's leadership in regional integration in South America worked best during the Lula administration when Brazil's government had a strong interest in strengthening Brazil's role in the region. At that time Brazil was the only hegemon in South America, and the US remained largely absent from regional affairs (Burges 2015, p. 194). During Lula's term, South America was also governed by left-wing governments who were sympathetic to the PT's foreign policy priorities in the region.

Brazil's relations with its neighbours changed when Dilma Rousseff was impeached, and Michel Temer took over the presidency. This demonstrates how solidarity between left-wing versus right-wing governments affected regional cooperation. Especially South American countries that were ruled by left-wing governments criticized the impeachment, while the rest remained less critical or endorsed the impeachment. The Bolivarian nations of Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela withdrew their ambassadors in protest. Venezuela announced that it would freeze its diplomatic relations with Brazil because of the "parliamentary coup" that took place in Brazil. Bolivian president, Evo Morales claimed that the impeachment process had been unjust. Ecuadorian President, Rafael Correa stated that the impeachment was a reminder of the darkest hours of America (referring to the dictatorships of the past), stressing that these events posed a risk to regional stability and constituted a setback in the consolidation of democracy (Tharoor, 2016).

A quite different response came from Argentina. Chancellor, Susana Malcorra affirmed that Argentina's government respected the institutional process of the impeachment and reaffirmed its commitment to work together with Brazil for regional integration (Rosemberg, 2016). Colombia's reaction was neutral, with President Juan Manuel Santos stressing the importance of regional stability and the preservation of democratic institutions.

The change of Brazil's relations to states in the region under different administrations needs to be kept in mind when analysing Brazil's regional leadership capacity, especially as it regards Brazil's strategy of consensual hegemony, which relies on the ability to create consensus and followership through the provision of ideas.

Brazil's regional leadership capacity and the limits to its strategy of consensual hegemony are investigated more closely in the following chapters which look at Brazil's leadership within UNASUR in the specific domain of regional democracy promotion.

CHAPTER 5 - Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion through UNASUR

As Chapter 4 demonstrated, UNASUR was the institutional manifestation of Brazil's consensual hegemonic project in South America. UNASUR was not only central to Brazil's quest for the development of a regional organization that provided the framework for a South American region under Brazilian leadership; UNASUR was also the culmination of Brazil's efforts of creating regional stability through political regional integration. In this context, democracy promotion is a core issue that Brazil needed to pursue in order to guarantee a stable regional environment. According to democratic peace theory (as discussed in Chapter 2), democracies are less likely to wage war against each other, and are more likely to resolve disputes peacefully (Dixon, 1994). Moreover, democratic crises within a state and the associated political instability can have a spill-over effect, thereby creating humanitarian, political and economic issues that affect neighbouring states.[46]

Chapter 5 therefore explores Brazil as a democracy promoter and explains the centrality of UNASUR for Brazil's regional democracy promotion strategy. In doing so, this chapter provides the background for the case study of Brazil's democracy promotion through UNASUR in Bolivia, Paraguay, and Venezuela, which will be discussed in the Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

This chapter starts with an analysis of Brazil's motivations and strategies regarding democracy promotion in South America, before discussing in more detail how UNASUR fits into Brazil's democracy promotion strategy. It is argued that Brazil set up an organization for regional cooperation in UNASUR that was conducive to its preferred consensual hegemonic leadership approach.

5.1. Brazil as a democracy promoter in South America

> "It is democracy, above all, that unites us in South America. Democracy as a precondition for regional integration is more than a conceptual formulation and political

[46] For more details on the relation between democracy, stability and economic growth read Feng (1997). For the potential impact of state failure to neighbouring countries and to a region, read Iqbal and Starr (2008).

> imperative that we defend and promote. It corresponds to a historical reality in the geographical space that we share." (Patriota, 2012a)[47]

As expressed in the quote from the former foreign minister Antonio Patriota, democracy was central to Brazil's regional vision for South American regional integration. Domestic political instability was perceived as a critical issue in South America. While the region went through a process of democratization after the end of military dictatorships, challenges remained regarding the strengthening of democratic institutions and the prevention of authoritarian backsliding (Gratius & Legler, 2009, p. 185).

Brazil is hesitant to interfere (overtly) in other states' domestic affairs as it needs to respect the regional norm of non-intervention and wants to avoid being perceived as acting in a dominant way. As democracy promotion by definition represents an interference in the domestic issues of another state, the question that arises is to what extent Brazil is willing and capable of promoting and defending democracy in the region. Hence, the following section highlights *why* Brazil is interested in democracy promotion in South America and *how* Brazil promotes democracy.

5.1.1. Brazil and democracy promotion – the why question?

Looking back in history, Brazil was active in democracy promotion in South America since the end of the military dictatorship. Examples are the prevention of coups in Paraguay in 1996 and again in 1999, as well as in Venezuela in 1992 and 2002. Moreover, Brazil was an active mediator in political crises in Bolivia and Ecuador in 2000 (Santiso, 2002). Burges (2016, p. 170) goes as far as to argue that Brazil has been an important actor in calming almost every case of democratic crisis in South America since 1998, also pointing to the examples of Paraguay (1998, 1999), Peru (2000), Venezuela (2000, 2002), Ecuador (2005, 2008) and Bolivia (2005, 2008).

[47] Original quote in Portuguese: "É a democracia, antes de tudo, que nos une na América do Sul. A democracia como pressuposto da integração regional, além de uma formulação conceitual – e de um imperativo político – que defendemos e promovemos, corresponde a uma realidade histórica no espaço geográfico que compartilhamos."

Despite Brazil's activities in the domain of democracy promotion, literature on the issue remains scare. Brazil as an advocate for democracy has been discussed with reference to the Cardoso presidency, with an emphasis on Brazil's pro-democratic discourse and its reluctance to interfere in the domestic affairs of other states. As Santoso (2002, p. 398) argues, Brazil had strengthened its normative commitment to the promotion of democracy, but remained dedicated to the principle of non-interference.

Stuenkel and Jacob (2010) argue that Brazil has no "missionary zeal" to promote democracy. They argue that Brazil's democracy promotion is motivated by its interest in regional stability and by its international status seeking as a regional hegemon. Stuenkel (2013, p. 346) furthermore argues that Brazil defends political stability in the region because of the relevance of South America as an area for Brazil's economic expansion. He argues that it is not the strength of Brazil's neighbours, but rather their instability that is a potential threat to Brazil.[48]

Democracy promotion in South America is hence part of Brazil's broader foreign policy agenda in the region and internationally. While democracy promotion was most visible during the PT administrations (under Lula and Rousseff), Brazil's pro-democratic stance goes back to the Cardoso presidency and cannot be solemnly tied to the PT's foreign policy agenda. Democracy promotion feeds into the foreign policy interests identified in Chapter 4, such as regional stability, countering US influence in the region and Brazil's international aspirations.

Viewed from this angle, it is clear that Brazil's democracy promotion needs to be separated from the promotion of human rights (or political rights more specifically). Brazil is interested in defending the constitutionality of democracies and the strength of institutions, rather than in criticizing human rights violations by South American governments (Macaulay, 2014, p. 77), as long as they don't threaten regional stability significantly.

While Brazil supports institutions that promote human rights (such as the Inter-American court of Human Rights) it does not engage in human rights promotion in an enthusiastic way (Santoro, 2014, p. 68). Brazil has been reluctant in openly criticizing other governments, specifically other governments in South America, which is evident in Brazil's regional foreign

[48] The economic risks of democratic crisis will be discussed in more detail with reference to the issue areas of Bolivia, Paraguay, and Venezuela in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

policy discourse. A relatively recent example is the Lula and Rousseff administrations' reluctance to openly criticize human rights violations in Venezuela (as will be discussed in chapter 8).

Hence, Brazil adopts a legalistic view of democracy promotion that is centred on the protection of democratic institutions, with the ultimate goal of promoting stable regional democracies. This leads to the question of how Brazil promotes democracy. As will be discussed below, Brazil embedded its regional democracy promotion in the framework of regional organizations and their democratic clauses. As will be highlighted, these clauses were designed to prevent coups against elected governments rather than to strengthen the quality of democracies or to sanction human rights violations by incumbents. As stated by a Brazilian official (Brazilian official A, 28.07.2017, Brasilia), democratic clauses are perceived by Brazil as a tool for the protection of democratic systems (which include certain characteristics such as free elections, among other elements), and not for the promotion of human rights, which they perceive as the responsibility of UN human rights mechanisms.

5.1.2. Brazil and democracy promotion - the how question?

The question of how Brazil promotes democracy can be explained by looking at how Brazil conducts its foreign policy towards South America more generally. As has been highlighted in Chapter 4, Brazil opted for a consensual hegemonic approach of regional leadership in South America. This includes a clear focus on shaping regional organizations and working within the context of regional multilateral institutions. Regarding democracy promotion, Brazil followed the same strategy. Especially considering that democracy promotion is an activity that deals with the domestic issues of another state, regional organizations provide the necessary institutional context in which Brazil can act without being accused of unilateral intervention in a neighbour state's domestic affairs.

However, as in other domains of regional affairs, Brazil had to compete for leadership in regional democracy promotion. Brazil had to build a regional framework for democracy promotion within UNASUR as an alternative to other existing democracy promotion practices by regional organizations. Of the latter, the OAS has the longest record of involvement in the region. The OAS established a democratic clause shortly after its creation in 1948 and updated

its framework to the current democracy promotion framework, which is based on the Inter-American Democratic Charter of 2001 (Inter-American Democratic Charter, 2001).

The OAS has been perceived as an organization under heavy US influence. Under the administrations of Bush Sr., Clinton and Bush Jr., the US sponsored the development of legal frameworks for democracy promotion in the OAS and supported the OAS resolutions in the cases of Haiti (1991), Peru (1992), Guatemala (1993) and Paraguay (1996) (Gratius & Legler, 2009, p. 191).

However, some of South American governments became critical of the OAS activities in democracy promotion. This is due to the US use of democracy promotion as a means to destabilize governments that the US did not favour (Gratius & Legler, 2009, p. 186). In this environment, Brazil could push for the development of regional democratic clauses that would allow South American states to pursue democracy promotion without the presence of the US.

As governments in the region shared the preoccupation for regional stability, several regional organizations added democratic clauses to their treaties. Examples of such regional democratic clauses are the Ushuaia Protocol (1998) and Montevideo Protocol (2011) of MERCOSUR, the Commitment of the Andean Community to Democracy and the CELAC special declaration on the defence of democracy and constitutional order. UNASUR added a democratic clause to its Constitutional Treaty in 2011, a process in which Brazil's participation was vital.

The formulation of UNASUR's democratic clause was triggered by a specific event of political instability in Ecuador in 2010, when police forces protested against the government and occupied Parliament. The event (which some even labelled an attempted coup) was a wake-up call for governments in the region and propelled the Brazilian foreign ministry to take action. Former Brazilian foreign minister Celso Amorim (18.8.2017, Brasilia) stated in an interview, that Antonio Patriota and Marco Aurelio Garcia participated in the drafting of the document. He argued that it was not difficult for countries to agree on the clause, because the clause was intended to prevent coups.

While Brazil was a relevant player in the drafting of the clause, it was not only Brazil's interests that drove the formulation of the clause. UNASUR members shared Brazil's preoccupation with regional stability (Dabène, 2016). In the case of a domestic political crisis and

polarization, neighbouring countries tend to fear that the crisis is going to spill across the border, which would have potential economic and social consequences (Mauricio Santoro 09.08.2017, Rio de Janeiro).

The development of UNASUR's democratic clause therefore occurred in an environment that was very conducive to Brazil's consensual hegemony approach. The joint preoccupation with regional stability and protection of governments from domestic threats led to an environment in which member states had a common interest in adding a democratic clause to UNASUR.

UNASUR provided Brazil with a regional mechanism to address security issues that arose in the region without the need to turn to external actors, such as the US or the OAS. The advantages of settling regional security challenges through UNASUR was that Brazil was not seen as acting unilaterally (Andres Malamud et al., 2017, p. 9). In other words, by working through UNASUR, Brazil could employ its strategy of consensual hegemony.

UNASUR provided Brazil with the necessary platform for regional leadership based on soft power. Brazil hardly ever used hard power capabilities in regional security governance because it would not be well received. Malamud et al. (2017) refer to Merke's (2015) concept of concertacion - a consensus seeking approach to the settlement of regional disputes – as an accepted diplomatic practice in South America (op. cit, p.17). They argue that while Brazil is not supporting US involvement in the region, it is also not willing to assume a regional role based on hard power capabilities in order to replace the US security approach in the region.

Through Brazil's active engagement within UNASUR and in building its democracy promotion system, the organization became the main tool for regional democracy promotion under Lula. It enabled Brazil to step up its efforts in the domain of democracy promotion compared to previous administrations. While the Cardoso administration focused on legal issues of democratic governance through its membership in the OAS, it did not play a prominent role in leading democracy promotion efforts. During Lula's administration, Brazilian democracy promotion could take place through the institutional framework of UNASUR where Brazil had more leverage (Schönwälder, 2014, p. 15), compared to the OAS, where Brazil was only one of many member states, and the US occupied the role of regional leader.

Through strengthening the capacity of regional organizations (and most importantly of UNASUR) to deal with regional democratic crises, Brazil pursued its goal of keeping US influence out of the region and shaped regional frameworks for democracy promotion that corresponded to its interests and needs. By developing the democracy promotion capacity in UNASUR, Brazil built a regional framework that could challenge the OAS's role and potentially replace the OAS as the leading organization for democracy promotion in South America.

5.2. Brazil and democracy promotion through UNASUR

The pursuit of the creation of democracy promotion frameworks in regional organizations shows which strategy Brazil implemented to create the relevant tools for its democracy promotion practice. The existence of these frameworks however does not automatically imply how and under which circumstances they will be used. In order to understand how democracy promotion works at the institutional level of UNASUR, it is crucial to understand the institutional structure of the organization and the decision-making processes that drive UNASUR's actions. This section therefore starts with a discussion of UNASUR's structure and decision-making process before discussing in detail how UNASUR's democracy promotion framework works in theory and in practice.

5.2.1. UNASUR's structure and decision-making process

Since Brazil was the main driver behind the creation of UNASUR, the organization's institutional structure mirrors Brazil's consensual hegemonic approach to regional affairs. UNASUR is a regional organization without any supranational power. The organization is an institutionalized forum for heads of state, who take decisions based on consensus. Therefore, Brazil made sure that UNASUR would not infringe on its national autonomy but would provide the platform for consensual decision-making (under Brazil's leadership).

The main decision-making bodies are the Council of Heads of State and Government, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and the Council of Delegates. On an administrative

level, the organization is led by a Secretary General and a rotating Pro-tempore Presidency, which is held by member states in an alphabetical order for a period of one year.

The Council of Heads of State and Government is the highest organ of UNASUR. According to Article 6 in the Constitutive Treaty of UNASUR, the Council of Heads of State and Government has the following responsibilities: to establish policy guidelines, plans of action and projects for South American integration, and to decide on their priority for implementation. The Council of Heads of State and Government can summon sectoral ministerial meetings and create councils of ministers. Furthermore, it decides on the proposals of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The Council of Heads of State and Government also develops the political guidelines for relations with third parties. The meetings of this council took place annually, while extraordinary meetings could be requested by each member state.

While the heads of state decide on the policy direction of UNASUR, they are also the relevant actors in case of emergencies. This applies also to the domain of democracy promotion, as pointed out by former Secretary General Ernesto Samper: "When there is a crisis or potential rupture of democracy, it is the heads of state who take action" (Samper, 21.11.2016, Quito).[49]

National governments also have a main role in the administrative function of the organization, in the form of the rotating Pro-tempore Presidency. Its role is to prepare, summon and preside over the meetings of UNASUR bodies. Moreover, the Pro-tempore Presidency presents an annual program of cooperation activities to the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and to the Council of Delegates.

The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs has a long list of responsibilities. Among them are the adoption of resolutions, the proposal of draft decisions, the preparation of meetings of the Councils of Heads of State and Government, the development of positions, the approval of financing of UNASUR activities and the annual budget and the creation of working groups based on the priorities of the council of Heads of State and Government. The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs meets once per semester, or in extraordinary meetings if requested by a member state. The Council of Delegates mainly has a support function to the Council of

[49] Original quote in Spanish: "Si hay una crisis o una ruptura potencial de la democracia, son los jefes de los estados (los cancilleres y los presidentes) que toman acción."

Ministers of Foreign Affairs. Its members are made up of one delegate per member state, who should meet every two months.

The Secretary General is the legal representative of the General Secretariat and occupies the highest office within the organization. He or she is elected for a term of two years and appointed by the Council of Heads of State and Government, following a proposal by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The responsibilities of the Secretary General include providing support to the Council of Heads of State and Government, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Council of Delegates, and the Pro-tempore Presidency in the fulfilment of their duties. Moreover it is the responsibility of the Secretary General to propose initiatives and to oversee the implementation of the directives of UNASUR bodies, to perform the role of secretary at the meetings of UNASUR bodies and to prepare a draft of the annual budget, among other responsibilities. The position was drafted mainly as an administrative role; however, depending on the incumbent, the Secretary General can take on a more political role.

The post of Secretary General has typically been occupied by either former heads of state of South American countries or by distinguished diplomats. The first Secretary General was former Argentine President Néstor Kirchner (May 2010- October 2010). He was succeeded by the Colombian diplomat María Emma Mejía Vélez, who held the office from May 2011 to June 2012. The Venezuelan diplomat Alí Rodríguez Araque followed (June 2012- July 2014) before the former president of Colombia, Ernesto Samper, was elected to be Secretary General from August 2014 until January 2017. Since then, UNASUR's members have been unable agree on a successor, which has led to a political deadlock within the organization (more details on the political deadlock within UNASUR are discussed in Chapter 9).

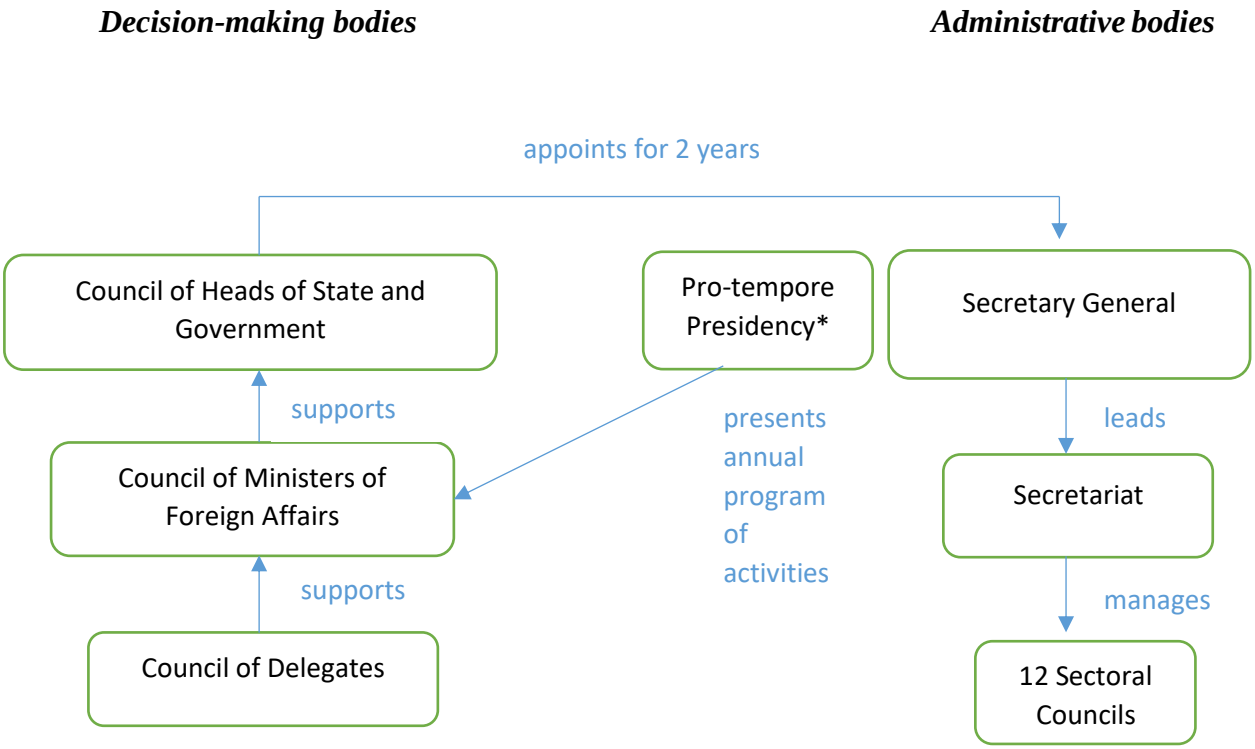
The Secretariat of UNASUR was supported by a very limited number of permanent staff members at its headquarters in Quito, Ecuador. The bureaucratic apparatus of UNASUR included 12 Sectoral Councils that were dedicated to specific issue areas: defence, health, elections, energy, science and technology, culture, social development, finance, education, infrastructure, drugs, justice, and transnational crime.

The councils enabled a more coherent cooperation. In other domains, the meetings between delegates were less frequent and therefore less work was done in these areas. According to a

UNASUR official, the three areas that saw the most cooperation were the domains of defence, infrastructure, health, and electoral assistance (UNASUR official A, 21.11.2016, Quito).

The institutional structure of UNASUR is summarized in Figure 5, indicating the main decision-making and administrative bodies of the organization. The figure therefore highlights the multilateral structure of UNASUR, in which decisions are made by member states, which are administered by a small bureaucratic apparatus, which is also partly managed by member states.

Figure 5 - Institutional structure of UNASUR



*one-year term, occupied by member states in alphabetical order

© Source: own illustration

As the institutional structure of UNASUR demonstrates, member states left very little responsibility to the organization and kept the monopoly over decision-making. Moreover, participation from civil society actors has been side-lined. As Serbin (2012) highlights,

UNASUR is an expression of state-centric regionalism. While left-wing governments in South America incorporated a social agenda into their national policies, as had been demanded by civil society organizations, this has not led to an increase of civil society participation in the regional integration process within UNASUR.

The meetings of the South American Community of Nations (SACN) – the predecessor organization of UNASUR - had been accompanied by "Social Summits" which provided a space for dialogue between state and non-state actors. However, these interactions ceased to exist when UNASUR was founded. While the UNASUR Constitutive Treaty refers to the importance of citizen participation for the strengthening of democracy, UNASUR does not provide institutionalized mechanisms for civil society participation (Andrés Serbin, 2012, pp. 154–155). Civil society participation within UNASUR was therefore rather symbolic (when it happened) and did not go beyond mere consultation mechanisms.

Since Brazil was a key agent in creating UNASUR, some have argued that Brazil created a relatively weak regional body in UNASUR, and that Brazil failed to help build the bureaucratic apparatus that would have been needed for a successful implementation of UNASUR's initiatives (Fuccille et al., 2017). Others have questioned whether Brazil prioritized its global ambition and created UNASUR merely as a regional stabilizer and "fire-extinguisher" (S. C. Santos, 2012, p. 21).

The structure of UNASUR reflects Brazil's consensual hegemonic approach to regional affairs and the preference of South American states for the building of institutionalized fora for state leaders rather than for building independent supranational regional organizations. The limited institutionalization and multilateral structure of UNASUR does however create problems for the capacity of UNASUR to fulfil its mandate, as discussed below.

The limitations resulting from UNASUR's structure

While the structure of UNASUR had the advantage of not infringing on the sovereignty of any member state (including Brazil), there are some downsides to this structure. Below is a more detailed discussion on the disadvantages of UNASUR's structure. The three main obstacles discussed are the limited operability due to the consensus-based decision-making structure, the

split of administrative responsibilities between the Secretariat and the Pro-tempore Presidency, and the limited institutional budget.

1.) The consensus-based decision-making structure

The main structural issue (that turned out to lead to an impasse within the organization in 2018) was the consensus-based decision-making structure. UNASUR's institutional structure is informed by the norm of non-interference in domestic affairs and the respect for national autonomy. Due to these principles, the organization does not hold supranational power over decision-making. It is therefore important to differentiate UNASUR from other regional organizations, such as the European Union. As pointed out by an EU official during an interview, the integration level within the EU and UNASUR is so different, because South American countries are not willing to transfer any agency to the supranational level (EU official, 31.7.2017, Brasilia).

Furthermore, the above-mentioned norms allow members to exercise veto power. The potential veto power of each member served smaller states that tried to play a bigger role within the organization (Salgado Espinoza, 2015, p. 251). And it was in Brazil's interest to subvert the risk of a majority of small countries uniting against it (Mauricio Santoro, 08.09.2017, Rio de Janeiro). Therefore, the consensus-based decision-making structure was favoured by big and small states alike.

However, from an institutional perspective, the problem that arose from this decision-making structure was first, that the pace of work was very slow because of it (David Alvarez, 20.02.2020), and second, that no action could be taken unless all the member states could be brought to agree on joint action. The problem of a political deadlock proved to be the core issue of why UNASUR ultimately failed to remain a relevant regional organization in the long run (which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 9).

2.) The Pro-tempore Presidency

Another institutional feature that limits the power of the organization is the Pro-tempore Presidency. The administrative function of the organization is divided between the Secretariat and the Pro-tempore Presidency. The General Secretariat therefore does not have sole responsibility over administrative functions and is limited in its agenda setting capacity. As

mentioned by a UNASUR official during an interview, clashes may occur between the Presidency and the Secretariat on what the main issues are that should be addressed:

> "You shouldn't have both, the General Secretariat and the Pro-tempore Presidency, because it means that there is one country and one organization trying to do the same thing" (David Alvarez, 20.02.2020).

The relevance of the Pro-tempore Presidency in the agenda setting function was also highlighted by another UNASUR official, who stated that "The role of the Pro-tempore Presidency is to keep firm the political agenda of the organization. Among other responsibilities, they propose in which parts of the organization, and on which topics, there is more work done" (Ricardo Malca, 28.02.2020).

Another issue with the Pro-tempore Presidency is that the position entails a large bureaucratic load. Some of the smaller member states, such as Suriname, did not have the resources to fulfil this function, but have been assisted by other member states:

> "It means that the member country has two jobs: the one of the Presidency and the one as a member country, i.e. two seats in the reunions. The bureaucratic load is important. They have to circulate all the information. They receive a request, circulate it, receive opinions on it from all members, circulate it, etc" (Ricardo Malca, 28.02.2020).

Assessing the Pro-tempore Presidencies of Venezuela, Suriname, and Ecuador in comparison, a UNASUR official concludes:

> "The problem with the Pro-tempore Presidency of Venezuela is not that they are acting biased, but that they do not have the institutional capacity and the strength to put important issues forward. We had the same issue with the presidency of Suriname. The presidency of Ecuador was much more efficient" (UNASUR official A, 21.11.2016, Quito).

The Pro-tempore Presidency is hence one of the aspects that limits the power of the General Secretariat, and potentially slows down the work of the organization, if the member state holding the presidency is not capable or willing to move issues forward on the organization's agenda. While the Pro-tempore Presidency can give member states a feeling of agency, it

inhibits the development of a stable institutional agenda and direction for the organization, as the agenda setters of the Pro-tempore Presidency change in a yearly manner.[50]

3.) Budgetary issues

The third main issue that obstructed a strong institutionalization of UNASUR was its very limited institutional budget. The limited budget increased UNASUR's dependency on Brazil's contributions for general operability, since almost half of the general budget was provided by Brazil. The institutional budget in 2013 was roughly 8 million US dollars. The division of budget contribution among member states is listed in Table 2, based on the numbers provided in the revised budget report proposal of UNASUR resolution 21/2012 (UNASUR, 2012).

Table 2 - UNASUR budget contributions in US dollars

Member states	**Percentage of budget contributions**	**Budget contributions in US$**
Argentina	16,00%	1.311.734
Bolivia	0,80%	65.587
Brazil	39,00%	3.197.351
Colombia	8,00%	655.867
Chile	7,00%	573.883
Ecuador	4,00%	327.933
Guyana	0,10%	8.198
Paraguay	1,60%	131.173
Perú	10,00%	819.834
Surinam	0,10%	8.198
Uruguay	1,00%	81.983
Venezuela	12,40%	1.016.594
Total	100,00%	**8.198.335**

[50] The Pro-tempore Presidency is also limited to the duration of 1 year in other regional organizations, such as in the case of CELAC. In MERCOSUR, the Pro-tempore Presidency is limited to 6 months.

The limited budget has not only restricted the general functioning of UNASUR, but also made it impossible for UNASUR to fund additional activities without the provision of extra-budgetary contributions by member states.[51]

On a general operative level, the limited institutional budget meant that UNASUR had a lack of human resources. Because of the limited number of bureaucrats employed at the headquarters, operational tasks had to be handed over to representatives of member states who were sent by their respective governments to work at the headquarters. As pointed out by a UNASUR official (David Alvarez, 20.02.2020) during an interview, the problem that arose was that the country representatives received their mandate from their country and not from the organization itself, which led to conflict over responsibilities with UNASUR staff members.

The limited budget also offered an opportunity to member states to put pressure on the organization. This especially related to Brazil, which was the main contributor to the general budget of UNASUR. As pointed out by one UNASUR official in an interview:

> "Brazil represents forty percent of the budget. Countries can manage the agenda through the budget. If they are not willing to transfer money, they say 'I don't like the way you are working'" (David Alvarez, 20.02.2020).

Another UNASUR official (Ricardo Malca, 28.02.2020) compared the role of Brazil within UNASUR to the role that the US plays in the OAS. He mentioned that Brazil represented around half of the budget of the organization, as well as half of the territory and population of UNASUR.

While Brazil was the main financial contributor to UNASUR, it has been noted in informal talks with UNASUR officials that Brazil was late in its payment of the annual budget in 2016 when Dilma Rousseff was president. However, the outstanding balance was quickly paid once the interim government of Michel Temer took office, which limited UNASUR's ability to openly criticize the impeachment and the new government (according to an informal source to the author).

[51] In comparison, the OAS has an annual budget of roughly 80 million $US, ten times the budget of UNASUR (OAS, 2019).

Through providing UNASUR with a limited budget, Brazil gained two advantages: first, the integration costs of UNASUR were limited for Brazil, and second, Brazil could put pressure on the organization through late payment of its contributions, which could potentially limit the organization's operability.

UNASUR is therefore a good example of Brazil's low-cost strategy for integration and its consensual hegemonic approach to institution-building. This is in contrast to a cooperative hegemonic approach, which would entail a more generous funding of regional organizations. The application of pressure through the withholding of funding indicates a tendency of Brazil to add a more coercive element to its idea-based leadership strategy of consensual hegemony.

To summarize, UNASUR is a strictly multilateral organization, where decision-making is based on consensus. Based on UNASUR's structure and decision-making process, as well as its limited budget and staff, UNASUR can be viewed as the institutional manifestation of a consensual hegemonic project under Brazil's leadership. Brazil designed UNASUR in a way so the organization would not infringe on Brazil's quest for autonomy. However, the institutional design and consensus-based decision-making also impacted UNASUR's operability, in addition to limiting the authority of the General Secretariat as well as causing budgetary constraints.

Built on the understanding of UNASUR's structure, the next section analyses UNASUR's democracy promotion framework. As will be demonstrated, UNASUR's democracy promotion is also deeply rooted in a respect of national sovereignty and presents an opportunity for member states to apply its frameworks as they see fit, due to the open formulation of the democratic clause.

5.2.2. UNASUR's democracy promotion framework

> "At the roots of UNASUR are the appreciation of democratic principles and the perception that integration itself could be endowed with tools capable of strengthening democracy" (Brazilian diplomat A, 10.01.2017, online).[52]

[52] Original quote in Portuguese: "Nas raízes da UNASUL, estão a valorização dos princípios democráticos e a percepção de que a própria integração poderia ser dotada de ferramentas capazes de fortalecer a democracia. Tais ferramentas incluem o exemplo democrático fornecido pelos vizinhos, a plena vigência das instituições

As argued by a Brazilian official, democracy is an important principle of integration under the umbrella of UNASUR. As he further elaborates, UNASUR has several tools for the promotion of democracy such as "the democratic example provided by the neighbours, the full validity of national democratic institutions as a requirement for entry into UNASUR, the sending of electoral missions, and cooperation in electoral matters, as well as the participation of the organization in the management of crises and threats of ruptures to democratic institutions" Brazilian diplomat A, 10.01.2017, online).

Two important mechanisms for democracy promotion are UNASUR's electoral assistance and UNASUR's democratic clause. These two tools differ from mechanisms employed by other regional organizations, as they are conceptualized in a way so as not to violate the regional norm of non-intervention into domestic affairs. While the concept of electoral accompaniment reflects an adherence to the norm of non-intervention in domestic affairs in a strict sense, the democratic clause allows for the application of sanctions in certain cases of democratic disruptions. This can be interpreted as a type of intervention in domestic affairs, and therefore constitutes a more lenient interpretation of the norm of non-intervention. Both mechanisms are explained in more detail below.

1.) UNASUR's electoral missions

Quite early on, UNASUR developed its own electoral missions, which was welcomed by the Brazilian foreign minister, who stated that "It is important that South America develops its own electoral observation capacity" (Patriota, 2011b).[53] However, UNASUR's electoral missions can be described as electoral assistance rather than as monitoring or observation. UNASUR electoral missions only take place upon request of the member state and in close cooperation with the electoral authorities of the concerned state.

Former Secretary General of UNASUR, Ernesto Samper, also highlights this point in an interview, in which he stated that UNASUR does not engage in electoral monitoring in the traditional sense. UNASUR's intention is rather to support member states with the technical

democráticas nacionais como requisito para entrada na UNASUL, o envio de missões eleitorais, e a cooperação em matéria eleitoral, além da participação do organismo na gestão de crises e ameaças de rupturas democráticas."

[53] Original quote in Portuguese: "É importante que a América do Sul desenvolva sua própria capacidade de observação eleitoral."

issues of organizing elections: "UNASUR helps in the coordination of elections and the technical issues. We accompany elections, we are not observers" (Samper, 21.11.2016, Quito).

If a given member state asks for UNASUR's election assistance, the member state and the Pro-tempore Presidency of UNASUR need to agree on the scope, composition, and coverage of the missions (UNASUR, n.d.). Hence, UNASUR's Electoral Council is not able to act independently, but can only help to support the national authorities with technical tasks.

The teams that are sent out to electoral missions are composed of electoral authorities of other member states of UNASUR. As pointed out by a UNASUR official:

> "The people that are sent on those missions are experts; they are authorities of the electoral organs of the member states. Therefore, these missions are very rich. The teams make recommendations that are very valued by member countries, while they allow to improve the election processes significantly" (Ricardo Malca, 28.02.2020).

This is a major difference to election observation as executed by the EU, OSCE, UN, AU, or the OAS, where election observation is usually carried out by volunteers, independent contractors, or staff of international organizations.

UNASUR officials have evaluated the capacity of UNASUR to accompany elections as positive and have pointed to the improvement of technical aspects of national elections. However, UNASUR's election assistance fails to ensure that potential electoral fraud or major irregularities are reported. As pointed out by Closa and Palestini (2015, p. 5), UNASUR's election missions are "tailored to the applicant's needs" and therefore limit impartial monitoring.

It can be concluded that UNASUR's electoral assistance is a tool that can potentially increase the quality of elections, especially regarding technical aspects, but does not offer an alternative to impartial monitoring. In contrast to other electoral missions, UNASUR's electoral assistance is defined in its scope by the recipient country, and carried out by electoral officials from other

member states.[54] Hence, UNASUR's electoral missions do not infringe on a nation's sovereignty and respect the norm of non-interference in a strict sense.

2.) The democratic clause of UNASUR

The main document that specifies UNASUR's actions in the case of democratic crisis is the democratic clause that was added to the Constitutive Treaty in 2010.[55] As specified in Article 4 of the clause, possible sanctions to be taken in the event of a breach of the democratic order are: suspension of the right to participate in the organization, partial or complete closure of borders (including suspension of trade, air and maritime traffic and provision of energy supplies), advocating the suspension of the affected state from other regional organisations, suspension from cooperation agreements and additional diplomatic sanctions (Protocolo Adicional Al Tratado Constitutivo de UNASUR Sobre Compromiso Con La Democracia, 2014).

Former Secretary General Ernesto Samper argues that the UNASUR democratic clause is fundamentally different from other democratic clauses, because it does not simply concern itself with the balance of power, as in the concept of representative democracy (which is at the core of the OAS concept for democracy promotion):

> "The concept of democracy of UNASUR goes further. It includes the participation of citizens and citizen's rights. It goes beyond the concept of the legality of a democracy. It can be used to prevent a situation of rupture. The clause allows UNASUR to accompany the democratic process. It is not just a question of election. It is dedicated to the 'climate' of a democracy" (Samper, 21.11.2016, Quito).[56]

[54] As an example, UNASUR's electoral mission in Venezuela and Brazil's involvement in it will be discussed in Chapter 8.
[55] The full text of the democratic clause (in Spanish) is provided in Appendix V of this thesis.
[56] Original quote in Spanish: "Sí, hay una diferencia fundamental en la concepción de la cláusula democrática. No se trata solo del equilibrio de poderes, como en el concepto de democracia representativa. La concepción de la democracia de UNASUR va más allá. Incluye la participación ciudadana y los derechos ciudadanos. Va más allá del concepto de la legalidad de la democracia. Y también se puede usar para prevenir una situación de ruptura. La cláusula permite un acompañamiento del proceso democrático. No es solo un tema electoral. Está dedicado al clima de una democracia"

Whereas other democratic protocols, such as the Ushuaia Protocol of MERCOSUR only apply in the case of a disruption of the democratic order, the democratic protocol of UNASUR also applies in other circumstances. For example, it applies in the case of a threat of breach of democratic practices or the violation of constitutional order as well as any situation that puts the legitimate exercise of power and democratic values and principles at risk (Protocolo Adicional Al Tratado Constitutivo de UNASUR Sobre Compromiso Con La Democracia, 2014).

The wording of the clause allows it to be applied in a potentially wide range of scenarios, not only because it can be applied in cases of a threat to democracy, but also because the clause does not define which events are to be viewed as a threat to or a rupture of the democratic order. Thereby member states can interpret the clause based on their needs and willingness to take action in any case that might indicate undemocratic practices. The clause therefore does not constitute a legal basis for the interpretation of threats to democracy.

In case the democratic clause gets activated, the Council of Heads of State and Government or the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs meet for an extraordinary session, convened by the Pro-tempore Presidency on behalf of the affected state or through a petition of another member state (Article 2). As specified in Article 3 of the Protocol, the members of the respective council need to come to a consensus on the appropriate measures to be taken, while respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the affected state.

The clause's wide range of potential sanctions and the open formulation of its applicability in scenarios of a threat to democracy seem surprising at first, particularly given the regional norm of non-interference in domestic affairs. Whether the clause potentially allows for intervention in domestic affairs depends on the interpretation of what constitutes an "intervention". A UNASUR official argues that the clause does not allow intervention in domestic affairs of member states:

> "The democratic clause works through pressure. There is no intervention in domestic affairs. The pressure works on three levels. First, on a declarative level through formal Joint Declarations. Second, through suspension from the organization. And third,

> through closing the borders, which is the hardest measure because it stops trade and movement of people" (Ricardo Malca, 28.02.2020).

However, as argued by a Brazilian official, the UNASUR democratic clause goes beyond mere political pressure: "UNASUR was a step further. It goes beyond diplomatic pressure. For example, it allows closure of borders. But I doubt that it will be done, because it needs consensus" (Brazilian official A, 28.07.2017, Brasilia). He furthermore notes that this can only happen if a country has no supporter in the region, which is unlikely.

The process of decision-making therefore provides a solution to the conflict between intervention (i.e. the application of sanctions and especially the closure of borders) and the norm of non-intervention. Member states did not feel threatened by the clause because it left it up to member states to interpret events as a breach of democratic order. Moreover, member states needed to come to a consensus in order to activate the clause and to implement certain measures.

A similar point has been made by Santoro (2014, pp. 72–73) who argues that the structure of UNASUR's decision-making renders it difficult for UNASUR to allow for criticism of an incumbent. And, as has been criticized by Closa and Palestini (2015, p. 4) the democratic clause was not intended to scrutinise elected governments that violate the civil or political rights of their citizens.

Therefore, it can be argued that the clause potentially allows for intervention in domestic affairs. However, because of the decision-making structure of UNASUR, governments did not expect that the clause would be activated against their interests. While some member states might have perceived that they were too big to be sanctioned, smaller states thought that the clause would help to strengthen their government against domestic threats (Closa & Palestini, 2018).

In this context it has to be remembered that the democratic clause was added to the Constitutive Treaty of UNASUR in a direct response to the political crisis in Ecuador.[57] This was highlighted by a Brazilian diplomat, who stated that the clause "derives from a regional

[57] As discussed in Chapter 1.

response to the threat of violation of the democratic order in Ecuador. The democratic clause was devised as a concrete multilateral tool for the protection, defence, and eventual restoration of democracy" (Brazilian diplomat A, 10.01.2017, online).[58] The clause was hence drafted by UNASUR's governments as a tool to protect governments in the region from destabilizing domestic forces.

To summarize, one can argue that the clause is a potentially powerful tool for democracy promotion in the region, which can be applied in any situation that is interpreted as a threat to the democratic order by UNASUR's member states. However, its application rests solely on member states' willingness to intervene, and the ability of member states to reach a consensual decision on the relevant sanctions that should be imposed. The decision-making structure therefore limits the possibility of the actual use of this permit for intervention in domestic affairs of a member state.

5.2.3. Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion through UNASUR

Regional organizations offer a space where Brazil can consolidate the norm of non-interference in domestic affairs and pursue its aims of democracy promotion and regional stability. Regional organizations like UNASUR provide the platform for Brazil to promote regional stability as it tries to avoid being perceived as a bully or being accused of acting unilaterally. By working through multilateral regional institutions, Brazil can apply its approach of consensual hegemony to reach consensus for joint action in the domain of democracy promotion.

Regional organizations are especially important for Brazil's actions in democracy promotion because of the sensitivity of this policy domain. As has been highlighted by various diplomats during interviews, Brazil does not want to pressure or sanction undemocratic behaviour in an overt manner, as this goes against Brazil's diplomatic tradition and regional norms.

One diplomat states that "We don't put pressure. It's not our way. You have to work through the institutions" (Brazilian diplomat C, 25.7.2017, Brasilia). Another diplomat specifically refers to the norm of non-intervention: "We don't have a tradition of sanctioning countries.

[58] Original quote in Portuguese: "Sua negociação deriva de uma resposta regional à ameaça de violação da ordem democrática no Equador. A cláusula democrática foi idealizada como uma ferramenta multilateral concreta para proteção, defesa e eventual restauração da democracia."

This is a strong principle in our diplomatic DNA. Non-interference is a very important principle in the region" (Brazilian official A, 28.07.2017, Brasilia).

The importance of regional organizations for Brazil's democracy promotion and the consolidation of Brazil's diplomatic tradition and foreign policy interests is also highlighted in a statement by Brazilian diplomat Filipe Nasser:

> "It should also be remembered that Brazil has rarely set out to actively promote a democratic agenda abroad (beyond a symbolic or rhetorical emphasis), except when it did so in the context of MERCOSUR, UNASUR or OAS, which, each in its own way, has a normative framework to deal with disruptions of the institutional order of its members. In particular cases - and without claiming the merits of the strategic resolution of each decision - Brazilian diplomacy sacrificed the universality of its foreign policy in favour of the democratic restoration of countries of the region: Paraguay (1996 and 2012), Honduras (2009) and Venezuela (2015-2017)" (Nasser, 2017, p. 51).[59]

The setting of overlapping regional organizations give states like Brazil the possibility to choose between different regional organizations and their corresponding democracy promotion frameworks, memberships, and different decision-making structures. As demonstrated before, the Lula administration worked to establish UNASUR as an organization for democracy promotion in order to decrease the influence of the US, and the reliance on the democracy promotion tools of the OAS.

The democracy promotion architecture of UNASUR was meant to be an alternative to the OAS, since involvement by the OAS was rejected by some governments due to the influence that the US asserts in the organization. However, the OAS has some advantages compared to UNASUR, for example its budget, which is ten times larger than the UNASUR budget and amounts to roughly US$ 80 million (OAS, 2019).

[59] Original quote in Portuguese: "Cumpre também recordar que raramente o Brasil se propôs a promover ativamente uma agenda democrática no exterior para além do plano simbólico ou retórico, à exceção de quando o fez no âmbito de Mercosul, Unasul ou OEA, que, cada qual à sua maneira, possui um marco normativo específico para tratar de rupturas na ordem institucional de seus membros. Em casos particulares – e sem pretender entrar no mérito do acerto estratégico de cada decisão –, a diplomacia brasileira sacrificou a universalidade de sua política externa em benefício da restauração democrática de países da região: Paraguai (1996 e 2012), Honduras (2009) e Venezuela (2015-2017)."

It is therefore not argued that Brazil planned to substitute the OAS completely through the establishment of UNASUR. In fact, Brazil did not refrain from using the OAS for specific tasks. The former Brazilian foreign minister Celso Amorim gives a concrete example of how this selective use of regional organizations works:

> "UNASUR was meant to replace other groups in subjects that were specific to South America. (…) It was not meant to replace other mechanisms completely. The OAS has more juridical means" (Celso Amorim, 18.8.2017, Rio de Janeiro).

He gives a specific example, referring to the resolution of bilateral tensions between Colombia and Ecuador in 2008:

> "In the crisis that emerged from the bombing of FARC troops in the Ecuadorian territory by Colombia, the real progress was made through the Rio Group, which met in Santo Domingo. Later we went to the OAS because they have the juridical means. Our work in the OAS was to make the OAS accept what had already been done by the Rio Group" (Celso Amorim, 18.8.2017, Rio de Janeiro).

The question that arises is thus, to what extent Brazil used the democracy promotion tools of UNASUR (in whose foundation Brazil played such a vital role) in practice to promote regional stability in South America since the Lula administration. While Brazil stressed the importance of democracy in its foreign policy discourse (Armijo & Burges, 2009), and while it has been instrumental in strengthening regional organizations' democratic frameworks in South America (Santiso, 2002), Brazil's actual contribution to democracy promotion through these mechanisms has not been investigated much.

Conclusion

Based on Brazil's foreign policy discourse on democracy promotion, its interest in regional stability, its status as a regional hegemon in South America and its strategy of consolidating its influence in South America through its leadership in UNASUR, it is clear that there is a certain expectation regarding Brazil's role in promoting democracy through UNASUR. As stated by Stuenkel, who refers to the UNASUR mission in Venezuela:

> "UNASUR's attempt to mediate in the Venezuelan conflict is a multilateral undertaking, and an interesting experiment to see in how far the continent is capable of solving its own problems. Yet given that the United States is largely staying out of the discussion, Brazil is by far the most important actor in South America that, in theory, would be best placed to assume leadership. If things go wrong in Venezuela, it is Brazil, not UNASUR, that will – rightly so – be blamed for failing to defend democracy and stability in the region" (Stuenkel, 2014).

Whether Brazil meets the expectations of leadership in democracy promotion through UNASUR and other regional organizations in South America needs to be investigated further, including an analysis of why Brazil does (not) meet this expectation, as will be discussed in the next chapters.

This chapter highlighted the importance of UNASUR for Brazil's vision for democracy promotion in South America. It demonstrated how and why Brazil enabled the development of a democracy promotion framework in UNASUR, which was envisaged to rival existing mechanisms for democracy promotion (most importantly of the OAS). While Brazil's role in the creation of UNASUR's democracy promotion framework demonstrates Brazil's willingness to lead democracy promotion in South America and underscores its commitment to a consensual hegemonic leadership strategy, the next chapter will look at Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion in practice in three issue areas.

CHAPTER 6 - The Bolivian issue – A success story for UNASUR

Since its creation, UNASUR has witnessed several democratic crises in its member states, which include (perceived) disruptions of democracy in Bolivia (2008), Ecuador (2010), Paraguay (2012), Venezuela (since 2013) and Brazil (2016). Chapter 6 analyses the democratic crisis in Bolivia, which was regarded as a success story for UNASUR's first attempt of democracy promotion in a member state. The aim of this chapter is to evaluate Brazil's capacity and willingness to lead regional democracy promotion in Bolivia through UNASUR, and to demonstrate the opportunities of Brazil's strategy of consensual hegemony in this particular issue.

This chapter consists of three main parts: First, it deals with the constitutional crisis and conflict of the Pando region in 2008. Second, it evaluates the response of the two main regional organizations that became actively involved in this case: the OAS and UNASUR. And third, it analyses Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion through UNASUR.

However, before discussing the political crisis and the regional response to it, the events need to be put into the context of Bolivia's turbulent history and its relatively recent process of re-democratization.

Historical contextualization of the constitutional crisis

Bolivia's political crisis in 2008 needs to be put into the perspective of a history of inequality, political instability, and struggle over resources. Built on a history of colonialism, Bolivia experienced a 16-years long war of independence from Spain (1809 - 1825). After independence Bolivia unified with Peru to build the Peru-Bolivia confederation which fought wars against almost all its neighbours (1836-1839). When the confederation fell apart, Bolivia went through a history of short-lived governments and coups. While Bolivia struggled economically it also lost its coast to Chile in the War of the Pacific (1879–83).

Bolivia's political history led to structural inequalities between ethnic groups. The living and working conditions for the indigenous population of Bolivia and the descendants of the Spanish were very unequal. During the Great Depression, Bolivia faced an increase in strikes and political unrest. In the midst of political turmoil, a military junta ruled Bolivia for a year in 1930, before new elections took place. The Chaco War (1932–1935) between Bolivia and

Paraguay, in which Bolivia lost a lot of land and lives, weakened the ruling elites. Indigenous people that had been fighting in the war became active in social movements after the war. New political parties were formed, such as the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) (Pateman & Cramer, 2006, p. 25).

In 1936 a military coup overthrew the government, whose popular support soon faded. In 1940 Peñaranda, a general of the former regime was elected president. The pressure to reform Bolivia grew. In 1943 the MNR formed an alliance with a military group (Radepa), overthrew Peñaranda and installed Gualberto Villaroel as the new president. The government of Villaroel tried to get support from the indigenous population. However, most of the promised reforms were not put in place. In 1946 Villaroel was overthrown because of a lack of public support and rivalry between the MNR and the military.

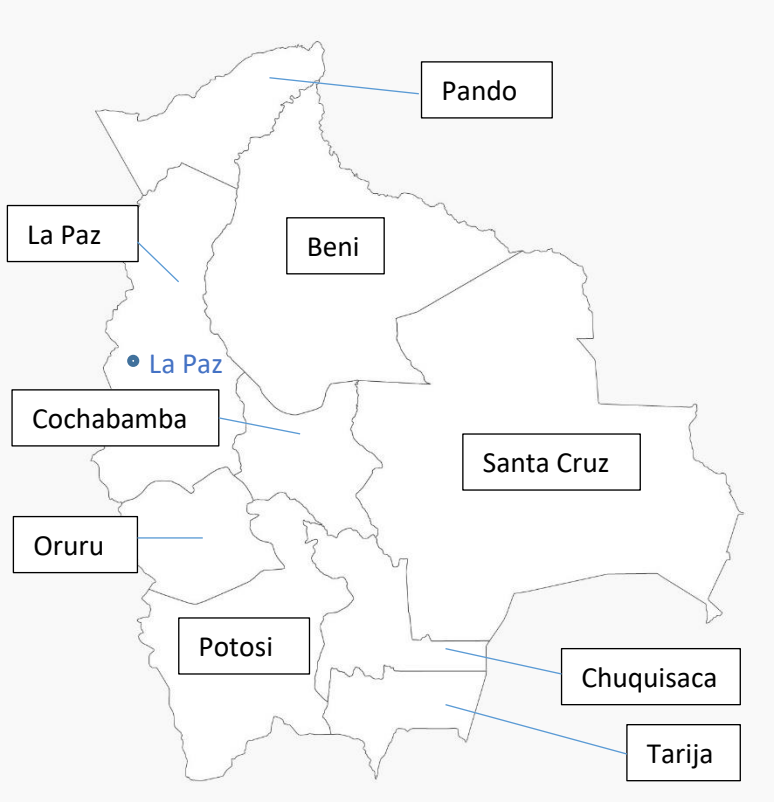
In the years before the revolution, the economy declined, and social tensions grew. During World War II tin from Bolivia's mines was in high demand. With the end of the war, the price and demand dropped with dire economic consequences for the working class. Amidst the continuing economic decline, the MNR initiated a revolution in 1952 and armed the civilian population (such as the workers in the mines). The army was defeated, and Paz Estenssoro became president. During his presidency, Indigenous people gained the right to vote, a land reform was implemented, and mines were nationalized.

The MNR was in power for 12 years, before the next military coup happened. What followed were different military regimes in the 1960s and 1970s. Only in 1982 Bolivia returned to democracy and Estenssoro became president for the third time (Pateman & Cramer, 2006, p. 27).

After a period of neoliberal reforms (including privatizations and cutting of social benefits, linked to an effort to pay Bolivia's debt to international creditors) in the 1990s, public protests increased. Indigenous groups demanded more economic and social rights. Bolivia's society was divided into two camps: a left-wing indigenous bloc (made up of workers and peasant organizations in La Paz, Cochabamba, Oruro, Potosi and Chuquisaca) and an eastern-bourgeois bloc (made up of representatives of the agroindustry, finance and oil industry in Santa Cruz, Tarija, Pando and Beni). The government of Carlos Mesa (2003-2005) tried to mediate the divided interests, but failed (J. R. Webber, 2010). This led to the election of Evo Morales in 2005, a former coca worker and first indigenous president of Bolivia. Morales, a member of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) was then re-elected in 2009 with 64 percent of the vote. Morales' politics were centred on socialist policies, indigenous activism, and opposition to

neoliberalism. While his policies were popular among indigenous groups, opposition came from the eastern provinces (Kohl & Bresnahan, 2010).

Figure 6 - Map of regional provinces of Bolivia



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Given that 61 percent of the population of Bolivia identified themselves as indigenous, Morales could count on a large support base. However, Webber argues that while Morales' government was seemingly acting on behalf of indigenous workers and peasants, the indigenous population continued to be subjugated in the interests of the country's economic elite (J. R. Webber, 2016). With regard to the mining sector, little changed, allowing for workers' exploitation by transnational firms. Environmental laws continued to be weak, thereby affecting the livelihoods of the indigenous population (Andreucci & Radhuber, 2017).

While division along ethnic lines seem to be characteristic of some of the issues that the Bolivian society is facing today, it has been pointed out that ethnic conflicts are rather a symptom rather than a cause of these tensions. As argued by Crabtree and Whitehead (2008, p. 255), regional loyalties and conflicts over natural resources are what divides Bolivian society into different camps. As pointed out by Barragan (2008, p. 101), the western provinces

(inhabited by mainly indigenous groups), which were heavily taxed on their mining revenue, helped facilitate investments in the eastern provinces, where tax revenues from the hydrocarbon sector stayed to a larger percentage within the region, thereby leading to tensions between the eastern and western provinces.

High value natural resources can be a catalyst for the politicization of ethnic identity, and in the case of Bolivia, of indigenous identity. The prevalence of valuable resources can thereby accelerate social tensions between groups because the stakes of confrontation between identities are higher (Mähler & Pierskalla, 2015). Especially the political crisis of 2008 seems to support that claim, where regions and their access to resources played a key role in the conflict.

6.1. The Bolivian constitutional crisis in 2008

In 2008, tensions escalated between the national government and eastern provinces of Bolivia, where the local government was led by opposition parties (Sanchez, 2015). The eastern provinces of Bolivia where most of the country's gas is produced,[60] demanded greater political and economic autonomy, threatening to secede from Bolivia. The autonomy movement of one of the eastern provinces (namely Santa Cruz), where a privileged group struggled for emancipation, created a collective identity that could be mobilized for political gains (Flesken, 2018). Similar movements took hold in other provinces in the east of Bolivia.

In a referendum in May and June 2008, four provinces (Beni, Pando, Tarija, and Santa Cruz), commonly referred to as Media Luna, voted for autonomy. The referendum was considered unconstitutional by the national government. Before the referendum took place, a new law had been adopted, which stated that provincial referenda could only be initiated by Congress and not by regional governments.

Shortly after the referendum, the eastern provinces of Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando, Tarija protested against the draft of a new constitution which had been proposed by the president Evo Morales in August 2008. The new constitution would have allowed the state to redirect tax revenues from hydrocarbons, to redistribute petroleum royalties, to speed up land reform and to create a

[60] The revenues of the gas sector vary significantly from year to year. In 2007, the gas sector accounted for 20.4 percent of Bolivia's GDP (Weisbrot & Sandoval, 2008). Gas is also Bolivia's main good for export.

different legal system for the indigenous population. Morales secured 67 percent of approval in a national referendum on the revised constitution (Romero, 2008) but faced strong opposition against the draft in the eastern provinces.

During the protests some governmental buildings were occupied, and police clashed with protesters. Morales sent the army to the eastern provinces to protect the oil and gas production plants. Shortly thereafter, in September 2008 the opposition (who governed the eastern provinces) threatened to cut off oil and gas exports to Brazil and Argentina. The protests continued, national gas company grounds were occupied and damaged by the protesters. As a response, Morales sent further military troops to the eastern provinces, and fights between pro-opposition and pro-government groups in the Pando region escalated, in which around 30 people were killed.

Morales declared a state of emergency for the region of the Pando, authorizing martial law. He accused the opposition of plotting against the government and orchestrating a massacre against (indigenous) farmers. The opposition countered that the pro-Morales farmers were in fact armed groups. The army arrested several people, among them the governor of the Pando, who had been accused of hiring Peruvian and Brazilian mercenaries in the fight against the pro-government groups (Romero, 2008).

As the crisis deepened, several international and regional actors tried to intervene and assist mediation between the government and opposition, such as the OAS and UNASUR. However, the talks between the government and the opposition proved to be difficult. Morales declined the call of the eastern provinces for autonomy. Furthermore he expelled the US ambassador, accusing the US of supporting the opposition and threatening the country's unity (McDermott, 2008).

Accompanied by UNASUR's mediation mission in Bolivia, the government and the opposition started negotiations over the draft of the new constitution. At the end of September 2008, both conflict parties agreed to hold a referendum on the constitution and early elections. Morales furthermore declared that he would not run for a third term if he were re-elected for a second term in 2009.

In January 2009, 60 percent of the population voted in favour of a new constitution. The constitution changed Bolivia from a Republic to a Plurinational State, which recognized

indigenous groups' collective cultural and political rights (Centellas, 2013, p. 88) and replaced some of the state institutions. The National Congress, for example, was replaced by the Plurinational Legislative Assembly, which included indigenous representatives. Previously, indigenous organizations and movements had been represented indirectly through political parties like the MAS but had no direct representation (op.cit. p. 97).

Despite these changes, some have argued that the new constitution reflected a symbolic rather than a practical empowerment of Bolivia's indigenous population, since indigenous rights were secondary to the state's right to extract natural resources for national development (Lalander, 2017). The constitution also increased the power of provincial governments in the jurisdiction of several policy areas (such as human development, energy, regulation of NGOs, foreign investment among others), which means that indigenous communities are de-facto subordinated to provincial governments (Centellas, 2013, p. 104).

In December 2009, Morales was elected for a second term, with around 60 percent of the vote. In May 2013, Bolivia's Supreme Court ruled that Morales could seek a third term in office. Despite the two-term limit in the constitution, the court argued that Morales' first term did not count, because the constitution was changed during his term. In October 2014 Morales was re-elected president of Bolivia. In a referendum in 2016, Bolivians voted against Morales' intention to run for a fourth term in office. However, the public will, and the term limits of the constitution were overruled by the constitutional court. Limits to re-election were declared unconstitutional. Thereby the court undermined the constitution of 2009, which had resulted from a compromise between government and opposition in the 2008 crisis (Verdugo, 2017).

While the Pando conflict, the associated public riots and the disagreement regarding the constitutional changes could be solved by peaceful means, the desire of Morales for further extension of his presidential terms and the undermining of national referenda and the constitution, demonstrated a hollowing out of the Bolivian democratic system.

The peaceful resolution of the Pando conflict and the constitutional crisis was aided by the involvement of regional organizations that tried to mediate between the conflicting parties. The next section looks at the mediation efforts of two regional organizations, the OAS and UNASUR, which competed for influence in regional democracy promotion.

6.2. The Bolivian constitutional crisis, the OAS and UNASUR

When the Media Luna eastern provinces drafted their own constitution and protested against La Paz, the OAS sent a mission to Bolivia in support of Morales and asked for the respect of constitutional order. However, the OAS did not manage to de-escalate the tensions or to prevent the violent protests that followed (Tussie, 2015, p. 78).

Upon the request by Morales, a "group of friends" formed by Brazil, Argentina and Colombia were invited to mediate between the government and the opposition. However, the efforts also did not solve the conflict and the province of Santa Cruz went ahead with the referendum for autonomy in June 2008, which was rejected by Morales (Morales Martinez & Oliveira de Lyra, 2018).

At the height of the crisis, three days after the violent escalation of the conflict in the Pando region, UNASUR held an ad-hoc council in Santiago de Chile on the 15th of September 2008, which was initiated by the Chilean President Michelle Bachelet, who was holding the UNASUR Pro-tempore Presidency at that time. At the summit, leaders first disagreed about the actions that had to be taken. Hugo Chavez asked for full support of Morales and even offered to send military troops in support (Kersffeld, 2013, p. 195). Chavez supported Morales' claim that a coup against the government was in the making, which was also believed by Rafael Correa (president of Ecuador) and Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner (president of Argentina). Together they advocated more interventionist responses to the crisis. Chavez wanted to send troops to support his "friend Morales". But Lula, jointly with Michelle Bachelet and Alvaro Uribe (president of Colombia), advocated for the facilitation of a negotiation between the opposition and the government. As Lula stressed, mediation by UNASUR would be more effective than intervention (C. Malamud, 2008, p. 4).

The leaders of Argentina, Brazil and Chile prioritized a swift de-escalation of the situation, all of whom were concerned about a potential negative effect on the gas supply from Bolivia. Therefore, their main goal was to ensure stability in Bolivia, while, at the same time ensuring that the eastern provinces would not go ahead with their plans of succession and avoiding (indirect) US intervention through the OAS. The declaration that was issued at the end of the summit was negotiated without the presence of the opposition or civil society. Instead, the 12 members of UNASUR closed ranks in their support of Morales (Tussie, 2015, p. 78).

The UNASUR summit ended with the adoption of the Moneda declaration, in which Brazil and its president Lula played a vital role (Salaverry, 2008). In the Moneda declaration (Declaracion

de La Moneda, 2008) the UNASUR member states expressed their "full support for the constitutional government of President Morales, whose mandate has been ratified by a large majority during the recent referendum" (point 1 of the declaration). Furthermore, they stated that they would not "recognize any situation that implies an attempt of a civil coup, a break of institutional order, or a compromise to the territorial integrity of the Republic of Bolivia" (point 2). In point 3 they stated that they "condemn the attack on government facilities and the public force by groups who intend to destabilize the Bolivian democracy". Point 4 asked for immediate cessation of violence. Point 5 condemned the massacre in the Pando and pointed to the call by Bolivia for UNASUR to build a commission to investigate that matter. The declaration called for dialogue between the conflicting parties. In point 8 and 9 the members agreed to create a commission to accompany a dialogue roundtable and an assisting committee for the government of Bolivia.

In the week after the Moneda declaration had been signed, the head of state of UNASUR met again in New York, during a General Assembly of the United Nations, to discuss the issue of how to help the Bolivian government and opposition in their negotiations. Chavez did not participate in this reunion, because of a visit to China. Bachelet discussed the organization of a commission for dialogue that had been agreed upon in Santiago, which was to be led by former chancellor of Chile Juan Gabriel Valdés. He put an Argentinian advocate Rudolfo Mattarollo in charge of investigating the violent clashes in the Pando region and issuing a report on the fact finding mission (Aruguay & Moreno, 2014, p. 15). Furthermore, Mr Valdes informed the presidents about the dialogue between Morales and the opposition. While he stated that no agreement had been reached yet, he positively commented on the good will of both parties and that nobody would question the integrity and unity of the Bolivian state (C. Malamud, 2008, p. 5).

Given the clear stance that UNASUR took in support of Morales, the Bolivian opposition initially preferred involvement of the OAS instead of UNASUR's mediation. Another point of discrepancy was that the OAS model of democracy was based on a concept of representative democracy[61] as written down in the Inter-American Democracy Charter, while Morales

[61] While representative democracy is a system that is built on the election of representatives by the people, participatory or direct democratic models allow voters to vote directly on some legislation and to participate in more aspects of the policy cycle. In the Bolivian case, the concept of participatory democracy is linked to the recognition of indigenous political systems within the context of a plurinational democratic system. For more details read Schilling-Vacaflor (2010).

advocated a model of participatory democracy (Aruguay & Moreno, 2014). However, despite the initial scepticism by the opposition, it agreed to take part in the UNASUR led mediation.

One week after the killings in the Pando region, UNASUR organized a meeting between Morales and the opposition for reconciliation. The UNASUR fact finding mission of the Pando massacre published its report. The fact that the Bolivian government and opposition worked together through the commissions of UNASUR gave the mediation efforts of UNASUR legitimacy. As Tussie (2015, p. 79) argued, the proceedings also mark an unprecedented turn from the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs, which has a long tradition in the region. However, while the UNASUR mediation mission constitutes an involvement in domestic affairs of Bolivia, it must be noted, that the UNASUR mission was based on an invitation by Morales. This form of "intervention" needs to be clearly distinguished from any intervention that is carried out without the consent of the affected state.

The main achievement of UNASUR was to get the government and the opposition to the negotiations table. The talks over a new constitution lasted for several months. The first meeting between the government and opposition took place on the 18th of September in Cochabamba (three days after the UNASUR emergency summit) and lasted until 5th of October. The Cochabamba talks were observed by UNASUR, the EU, the UN, and the OAS. The main issues that had to be overcome were the demand by the eastern provinces to ensure that the hydrocarbon revenues would mainly benefit their provinces, while the government had to be persuaded to make more substantial changes to the proposal of a new constitution (Aruguay & Moreno, 2014, p. 17).

Further talks ensued between the leaders of the government party (MAS) and the opposition party (PODEMOS) behind closed doors in La Paz, in which the government agreed to make concessions regarding the term-limits for re-election of presidents and the opposition agreed to step back on the demand for regional autonomy. The leaders of the government and opposition agreed on holding elections on the commonly drafted constitution (op.cit. p16).

Given that the government and opposition reached an agreement on a new draft of the constitution and on the holding of early elections in January 2009, the role of UNASUR in the conflict in Bolivia can be interpreted as a successful intervention that demonstrated that the

region of South America could handle domestic crisis collectively, without US intervention. UNASUR reacted quickly at the moment when the conflict escalated into violence, played an important role to de-escalate the tensions, and facilitated dialogue between the government and opposition.

As the Bolivian case was UNASUR's first case of democracy promotion, Salaverry (2008) argued that the crisis in Bolivia was a test case for the institution, which would help to assess whether UNASUR could be a substitute for the OAS. Serbin (2009) argued that the meeting in Santiago was a sign for the diminishing role of OAS in the region. UNASUR decided to send its own team to Bolivia instead of opting for a combined mission with the OAS which was already operating in Bolivia. UNASUR therefore established itself as an independent player vis-à-vis the OAS. While the Secretary General of the OAS was invited to the Santiago summit as an observer to prevent tensions between the two regional blocs, he was mostly presented with an already negotiated outcome (Tussie, 2015, p. 79).

The Brazilian foreign minister voiced his positive assessment of UNASUR as an actor in the Bolivian crisis. He stated that it would have been difficult for the OAS or other external actors to intervene in Bolivia:

> "A few months ago, the political crisis in Bolivia was very serious and it was precisely UNASUR that could act. Perhaps it was more difficult for the OAS, it might have been difficult for action outside of South America, but UNASUR was able to do it" (Amorim, 2009a)[62]

Malamud (2008) argued that at the time of the Bolivian crisis, UNASUR was more an organization for political coordination than for regional integration. At that time, UNASUR had just recently been founded, and neither had a democratic clause nor a permanent headquarters. UNASUR in the case of Bolivia worked based on a set of ad-hoc presidential summits. However, the existence of the organization of UNASUR allowed South American

[62] Original quote in Portuguese: "Há alguns meses, a crise política na Bolívia esteve muito grave e foi justamente a UNASUL que pôde agir. Talvez fosse mais difícil para a OEA, tal vez fosse difícil para uma ação fora da América do Sul, mas a UNASUL pôde fazer isso."

presidential diplomacy to have more weight and a more regular structure for meetings, compared to other forms of summit diplomacy.

The way UNASUR acted highlighted the centrality of presidential diplomacy in the case of mediation in the Bolivian crisis. The Moneda declaration was adopted after negotiations of heads of state behind closed doors. While the process was not transparent and did not include other actors (such as opposition or civil society), the meeting allowed to establish a common ground for the regional reaction to the crisis in Bolivia. While the Moneda declaration did not solve the conflict, it established the framework for how the conflict should be dealt with. As a result, both parties were assured that the conflict was taken seriously, and that the region stood behind the negotiations of the new constitution. By not getting involved in the negotiation itself, but just facilitating the talks between government and opposition, UNASUR did take the role of a mediator, without imposing its vision onto Bolivia.

To summarize, the Bolivian issue demonstrated the capacity of UNASUR to mediate between the government and opposition in an effective way, which de-escalated tensions and resulted in the adoption of a new constitution. The case of Bolivia also highlighted how UNASUR managed to keep the OAS (and US influence) out of the region. As a result, scholars and politicians evaluated UNASUR's involvement positively, which set hopes that UNASUR could become an important regional body for mediation and democracy promotion.

On a more critical note, one needs to highlight that while UNASUR succeeded in solving the immediate constitutional crisis, UNASUR did not manage to address the issue of Morales' clinging to power, which would eventually lead to another political crisis in 2019 that led to Morales' forced resignation (Fisher, 2019).

6.3. The Brazilian strategy and its motivations

This section is divided in two parts. First, it describes how Brazil reacted in the case of the Bolivian crisis based on its consensual hegemonic leadership within UNASUR. Second, it looks at the factors that influenced Brazil's strategy. These factors include enabling and constraining external factors for Brazil's consensual leadership role and factors that influenced Brazil's interest in becoming engaged in the crisis in the first place.

Brazil's actions

As a response to the violence in the Pando region, Brazil issued a statement on the 10th of September 2008 on the "situation of Bolivia", supporting the government of Bolivia and calling for an end of violence and asking all the political actors to respect the democracy and to return to the channels of dialogue:

> "The Brazilian Government is following with great concern the evolution of events in Bolivia and regrets the intensification of violence and acts of disobedience of institutions and the legal order. The Brazilian government stands in solidarity with the constitutional government of Bolivia and hopes that the actions of groups that use violence and intimidation will immediately stop. The Brazilian government urges all political actors to exercise restraint, respect the democratic institutions and reopen the channels of dialogue and consultation in the search for a negotiated and sustainable solution" (Brasilia, 10 September 2008).[63]

As Chilean president Michelle Bachelet called for an ad-hoc summit to discuss the situation in Bolivia, Brazil's president Lula da Silva first voiced his concern about the reunion in Santiago de Chile, stating that it would only make sense to meet if Bolivia was asking for involvement of UNASUR, and that any decision taken without the consent of Bolivia would be an intervention in domestic affairs (Salaverry, 2008).

According to El Pais, Lula set conditions for his travels to Santiago, firstly asking for a truce between the Bolivian government and opposition, and secondly seeking Morales's permission to intervene in the crisis, which he received. Despite his scepticism over the missing agreement between the Bolivian conflicting parties, Lula agreed to take part in the summit after receiving a phone call from Michelle Bachelet. After all, 9 presidents agreed to take part in the meeting. Without Lula's presence the region would have seemed fragmented from the start. When asked about Lula's participation in the summit, a Bolivian opposition leader, the Santa Cruz governor

[63] Orginal quote in Portuguese: "O Governo brasileiro acompanha com grande preocupação a evolução dos acontecimentos na Bolívia e lamenta o recrudescimento da violência e dos atos de desacato as instituições e a ordem legal. O Governo brasileiro se solidariza com o Governo constitucional da Bolívia e espera que cessem imediatamente as ações dos grupos que lançam mão da violência e da intimidação. O Governo brasileiro insta todos os atores políticos a que exerçam comedimento respeitem a institucionalidade democrática e retomem os canais do dialogo e da concertação, na busca de uma solução negociada e sustentável."

Ruben Costas, stated that Brazil was crucial to the solution to the conflict and voiced his hopes in the capacity of Lula to mediate (Delano, 2008).

As pointed out before, the heads of state of UNASUR had different views on the situation in Bolivia, and on how to react to the crisis. Especially Chavez' idea to send troops in support of Morales, which was rejected by Lula and even by Evo Morales, had to be softened in order to reach a consensual agreement within UNASUR. Given the neutral tone of the adopted declaration, the Spanish ambassador Emilio Menéndez del Valle (2008) argued that Lula managed to contain Hugo Chavez' more radical proposals which were mentioned at the meeting of heads of state.[64]

Brazil played a vital role in bridging the divide between the Venezuelan position and other parties, such as Peru and Colombia who were critical of Venezuela's hard-line stance. Chile and Brazil represented a position in between two extremes. However, it was Brazil, and more specifically, Lula's special advisor and his minister of foreign affairs that were credited with bringing consensus and facilitating the final communiqué of UNASUR (Aruguay & Moreno, 2014, pp. 14–15), which presented the uniform regional support for Morales.[65]

The conflict was a test case for Brazilian leadership versus US leadership in the region. Espinosa (2014, p. 45) argues that Brazil played a key role in solving the crisis in Bolivia, using UNASUR as a vehicle and always stressing that any actions in the crisis should only be taken with the consent of Bolivia. While the OAS was also present in the crisis in Bolivia, the relevant institution that Brazil used was UNASUR.

Asked which organization was crucial in solving the Bolivian crisis, former Brazilian foreign minister Celso Amorim stated that "With no doubt, UNASUR was the crucial one. (…) OAS was there symbolically" (Celso Amorim, 18.8.2017, Brasilia). This view is confirmed by a researcher who argued that:

[64] Hugo Chavez had expelled the US ambassador from Venezuela in a move to demonstrate his solidarity with Morales and had presented a speech against imperialism (Delano, 2008).

[65] At the end of the summit, Colombia's president Uribe stated that Colombia would condemn any terrorist behaviour against a democratic country in the region, in the same way that it condemns terrorism within Colombia (abc.es, 2008).

> "Brazil intervened under the banner of UNASUR. The mission was conflicting with the OAS mission. But still, it was useful to have the OAS around, because they are much more institutionalized [than UNASUR]" (Researcher, 11.7.2017. Sao Paulo).

The importance of UNASUR in the crisis of Bolivia is also highlighted by another Brazilian official, who refers to UNASUR's effort in mediating between the opposition and the government:

> "In Bolivia, UNASUR was a very useful tool. The governors of different regions could reach an agreement, and it worked" (Brazilian official A, 28.07.2017, Brasilia).

Lula and his team of advisors played a crucial part in several steps of the mediation. First, the Brazilians managed to create consensus on the issue of Bolivia at the UNASUR summit, which had been characterized by divergent opinion on the appropriate course of action. Brazil succeeded in convincing the heads of state, that mediation in Bolivia would be the most effective strategy to solve the conflict. Second, Lula's participation was important to get the government and the Bolivian opposition on board. While the opposition had initial doubts on the impartiality of UNASUR's mission, it believed in Lula's capacity to bring a balanced solution to the conflict (as argued above).

Lula or Brazil were not leading the mediation officially. The fact-finding mission and monitoring of the talks between the government and opposition were not administered by Brazil. While Brazil laid the groundwork of how to deal with the crisis in Bolivia, the mediation between government and opposition and the fact-finding mission were then carried out under the supervision of Chile and Argentina.

Brazil's involvement in the mediation efforts of UNASUR is consistent with an approach of consensual hegemony, which is characterized through the consensus creation for joint action according to Brazil's vision. Brazil's discourse was centred on the principle of non-intervention which is in line with Brazil's tradition on its regional foreign policy discourse. Brazil's leadership was not overt, but indirect, and focused on not creating an impression of Brazil as imposing itself on the region or on Bolivia. In leaving it up to Argentina and Chile to facilitate the fact-finding mission and the talks between government and opposition, Brazil refrained from leading all aspects of UNASUR's involvement. *This strategy is central to consensual*

hegemony, where other actors can take on leadership roles once the general policy direction has been established by the hegemon.

The central figure in Brazil's foreign policy action was Lula and his team, whose involvement was accepted by the government and opposition in Bolivia. The Bolivian case also demonstrates Brazil's clear preference for working through UNASUR instead of other regional bodies, or instead of working on a bilateral basis.

Brazil's motivations

While the section above highlighted *how* Brazil acted in the Bolivian crisis, this section answers the question *why* Brazil acted in a given way. Brazil's choice of a strategy regards two issues: first, the motivation to mediate in the Bolivian crisis; second, the motivation to work through UNASUR.

Brazil's motivation to mediate in the Bolivian constitutional crisis

Regarding Brazil's motives to get involved in solving the 2008 constitutional crisis, one clear motivational factor that stands out: Brazil's economic interest related to Brazilian gas imports from Bolivia.

Gas is of central importance to the Bolivian economy. The industry had been nationalized three times within eighty years (Miranda, 2008, p. 177) and had been at the centre of bilateral tensions between Bolivia and Brazil. When Morales nationalized the industry in 2006, he gave international investors a six-months period to comply with the new policies, mainly affecting the Brazilian parastatal company Petrobras and the Spanish-Argentinian venture Repsol. Increase of prices for imports of oil and gas would have had a huge impact on Brazil's economy, which relies on Bolivia for half of its gas imports. The economic region of Sao Paulo even gets 75 per cent of its gas supply from Bolivia (Zissis, 2006).

Brazil had previously negotiated successfully with Bolivia to ensure continued operations of Petrobras in Bolivia and to secure gas imports. As the Bolivian opposition threatened to cut gas exports to Brazil and Argentina, the political turmoil in Bolivia represented a direct threat to the Brazilian economy, and especially to the industry in Sao Paolo. Political stability in Bolivia was therefore a key concern of Brasilia. Mauricio Santoro noted "What Brazil buys from Bolivia is an essential resource for the Sao Paulo industry. It is not the biggest trading partner,

but it's the most important one" (Mauricio Santoro, Rio de Janeiro 09.08.2017). Another researcher also stated that "Bolivia is relevant to Brazil because of the gas supply. And there are also lots of Brazilians living across the border" (Researcher, 11.7.2017, Sao Paulo). Brazil shares 3,400 kilometres of border with Bolivia and a number of Brazilian migrants live in the border region.[66]

Because the opposition (Bolivia's eastern provinces) threatened to cut the gas supply to Brazil, Brazil had an interest in solving the conflict as soon as possible and without antagonizing any of the two parties. Brazil was motivated to mediate and to de-escalate tensions. It had to support the government of Morales to ensure stability (and to prevent any secessionist movements) on the one hand, and it had to ensure the opposition that it would take their matters seriously and treat them fairly in order to prevent the opposition from taking any negative measures that could affect gas supply to Brazil.

Another main argument for Brazil's motivation to mediate in the Bolivian crisis is Brazil's goal of keeping US influence out of the region. Through supporting and leading the UNASUR mission, Brazil successfully defended its role as a regional leader against US influence. Keeping the US out of the crisis and side-lining OAS efforts in Bolivia, Brazil could demonstrate not only that the region is able to solve its own conflicts, but that Brazil is able to lead a regional body that is well-functioning and through which it can promote regional stability.

Brazil's motivation to work through UNASUR

The second question is, why Brazil decided to act through UNASUR? There are several factors that can explain why choosing UNASUR was a favourable option for Brazil:

First, UNASUR offered Brazil the opportunity for presidential diplomacy and to use its strategy of consensual hegemony. Through creating regional consensus on joint action through UNASUR Brazil did not risk being accused of acting in a hegemonic way. As has been highlighted by Brazilian officials, UNASUR was a useful tool. Under the umbrella of UNASUR, the divergent regional opinions could be channelled into a coherent regional response that followed Brazil's mediation strategy.

[66] The exact number of Brazilian immigrants is not known. Based on data provided in the report of the International Organization of Migration, Brazilian nationals were the second largest group of immigrants after Argentinians, and amounted to a population of 15,000 registered Brazilian migrants in 2001 who were mainly living in the region of Santa Cruz, Cochabamba and La Paz (Morato, 2011, p. 31).

Second, working through UNASUR also dispersed any claims of intervention into domestic affairs. By emphasising that Bolivia, and more specifically Morales, had asked for the help of UNASUR, and that UNASUR should only intervene with the complete consent of Morales, Lula could maintain that Brazil respected the norm of non-interference.

Third, by working through UNASUR, Brazil could also strengthen its structural power in the region. The case of Bolivia was a test case for UNASUR, a regional body set up for Brazil's regional leadership in South America. UNASUR's success consolidated Brazil's structural power in South America.

Fourth, UNASUR could be used as an institutional framework for mediation that was accepted by both the Bolivian government and the opposition. Since the OAS was perceived as being too heavily influenced by the United States (from the Bolivian government's perspective, but also from Brazil's government's perspective), and Bolivia was not a member of another regional organization in which Brazil would have had strong leverage (such as MERCOSUR), UNASUR was an obvious choice for Brazil's strategy of consensual hegemony in the Bolivian crisis.

To summarize, one can argue that mediating in the crisis through UNASUR had several advantages for Brazil: it allowed Brazil to pursue its strategy of consensual hegemony through working within an institutional framework that underscored Brazil's structural power in the region, that allowed for consensual intervention in Bolivia (thereby respecting the norm of non-intervention in domestic affairs) and that was fitting for a strategy of presidential diplomacy. UNASUR was the ideal playground for Brazil's low-cost leadership, based on consensus creation for a joint South American response to the Bolivian crisis.

The enabling and constraining factors to Brazil's leadership strategy of consensual hegemony

While the sections above highlighted Brazil's *willingness* to promote democracy through UNASUR, this section deals with Brazil's *capacity* to promote democracy and to take a leadership role within UNASUR. In this section the author discusses the domestic, regional, international, and bilateral factors that enabled and constrained Brazil's involvement in the Bolivian crisis.

Domestically, Brazil's political environment was stable. Despite the financial crisis that hit Brazil hard in September 2008 (Sobreira & Paula, 2010), Brazil's economy had been doing well until that point (Barrionuevo, 2008). In 2008, Lula's approval ratings in Brazil were up to 70 percent, which made him the most popular Brazilian president since 1990 (Balakrishnan, 2008). Brazil's economic success under Lula's presidency enabled an environment that would render the followership of Brazil's example by other governments in the region more appealing.

Regionally, the turn to the left or "pink tide" had created a relatively homogenous ideological environment, with centre-left to far-left governments in power. In 2008, the presidents of Argentina (Fernandez de Kirchner), Chile (Bachelet), Brazil (Lula), Venezuela (Chavez), Bolivia (Morales), Ecuador (Correa), Paraguay (Lugo), Peru (García), Uruguay (Vázquez), and Colombia (Uribe) were members of left-wing or centre-left parties. Despite the fact, that they differed in terms of their policies and their positions on a scale of centre-left (Uribe) to far left (Chavez), the region experienced the greatest ideological coherence during this time.

The regional environment can therefore be characterized as an environment of solidarity between governments. This is a political environment that welcomed Brazil's involvement in regional affairs. The regional solidarity between governments in power was therefore prone to a strategy of consensual hegemony. The support of Bachelet (Chile) and Uribe (Colombia) of Lula's position (to mediate between the government and opposition) was important to allow him to swing the opinion of other heads of state who had been in favour of more direct intervention. Other states, like Argentina, were concerned about the gas supply and had a high interest in resolving the crisis. Generally, the region was interested in countering secessionist movements against leftist governments. One can therefore argue that the region was united through the overlap of their interest in solving the crisis swiftly and in preserving the integrity of the Bolivian state.

Another factor that favoured Brazil's role on the regional level, was the respect for Lula and his regional vision. As has been described in Chapter 4, Lula enjoyed a high level of respect among fellow governments in South America.

Internationally, one can attest an increasing absence of the United States in South American affairs. While the OAS did send a team to Bolivia, US interference was highly contested by Morales (as highlighted by the expulsion of the US ambassador). The relative absence of the US left the field open for Brazil's involvement.

On a bilateral level, one can observe a positive relationship between the leaders of Brazil and Bolivia. While the relationship between the two countries had not been without conflict (as the past conflict over Brazilian companies' access to Bolivia's petroleum sector shows), Lula and Morales had a good relationship. Lula's involvement was welcomed by Morales and by the opposition.

In this sense, the case of the crisis in Bolivia takes place in a domestic, regional, international, and bilateral environment which was conducive to Brazil's strategy of consensual hegemony.

To conclude, the case of Brazil's democracy promotion in Bolivia demonstrates how Brazil used UNASUR as an institutional mantle for its consensual hegemonic leadership approach in democracy promotion. Brazil showed the willingness (based on its security and economic interests) to get involved in mediating in the crisis, while using the regional organization of UNASUR as a tool to adhere to the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs. Despite the absence of a democratic clause, UNASUR provided a good platform for Brazil's strategy of mediation and presidential diplomacy, which took place in a domestic, regional and international environment that was favourable for Brazil's idea-based, low-cost leadership approach.

The case of Bolivia demonstrates the successful implementation of democracy promotion by Brazil through consensual hegemony in UNASUR. It is an important example that demonstrated how Brazil could potentially substitute democracy promotion efforts by the OAS and by the United States. However, the success of Brazil in mediating and de-escalating the Bolivian constitutional crisis needs to be compared to other examples of democracy promotion (in Paraguay and Venezuela), to see how Brazil acted in different circumstances, whether its strategy was successful, and why.

CHAPTER 7 The Paraguayan issue – Invoking the democratic clause

This chapter deals with the political crisis in Paraguay in 2012, when the president Fernando Lugo was impeached, and regional organizations sanctioned Paraguay by suspending its membership. The Paraguayan case offers the researcher the opportunity to analyse UNASUR's response to a democratic crisis in one of its smallest member states. Furthermore, the case allows the researcher to study Brazil's capacity and willingness to promote democracy in the context of different domestic, regional, and bilateral circumstances. First, the Paraguayan case took place during the administration of Dilma Rousseff, which permits the analysis of changes compared to the Lula administration (which was in power during the case of Bolivia). Second, UNASUR had already added a democratic clause to its constitutive treaty as the political crisis in Paraguay unfolded, which offered additional tools for democracy promotion and sanctioning. And third, this case is an example of how Brazil acted in a perceived case of democratic disruption in a neighbouring state, which is and was closely dependant on Brazil as an economic partner.

After a short historical contextualization, the chapter discusses the political events of the impeachment, before moving to a discussion of the regional response (with special emphasis on the regional organizations of MERCOSUR and UNASUR), and finally the analysis of Brazil's strategy, its motivations and the enabling and constraining factors regarding Brazil's strategy.

Historical contextualization of the Paraguayan political crisis

Paraguay's political history is turbulent and characterised by political instability and authoritarianism. In 1870 Paraguay lost the War of the Triple Alliance (Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay), in which it had to give up 25 percent of its territory and in which half of the population died. In the following years Paraguay went through a period of instability and experienced three civil wars. After the civil wars, the Colorado party was the single political force that ruled Paraguay between 1887 and 1904. In the years between 1904 and 1940 the Liberal Party was governing Paraguay. During that time, the Chaco War with Bolivia (1932-1935) destabilized the weak political institutions, which led to the takeover by the military in 1940. Six years later, the Colorado Party returned to power, based on its close ties with the

military. In 1954, the General Alfredo Stroessner, who had been a member of the Colorado Party, staged a military coup which was the start of his repressive 35 years long dictatorship (Beittel, 2010, p. 1).

Paraguay's long history of dictatorship ended in 1989. After the end of the dictatorship, Paraguay had been governed by the Colorado party for 61 years. Transition to democracy was not smooth and some of the structural legacies of the Stroessner dictatorship impacted the process of democratization. Because of the authoritarian past, state institutions were weak and corruption widespread. As argued by Carreras (2012), despite the introduction of new institutions and changes in the constitution in 1992, the transformation from an authoritarian rule to a democracy was not completed.

Corruption proved to be one of the main issues of the new democracy. Ezquerro-Cañete & Fogel (2017) argue the Paraguayan state under the Colorado Party was acting "predatory" in the sense that it was confusing state interests with party interests. Public property such as state-owned land was sold for own profit during the Stroessner dictatorship and continued to be sold under the Colorado government. During Stroessner's land reform, public land was sold for cheap prices to elites close to Stroessner. Part of that land was then resold for an expensive price to Brazilian and other foreign companies (op. cit. p. 282).

In 2008, the candidate of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) Fernando Lugo won Paraguay's presidential elections with around 40 percent of the votes, thereby ending the long-continued governing of the Colorado Party. Lugo, a former Roman Catholic bishop, was known as "bishop of the poor" because of his work with poor communities. Since 2006 he had been vocal against the government and active in civil society. Entering politics as an outsider, he was endorsed by an alliance of opposition parties, the Patriotic Alliance for Change (Alianza Patriótica para el Cambio - APC). The position of vice president was held by Federico Franco of the Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PLRA).

Lugo ran his election campaign on the promise of land and agrarian reform, the fight against corruption, and improved education and health care policies. Moreover, he had advocated for the renegotiation of the Itaipu and Yacyretá treaties with Brazil and Argentina, that concerned Paraguay's supply of hydroelectric power to these two countries (Beittel, 2010, p. 4).

Lugo's support within Paraguay's political institutions was short-lived. In his second year in office, calls emerged for Lugo's impeachment. The Alianza Patriótica para el Cambio began to dissolve because it had lost the support of the Authentic Radical Liberal Party, and Lugo faced strong opposition in Congress, including criticism by his vice president. The right-wing opposition had a majority in both chambers of the legislature, which made it difficult for the government to implement reforms. Lugo's supporters from the left only held six out of 80 seats in the lower house and three out of 45 seats in the Senate (Lambert, 2012b). Since early 2009, the opposition gathered support for an impeachment, however, it did not manage to find a convincing reason to move forward with the proposal (Wachendorfer, 2011, p. 2).

Lugo's public popularity also waned. In 2009, polls indicated that Lugo was one of the least popular presidents in South America, which might have been linked to a scandal regarding his fathering of children during his work as a catholic priest (Keating, 2009). The fight against corruption also did not bear any fruit in the eyes of the population. According to The Corruption Perceptions Index of 2009, Paraguay was ranked 154 out of 180 countries worldwide, similar to Venezuela which was ranked 162 (Transparency International, 2009).

Despite the challenges, Lugo's government did manage to fulfil some of his election promises. Health care was reformed and a cash transfer program for the poor was introduced. In July 2009, Lugo found an agreement with Brazil's president Lula to increase the prices paid for Paraguay's export of hydropower. The Itaipu treaty had previously forced Paraguay to export excess capacities to Brazil for a fixed price. The new agreement allowed Paraguay to sell its capacities at market rates, which meant an increase of the price by 200 percent.

While Brazil had long declined to renegotiate the deal, it is argued that Lula agreed to increase the price in order to support the struggling government of Lugo, in the face of political instability in Honduras and Venezuela's attempt to influence the region (Barrionuevo, 2009).

However, the renegotiation of the Itaipu deal failed to bring lasting support for Lugo. He failed to implement a substantial land reform, which was demanded by his voters. Hurdles to the implementation of a land reform were the strong opposition by the Colorado party and wealthy interest groups (such as the Rural Associate of Paraguay and predominantly Brazilian soy producers) and lack of political will on the government's side (Wachendorfer, 2011, p. 3).

The unresolved issue of land reform proved to be central to political tensions in Paraguay. Land ownership continued to be very unequal. According to data from the Agricultural Ministry of

Paraguay of the year 2008, 79 percent of the fertile land is in the hands of only 1.6 percent of landowners, who own the largest farms. The smallest landholders (20 hectares or less), which are quite numerous (83,5 percent) own only 4 percent of the agricultural land (Ezquerro-Cañete & Fogel, 2017, p. 281).

Discussions about land redistribution concerned mainly "tierra mal habida" (ill-gotten land), which is land that was acquired during the Stroessner dictatorship. While the redistribution of "tierra mal habida" was a popular idea, the process of distribution proved to be difficult. Only in a few cases was land successfully bought by the state and redistributed (Hetherington, 2012). Lugo's inability to address the issue of land reform in combination with the government's weak position in the legislature, provided a political environment in which Lugo's support in Paraguay's political institution was increasingly crumbling.

7.1. The impeachment of President Fernando Lugo

On the 15th of June 2012, in the district of Curuguaty, a small province in the east of Paraguay close to the Brazilian border, landless peasants clashed with police forces that tried to evict them from private land, that they had occupied for over a month. About 300 policemen had been sent to the remote region to evict around 100 farmers. The peasants were camping on the land owned by Blas Riquelme, a Colorado party member, who had obtained the land during the Stroessner dictatorship and whose ownership of the land was later confirmed in a court decision (which the Lugo government had tried to overturn unsuccessfully) (Associated Press, 2012b). During the clashes, more than ten farmers and seven policemen were killed, and 80 people injured. As a response, Lugo sent the military to support the police forces in the region (CNN, 2012).

Following the peasant protests, the Paraguayan Congress voted to start an impeachment process against President Fernando Lugo over his handling of the protest. On the 21st of June, the Chamber of Deputies voted 76-1 in favour of an impeachment proceeding, stating "bad performance of his functions" as the reason for impeachment (linked to article 225 of the Paraguayan Constitution). The charges included inability to address insecurity (regarding the land occupation in the Curuguaty), and after the clashes he was accused of acting with negligence, ineptitude and incapacity to act decisively (Lambert, 2012b).

President Lugo and his lawyers were given only 24 hours to prepare his defence. The quick trial before the Senate the next day resulted in the approval of the impeachment, with 39 votes to 4 votes (with two abstentions) (Associated Press, 2012a). With immediate effect, vice-president Federico Franco of the Liberal party took over the presidency to serve the remaining ten months of Lugo's term.

The impeachment happened only 9 months before general elections would have taken place. Hetherington (2012) argues that Lugo's presidency was accompanied with calls for his ouster since the beginning of his term. Only hours after the incident in the district of Curuguaty, the soybean industry lobby asked for his dismissal. This time, Lugo's party could not count on the support of allies in Congress. The greatest weakness of Lugo was that he did not control a party of his own and therefore did not have the necessary support in either the Senate or the Chamber of Deputies. In fact, Lugo's impeachment happened due to the weakness of the coalition government, where the left-wing alliance was relying on the support of the PLRA, which had different political aims and had just teamed up with the APC because of the PLRA's rivalry with the Colorado Party (Marsteintredet et al., 2013, p. 113).

Lugo accepted the impeachment, even though he stated publicly that the impeachment had deeply wounded Paraguay's democracy (Telegraph, 2012). Domestically there was relatively little public opposition to Lugo's impeachment. Despite some protests in Asuncion and in the countryside, massive support for Lugo was missing. The media supported the impeachment and criticized the regional response in South America (Lambert, 2012b), where governments strongly criticized the impeachment proceedings and acted with quick measures by suspending Paraguay from both MERCOSUR and UNASUR (as will be discussed in more detail in the next section).

After 9 months of interim government, elections took place in April 2013, in which the candidate of the Colorado party Horacio Manuel Cartes was elected president of Paraguay with 45.8 percent of the vote.[67] He took office in August the same year. Paraguay was also readmitted to MERCOSUR and UNASUR in the same month.

[67] The liberal candidate Pedro Efraín Alegre got 36.9 percent of the votes. Lugo's supporters split up before the elections, and the candidate endorsed by Lugo only got 3.4 percent of the vote. The election result mirrored the

7.2. The regional response to the impeachment

As the impeachment trial loomed, the Paraguayan government turned to UNASUR and asked for support (Abente Brun, 2012, p. 166). Following the announcement of Lugo's potential impeachment by congress, the heads of state of UNASUR met in Brazil for an emergency meeting.[68]

At the meeting, which was attended by Dilma Rousseff, Bolivia's president Evo Morales, Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos, Chilean president Sebastian Piñera, Ecuadorian president Rafael Correa, the president of Uruguay José Mujica and the foreign ministers of Argentina, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Surinam and Venezuela, it was decided that a team of foreign ministers would be send to Asuncion to observe the impeachment process. Following the meeting, the Brazilian foreign minister Patriota reiterated the importance of Paraguay's stability and democratic order:

> "The presidents expressed their conviction that stability and full respect for Paraguay's democratic order should be preserved, observing full compliance with constitutional provisions and ensuring the right to defence and due process" (Armendariz, 2012).[69]

Before flying to Asuncion, Patriota also compared the defence of democracy in Paraguay, to the defence of democracy in South America more generally:

> "The presidents consider that the countries of Unasur achieved democracy with great effort and, in that sense, we all must be extreme defenders of the democratic integrity in South America" (Armendariz, 2012).[70]

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low popularity of Lugo at the end of his term. The Colorado party also won a majority in Congress (BuenosAiresHerald, 2013).

[68] At that time Paraguay had held the Pro-tempore Presidency of UNASUR, which explains why the meeting did not take place in the country holding the Pro-tempore Presidency, but in Brazil instead.

[69] Patriota's quote in Spanish: "Los presidentes expresaron su convicción de que se debe preservar la estabilidad y el pleno respeto al orden democrático de Paraguay, observando el pleno cumplimiento de los dispositivos constitucionales y asegurando el derecho de defensa y el debido proceso."

[70] Patriota's quote in Spanish: "Los presidentes consideran que los países de la Unasur conquistaron con mucho esfuerzo la democracia y, en ese sentido, todos debemos ser defensores extremos de la integridad democrática en América del Sur."

The UNASUR delegation not only observed the impeachment process, but also tried to push the opposition to grant Lugo a fair process in meetings with the Vice-president Franco and members of Congress on the day before the impeachment trial. While the UNASUR presence was not rejected, the members of Congress who met the delegation refused to change course on the impeachment process. As argued by Abente Brun (2012, p. 166), the visit was an act of pressure rather than an act of mediation, which proved to be ineffective. Considering that the UNASUR delegation was made up of representatives of left-wing governments who came to Paraguay to support a fellow left-wing administration, UNASUR was unlikely to be considered an impartial mediator in the conflict.

After Lugo was impeached, the regional reaction was overall negative. However, some heads of state were more vocal in their opposition than others. Argentina, Ecuador and Venezuela adopted the position that the impeachment was in fact a coup d'état. Argentinian president Cristina Fernandez said that Argentina "would not validate the coup" in Paraguay. Ecuadorian president Correa stated that "The Ecuadorian government will not recognise any president that isn't Fernando Lugo", adding that "We will not lend ourselves to these tales of alleged legal formalities, which clearly attack democracy." Hugo Chavez announced that "We, the Venezuelan government, the Venezuelan state, do not recognize this illegitimate and illegal government that has been installed" (as cited in BBC, 2012a). Furthermore, Chavez drew comparisons between the impeachment of Lugo and the coup in Honduras in 2009 when President Zelaya was ousted. As a direct sanction, Chavez suspended oil exports to Paraguay (Lambert, 2012a).

The governments of Chile and Colombia were more soft-spoken in their critique of the impeachment. They criticized the fact that Lugo did not have enough time to prepare his defence (BBC, 2012a). While Colombia rejected the speed with which Lugo had been impeached, it did not see the impeachment process as a violation of democratic order (Borda, 2014, p. 231). Also, Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff assumed a rather discrete position and did not speak of a coup (Souto, 2012, p. 14).

The different rhetoric towards the situation in Paraguay was also mirrored in different diplomatic responses. While Argentina, Ecuador and Venezuela withdrew their ambassadors

from Asuncion, Colombia, Uruguay, Chile, Peru and Brazil called their ambassadors for consultations (MercoPress, 2012).

In contrast to the South American regional solidarity with Lugo, the United States opted for a neutral position. US State Department spokeswoman Darla Jordan said: "We urge all Paraguayans to act peacefully, with calm and responsibility, in the spirit of Paraguay [sic!] democratic principles" (BBC, 2012a). Because the United States did not interpret the events as a coup, it also recognized the interim government (Lindsay, 2013), contrary to the governments in South America.

One week after the impeachment, MERCOSUR and UNASUR held a joint summit in Mendoza, Argentina on the 29th of June 2012, at which both democratic clauses were activated, and Paraguay was suspended from both organizations. The suspension was to be upheld until new elections would take place (which were envisioned for 2013 by the interim government, at the end of Lugo's term). Because Paraguay had been holding the Pro-tempore Presidency of UNASUR at the time of impeachment, the Pro-tempore Presidency was then handed over (ahead of schedule) to Peru.

In the declaration, UNASUR stated that it would suspend Paraguay from taking part in the organization, referring to the observations made by the foreign ministers during the trial of Lugo in Asuncion and "Taking into account that the Constitutive Treaty of UNASUR establishes that the full validity of democratic institutions and the unrestricted respect for human rights are essential conditions for the construction of a common future of peace and economic and social prosperity, and for the development of integration processes among Member States. Reaffirming its commitment to the spirit and democratic principles subscribed in UNASUR, MERCOSUR and CELAC" (Decisión N° 26 12012, 2012).[71]

[71] Original quote in Spanish: "Tomando en cuenta que el Tratado Constitutivo de UNASUR establece que la plena vigencia de las instituciones democráticas y el respeto irrestricto a los derechos humanos son condiciones esenciales para la construcción de un futuro común de paz y prosperidad, económica y social y el desarrollo de los procesos de integración entre los Estados Miembros. Reafirmando su compromiso con el espíritu y los principios democráticos suscritos en UNASUR, MERCOSUR y la CELAC."

As the reason for suspension, the communique mentioned "the non-fulfillment of the right to due process and failure to comply with sufficient guarantees for the right to the defense of the President under political judgment", which would imply "a clear violation of the principles and values that sustain the process of integration of UNASUR" (op.cit.).[72]

In contrast to UNASUR and MERCOSUR, the OAS took the decision not to suspend Paraguay. The OAS just expressed its concern and decided to send an observation mission to Paraguay, which would monitor the political situation, keep member states updated and support the preparation of the 2013 election (Marsteintredet et al., 2013, p. 115).

The regional condemnation of the impeachment also differs from the academic reading of the events. While the region of South America interpreted the impeachment as an "impeachment coup", or "parliamentary coup" (Lambert, 2012a) and violation of democratic principles, the event has been classified by Marsteintredet et al. (2013, p. 111) as "interrupted presidency" or "presidential breakdown", which is defined as a presidency in which "an elected incumbent is forced to make an extraordinary exit from power before the end of a constitutionally fixed term" (op. cit.). In contrast to coups, the end of the presidential term does not go along with the end of the democratic order. Moreover, it is argued that interrupted presidencies are a common incident and have become the main source of form of presidential instability in the region of Latin America (op. cit).

While the impeachment of Lugo was deemed to be against the statutes of MERCOSUR and UNASUR and led to the suspension from both organizations, Hetherington (2012) argues that the Paraguayan constitution does not provide clear statements on how an impeachment needs to be processed, and therefore the impeachment was "most likely" not unconstitutional. Since the suspension from MERCOSUR and UNASUR was not an inevitable step as had been argued in the official discourse of some South American nations, the question is who was instrumental in facilitating this regional response and why?

[72] Original quote in Spanish: "el incumplimiento del derecho al debido proceso y el no haberse cumplido con las garantías suficientes para el derecho a la defensa del Presidente sometido a juicio político.", "implica una clara violación de los principios y valores que sostienen el proceso de integración de los Estados Miembros de UNASUR."

As argued by Lambert (2016, p. 39) Argentina's president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff were instrumental in the decision to suspend Paraguay from both regional organizations. The decision was supported by many in Latin America. But the solidarity expressed with Paraguayan president Lugo was soon questioned by civil society when Venezuela became a member of MERCOSUR, shortly after Paraguay's suspension. In the Paraguayan media, the actions were condemned as evidence that Brazil and Argentina would override the interests of Paraguay and that Paraguay had no leverage in the bloc.

Brazil and Argentina stressed that the suspension from MERCOSUR was based on a unanimous decision. However, it was reported that the president of Uruguay, Jose Mujica, was not in favour of suspending Paraguay and "was made to comply" (Burges, 2015, p. 201) by Brazil and Argentina. As a way of showing his objection to the decision, he refrained from sitting in the front row alongside Rousseff and Kirchner in the picture taken after the summit (ibid).

MERCOSUR indeed had a vested interest in suspending Paraguay from the organization. Venezuela was admitted to the organization on July 31, just a month after the suspension of Paraguay. Venezuela's membership had been awaiting ratification by Paraguay's Senate for 6 years (Marsteintredet et al., 2013, p. 14), and therefore had practically blocked Venezuela's admission to MERCOSUR.[73] Brazil and Argentina had an interest in Venezuela's admission to the trade bloc, as it meant easier access to Venezuela's market for Brazilian industry and Argentinian agricultural export, and better access to Venezuela's oil supply. Moreover, having Venezuela in the trade bloc could strengthen the influence and relevance of MERCOSUR in the global economy (Marsteintredet et al., 2013, p. 14).

The decision of MERCOSUR to suspend Paraguay was challenged by the Paraguayan interim government, which argued that the presidents of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay were not competent to make the decision for suspension and that such a decision would have needed to be preceded by consultations. More specifically, the Paraguayan interim government challenged the quick suspension process. Moreover, Paraguay claimed that MERCOSUR should not have admitted Venezuela as a new member without the approval of Paraguay. Based

[73] While Lugo had called the Senate to approve Venezuela's admission, the Colorado Party, who held the majority in Congress, had blocked the ratification since they opposed Chavez (MercoPress, 2010).

on the quick suspension of Paraguay from the organization and the admission of Venezuela, Paraguay issued a dispute before the Mercosur Court, claiming that the suspension was void and therefore Venezuela's accession was to be reversed. However, Paraguay's efforts to appeal to the Mercosur court failed. The court concluded that the emergency procedure chosen by Paraguay was not adequate for the case (Vidigal, 2013).

The intervention of MERCOSUR in the political crisis of Paraguay and the accession of Venezuela to the bloc marked a peak of politicization of the organization. Nonetheless, the politicization of the organization did not lead to a broader (public) questioning of the legitimacy of the regional body (A. R. Hoffmann, 2015, p. 70).

While the suspension from UNASUR was not welcomed, the suspension from MERCOSUR was more uncomfortable for Paraguay. Paraguay depends on the MERCOSUR trade bloc for its exports of primary goods to Brazil. Also Paraguay is the main beneficiary of the MERCOSUR infrastructure fund (Recalde & Rocío, 2013, p. 306), to which Brazil provides 70 percent of the budget (De Andrade Correa, 2010, p. 400).

Aside from the suspension (which meant that Paraguay was banned from participating in any decision-making within the organizations), MERCOSUR and UNASUR did not impose any other sanctions against Paraguay. UNASUR did however establish a high-level monitoring commission to follow up on the political process in Paraguay under the leadership of former Peruvian prime- minister Salomón Lerner (as the pro-temporary presidency was held by Peru). A Brazilian diplomat describes the process:

> "The Group collected information on the political and institutional situation in the country, through the Embassies of the South American countries in Asunción, and made arrangements with the Paraguayan electoral body, with a view to sending the UNASUR Electoral Mission to the April 2013 elections. The mission represented an important stage in the return of Paraguay to UNASUR, which was completed with the inauguration of President Horacio Cartes in August 2013. The suspension to Paraguay was lifted at the Paramaribo Summit in November 2013" (Brazilian diplomat A, 10.01.2017, online).[74]

[74] Original quote in Portuguese: "O Grupo coletou informações sobre a situação política e institucional no país, por meio das Embaixadas dos países sul-americanos em Assunção, e realizou gestões junto ao órgão eleitoral

In contrast to Bolivia, the Paraguayan interim government did not agree to any presence of UNASUR during the election in 2013, because UNASUR had not recognized the legitimacy of said government. However, the higher electoral court did authorize the observation missions of UNASUR, the OAS and the European Union (Borda, 2014, p. 231). All three organizations ended up conducting electoral missions during the 2013 general elections in Paraguay. UNASUR sent an unofficial mission because it had not been invited officially by Paraguay. After the elections, all electoral missions (official and unofficial) issued a positive evaluation of the election process.

To summarize the regional response, it must be highlighted that UNASUR and MERCOSUR acted jointly to suspend Paraguay, in a step that was pushed by the governments of Brazil and Argentina. The application of the democratic clauses was a strong step of condemnation of the events in Paraguay which have been questioned by observers who did not interpret the impeachment as a violation of the democratic order. Moreover, Brazil's and Argentina's push for the admission of Venezuela to the regional bloc of MERCOSUR shortly after Paraguay's suspension, was criticized.

It is difficult to say if the actions of UNASUR and MERCOSUR had a direct impact on the political process in Paraguay. The interim government served the end of Lugo's term and elections were held in 2013 as planned. However, through the suspension of Paraguay, UNASUR and MERCOSUR sent the message to Paraguay to follow through with the election process, and it sent a message to opposition groups in South America on how the region would deal with (perceived) unconstitutional impeachments.

7.3.The Brazilian response and its motivations

The following section looks at Brazil's response to the impeachment and the motivations driving Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion through the regional organizations of MERCOSUR and UNASUR. Finally, the enabling and constraining factors regarding Brazil's

paraguaio, com vistas ao envio de Missão Eleitoral da UNASUL ao pleito de abril de 2013. A missão representou etapa importante do retorno do Paraguai à UNASUL, que se completou com a posse do Presidente Horacio Cartes, em agosto de 2013. A suspensão ao Paraguai foi levantada na Cúpula de Paramaribo, em novembro de 2013."

strategy in the Paraguayan case are analysed to explain why Brazil had the capacity to opt for a more slightly more coercive form of democracy promotion.

Brazil's strategy

As a first reaction, Brazil tried to work through the UNASUR delegation to assure that Lugo would receive a fair impeachment process. When this initial strategy failed, which has been described as a way of putting pressure on the Paraguayan opposition, Brazil decided to sanction Paraguay through advocating its suspension from MERCOSUR and UNASUR, jointly with Argentina. Brazil and Argentina had recalled their ambassadors from Asuncion after the impeachment, and Dilma Rousseff announced in a press conference, that Paraguay should be suspended from both MERCOSUR and UNASUR (Daniljuk, 2012).

Brazil worked through MERCOSUR and UNASUR by organizing a joint UNASUR-MERCOSUR meeting in Brazil, and with Argentina organizing a joint meeting in Mendoza. The response to Lugo's impeachment can be described as a team effort that was mainly carried out by the respective presidents.

The Brazilian official position as expressed by the Brazilian foreign minister was in solidarity with Lugo, lamenting the suspension of a "brother nation", however stating that the impeachment constituted an "antidemocratic adventure":

> "A word about Paraguay, a brother nation. It has cost us all a lot to suspend Paraguay from MERCOSUR in compliance with the Democratic Clause of the Ushuaia Protocol. Democracy is an essential condition of South American integration. Always with care and discretion not to take measures that could harm the Paraguayan people, the Heads of State and Government of MERCOSUR gathered in Mendoza to send a message in unison, that there is no space in our region for antidemocratic adventures. Brazil, and I am sure that I express the sentiment of all the other countries of the bloc, would like to see full democratic normality re-established in Paraguay, so that the country can return to MERCOSUR as soon as possible and also to UNASUR" (Patriota, 2012b).[75]

[75] Orgininal quote in Portuguese: "Uma palavra sobre o Paraguai, um país irmão. A todos custou muito suspender o Paraguai dos órgãos do MERCOSUL em cumprimento da Cláusula Democrática do Protocolo de Ushuaia. A democracia é condição essencial da integração sul-americana. Sempre com cuidado e critério para não tomar

As can be read from this message, the focus was on suspension from MERCOSUR. Suspension from UNASUR was an additional measure that helped to legitimize the suspension from MERCOSUR. The case of Paraguay is the first incident where Brazil, jointly with Argentina, advocated for the application of the democratic clause. While the measure was a response in support of Lugo, it was a direct measure against a sitting interim-government. The suspension from MERCOSUR was a strong response to the impeachment, which was a relatively minor incident. While the governments of Brazil and Argentina stressed that these decisions were based on a universal regional understanding of the undemocratic nature of the impeachment, this claim needs to be challenged. While some governments were definitely in accord with Brazil's official position (and some states even went as far as to speak of a coup d'état), there was no immediate consensus to invoke the democratic clauses and to suspend Paraguay.

Burges (2015, p. 202) argues that the case of Paraguay demonstrates "Brazil's willingness to act forcefully in South America to advance its interests", which demonstrates the "(in)direct stick of a masked coercive hegemony". Burges specifically refers to Brazil's and Argentina's pressure on the Uruguayan president Mujica to agree to suspend Paraguay from MERCOSUR. While Brazil's strategy reflects a consensual hegemonic approach in rhetoric, the suspension from MERCOSUR was not as consensual as Brazil made it appear. According to early reports, Mujica had objected to the suspension and protested by sitting in the back row of a press op that was taken with Rousseff and Kirchner (op. cit. p.201). He finally agreed to the suspension after Brazil and Argentina claimed not to impose economic sanctions on the interim government (Rivera, 2013, p. 241).

Dilma Rousseff and her foreign minister Patriota conveyed the image that the suspension had been a straightforward decision, while there had been internal disagreement at Brazil's national level (between the government and the opposition) and within the Itamaraty. As one Brazilian official stated in an interview:

> "In MERCOSUR they agreed that it was a coup. But even in Brazil, there was not a consensus about that conclusion" (Brazilian official A, 28.07.2017, Brasilia).

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medidas que possam prejudicar o povo paraguaio, os Chefes de Estado e de Governo do MERCOSUL, reunidos em Mendonza, enviaram a mensagem, em uníssono, de que não há, na nossa região, espaço para aventuras antidemocráticas. O Brasil, e estou certo de que interpreto o sentimento de todos os demais países do bloco, gostaria de que a plena normalidade democrática se reestabeleça no Paraguai, de modo a permitir que o país possa retornar, o quanto antes, ao MERCOSUL e também à UNASUL."

He furthermore noted that, "Technically it was not a coup d'état. But it is true that it was awkward what happened. That allowed the countries to apply the democratic clause" (Brazilian official A, 28.07.2017, Brasilia).

Another Brazilian official added that the decision "was a combination of political forces at that time" (Brazilian official B, 28.07.2017, Brasilia), rather than a straightforward interpretation of the events in relation to the democratic clause.

The Brazilian government differed in its position compared to Brazil's opposition. Jatobá and Luciano (2018, p. 16) give the example of Deputy Rosinha (PT), who favoured Paraguay's suspension from MERCOSUR. In contrast, Deputy Eduardo Azeredo (PSDB -one of the main opposition parties) was more critical of Paraguay's suspension, especially since Paraguay's suspension enabled Venezuela's admission to MERCOSUR.

The decision to push for Paraguay's suspension from MERCOSUR thus primarily came from leaders of the PT, who acted in solidarity with the left-wing administration of Lugo. While Dilma Rousseff did not stand out as a chief negotiator, her position within the regional organizations was important to push for suspension of Paraguay. In the case of Paraguay, it was the heads of governments that decided on the suspension, most importantly the heads of state of Brazil and Argentina.

While Argentina and Brazil had pushed for suspension from MERCOSUR, the question remains how the two states could convince all members of UNASUR to suspend Paraguay too. In addition to the left-wing members of MERCOSUR, UNASUR at that time was comprised of left-wing governments (Ecuador, Bolivia, Venezuela) and centre-right governments (Colombia and Chile).

Jatobá and Luciano (2018, p. 12) argue that the member states acted upon a "commitment to defend democratic institutions in the South American region." As the Secretary General of UNASUR had stated before the impeachment, an impeachment process that would not follow due process would be a threat to democracy in UNASUR, because Paraguay was holding the Pro-tempore Presidency at the time (Odeen, 2012).

Given that both Argentina and Brazil promoted suspension, and the vast majority of UNASUR governments condemned the "coup" against Lugo, Brazil still had to convince Colombia and Chile to join the left-wing governments in UNASUR for a unanimous regional response. Brazil

(jointly with Argentina) managed to do so, because both Chile and Colombia were critical of the impeachment and were interested in developing a common regional response, rather than an independent foreign policy.

Chile's president Sebastián Piñera stated at a press conference that the impeachment did not follow due process or the right to defence and that he would consult with other heads of state in the region on the appropriate action (Meyer, 2012). The Chilean foreign minister also iterated that the impeachment process did not follow the minimum standards of such a process (Lopez, 2012).

The Colombian president Santos also iterated that he regretted the impeachment, and that he would consult with other South American nations to decide what position to take. On the presidential website he stated that the situation might have constituted an abuse of impeachment proceedings (Alsema, 2012).

While Colombia and Chile were not as quick as other South American nations to condemn the impeachment, they nevertheless were in favour of finding a common regional response through UNASUR. In this sense, Brazil had succeeded in establishing consensual hegemony, as governments were turning to the regional organization of UNASUR for regional cooperation in the case of political instability, as Brazil had intended.

In the case of Paraguay, Brazil adopted a calm discourse (as it did not officially speak of a coup) but promoted clear sanctions in the form of suspension from two regional organizations. In relying on regional mechanisms Brazil continued the appearance of a consensual hegemonic approach to regional democracy promotion. While the decision taken in the context of UNASUR can be seen as a consensual decision, the suspension form MERCOSUR was based on pressure on Uruguay to join the Argentinian and Brazilian strategy. Brazil's strategy in the case of Paraguay therefore points to a more coercive strategy for joint action under the umbrella of the regional organization of MERCOSUR.

Brazil's motivation

What motivated Brazil to advocate Paraguay's suspension from MERCOSUR and UNASUR? According to the Brazilian foreign minister, the application of the democratic clause in the case of Paraguay had a dual purpose:

> "The appeal - measured and proportionate - to the democratic clauses of UNASUR and MERCOSUR, which assume that a country where there is a rupture of the democratic order cannot participate in regional integration processes, has, in reality, a dual purpose: to facilitate the return to the full validity of democracy in Paraguay and to send a clear message that there is no longer room in our region for undemocratic adventures" (Patriota, 2012a).[76]

What is important here is Brazil's intention to "send a clear message". The relatively strict response in the case of Paraguay was intended as a warning for other opposition groups not to follow into Paraguay's footsteps. As argued by a researcher:

> "The response was a disincentive to the opposition in Argentina not to do the same. They wanted to make the case. It is an open question if the impeachment was actually a coup or not" (Researcher, 12.7.2017, Sao Paulo).

The Argentinian opposition had previously voiced that they would consider starting an impeachment against the president Fernandez de Kirchner based on allegations of corruption (MercoPress, 2009). In the Brazilian case, an impeachment in 2016 ended the second term of Dilma Rousseff's presidency. At the time of the impeachment of Lugo, the two leaders were therefore right in sensing that impeachments would constitute potential threats to their own presidencies.

Another reason for Brazil and Argentina to invoke the democracy clause, was the fact that they did not approve of the interim government's political orientation. An EU official argues:

> "There should not have been a breach of the democratic protocol. It was used for political reasons. The right-wing government in Paraguay did not suit Dilma and

[76] Original quote in Portuguese: "O recurso – medido e proporcional – às cláusulas democráticas da UNASUL e do MERCOSUL, que parte do pressuposto de que um país onde haja ruptura da ordem democrática não pode participar dos processos de integração regional, tem, na realidade, um duplo propósito: estimular o retorno à plena vigência da democracia no Paraguai e emitir mensagem inequívoca de que já não há espaço, em nossa região, para aventuras antidemocráticas."

> Kirchner well. (…) you can use these protocols depending on political views. It's not a constant development" (EU official, 31.7.2017, Brasilia).

Further reasons that particularly concern Brazil are its interests in securing its electricity supply.[77] Brazil as a powerful neighbour had the power to put pressure on the economically dependent neighbour country, as argued by a researcher:

> "Paraguay was important for Brazil because of the electricity supply. Brazil had the tool to influence the small country through threatening to strangle the economy" (Researcher, 11.7.2017, Sao Paulo).

Further economic interests concern the adhesion of Venezuela to the trade bloc of MERCOSUR which had been vetoed by Paraguay. As noted in a statement of the Itamaraty "the incorporation of Venezuela alters the strategic positioning of the bloc, which will now extend from the Caribbean to the extreme south of the continent", and furthermore, MERCOSUR would be "positioning itself as a global energy power in renewable and non-renewable resources" (BBC, 2012b). In a separate deal before the admission to MERCOSUR Venezuela agreed to buy planes from Brazil, and Brazil agreed to import oil from Venezuela (op.cit.).

The Brazilian strategy in the case of Paraguay, therefore, seems to be based on several considerations. One main issue for the government of Brazil was to discourage imitation of the impeachment by other opposition parties. Brazil and its neighbours, therefore, had a collective interest in sanctioning the impeachment. The second main motive can be linked to the economic interests associated with Venezuela's admission to MERCOSUR (related to Venezuela as an export market for Brazil, better access to Venezuelan oil and the strengthening of MERCOSUR within the global economy). A third motive can be identified as a political solidarity between the impeached left-wing Lugo and the PT in Brazil. However, compared to the other two motives, the motive of political solidarity is less prominent.

[77] The electricity produced at the Itaipu dam provides 11.3 percent of the energy consumed in Brazil (Itaipu Binacional, 2020).

Brazil's motivation to work through UNASUR

Another question is why Brazil worked through MERCOSUR and UNASUR (instead of bilateral diplomacy). As in the previous case of Bolivia, working through regional organizations had the advantage of fostering a collective regional response. The regional mechanisms offered a cost-effective way of intervening and had additional economic benefits (in allowing for the adhesion of Venezuela to MERCOSUR). Brazil mainly worked through MERCOSUR where it had more leverage and where it knew that the suspension would have more impact on the Paraguayan government. However, it also worked through UNASUR to increase the legitimacy of Paraguay's suspension from MERCOSUR.

The strategy that Brazil followed within MERCOSUR differs from an ideal type of consensual hegemony. Brazil created the consensus for suspension from MERCOSUR through putting direct pressure on Uruguay rather than through the dissemination of ideas or through convincing Uruguay in a subtle way. In MERCOSUR Uruguay rather reluctantly succumbed to the pressure exerted by Brazil.

The way Brazil acted in the context of MERCOSUR demonstrates that Brazil can act more forcefully in the context of a regional organization where it has more institutional power (i.e. the power to control decision-making within an organization) compared to UNASUR where Brazil's power is mainly structural (the power to shape institutional structures and relationships). In other words, Brazil relies on a strategy of consensual hegemony within UNASUR because it does not have the power to exert pressure to the same extent as it can within MERCOSUR. Bilaterally, the power imbalance between Paraguay and Brazil allowed Brazil to follow a more confrontational strategy (through invoking sanctions).

The enabling and constraining factors of Brazil's involvement

Domestically, Dilma Rousseff did not yet experience political instability in 2012. While there was internal disagreement within the Itamaraty regarding whether the impeachment violated the democratic clauses of UNASUR and MERCOSUR, the official discourse of Brazil was consistent and in favour of the suspension of Paraguay.

In the region of South America, Brazil had an important ally in Argentina. Especially in the context of MERCOSUR, Argentina was an important partner that helped to facilitate Paraguay's suspension from the trade bloc. Compared to Argentina and Brazil, Uruguay had very limited leverage within the organization and could not oppose the Argentinian-Brazilian strategy.

In the context of UNASUR, Brazil and Argentina could count on the support of the left-wing governments in the region who criticized Lugo's impeachment. No member state openly opposed the suspension, and Chile and Colombia proposed to discuss the necessary steps with other UNASUR members instead of declaring its own viewpoint prior to the UNASUR summit.

That member states sought UNASUR as a space to discuss the regional response to the impeachment shows how the consensual hegemonic project of Brazil developed its own dynamic. By facilitating the creation of UNASUR and its democracy clause, Brazil had created the structure in which the discussion on regional democracy promotion took place. While Brazil played a leading role in pushing for suspension from two regional organizations, it did not have to work hard to create consensus for suspension within UNASUR. The two member states (Colombia and Chile) that were less critical of the impeachment of Lugo in the first place (compared to left-wing governments in the region), actively sought to join a common regional response under the umbrella of UNASUR.

Considering the limited presence of the OAS, Brazil could act without having to compete with the United States for regional leadership. The recognition of interim government by the United States did give the interim government in Paraguay some legitimacy, however, the US position did not influence the regional position towards Lugo's impeachment.

The bilateral relationship between Brazil and Paraguay was asymmetrical and Brazil could have imposed more direct pressure on Paraguay if it had wished to do so. However, Brazil's goal was not to change the situation in Paraguay (such as to reinstate Lugo or trigger immediate elections), but to use Paraguay as a case to demonstrate how Brazil and the region would respond to impeachment by the opposition.

Looking at the number of enabling factors and the absence of constraining factors regarding Brazil's role, it is not surprising that the actions against Paraguay's impeachment were quick and relatively harsh (considering that this case was the first and only time the UNASUR democratic clause was activated and a member state was suspended). It is an example of how Brazil could act in the case of a perceived democratic disruption in a small state in the region that was economically dependent on Brazil and had limited allies within the region.

To conclude, the different strategies (consensual hegemony in UNASUR and a more coercive strategy of political pressure in MERCOSUR), show that Brazil is using its consensual hegemonic approach when it is convenient and perceived to be cost-friendly and effective. In the context of MERCOSUR, Brazil resorted to an approach based on pressure, because it had the institutional power to do so. This demonstrates that Brazil's consensual hegemony is not merely a diplomatic tradition, but a chosen strategy based on the limitations of Brazil's regional power in South America.

The case of Paraguay also highlights the flexibility of Brazil to work through different organizations. While the case demonstrates that Brazil prefers working through regional organizations, it also chooses to work through regional organizations where it has the most leverage.

While UNASUR did only play a secondary role in Brazil's strategy towards Paraguay's impeachment, the fact that UNASUR was involved in several stages of the crisis (observation of impeachment, suspension, observation of the political process and election observation), shows that UNASUR had established itself as a relevant regional organization for democracy promotion, that the member states would turn to, and that members would consult to develop a common regional response to democratic crises. This shows that, even though UNASUR was not effective in preventing (or reversing) the impeachment, Brazil had created a regional body that allowed it to generate a coherent regional response. Brazil could therefore use UNASUR's suspension of Paraguay as a means to legitimate its hard stance towards Paraguay.

CHAPTER 8 The Venezuelan issue – UNASUR hits the wall

The third issue area chapter concerns itself with the political crisis in Venezuela, which unfolded in 2013. The Venezuelan democratic crisis presents an interesting case of democracy promotion that involved multiple external actors and happened during a time of decreased Brazilian influence in the region. Brazil's close economic ties to Venezuela meant that Brazil's ability to exert pressure was smaller than in the case of Bolivia and Paraguay, while the potential cost of escalation of the Venezuelan conflict were high for Brazil in economic and security terms. The Venezuelan issue is therefore important to demonstrate how Brazil acted in a case of democratic disruption where the stakes for Brazil's economic and security interests were high but Brazil's leverage to influence Venezuela's domestic political situation was comparatively small.

The case of Venezuela is important to highlight the limits of UNASUR's capacity to promote democracy. While UNASUR was actively involved in Venezuela, the results of UNASUR's mediation missions are modest at best. The Venezuelan issue therefore underlines the limits of Brazil's approach to promote democracy through UNASUR.

The chapter discusses the different strategies that Brazil employed during the Rousseff and Temer administration, with a special focus on its use of the regional mechanisms of UNASUR, MERCOSUR and the OAS. With regard to the difficulty of Brazil to promote democracy through regional organizations, the Venezuelan case demonstrates the limitations of Brazil's leadership strategy of consensual hegemony. As will be discussed, Brazil's strategy of consensual hegemony failed in an environment of (Brazil's) domestic political turmoil and regional ideological heterogeneity, in which Brazil failed to put pressure on the Venezuelan government that continued to receive support by selected governments outside the region.

This chapter starts with a short overview of the political history of Venezuela that preceded the democratic crisis, followed by a discussion of the political events from 2013 to 2018. While the Venezuelan conflict did not end in 2018, the year marks the end of UNASUR (as a functional regional body) and the end of the Temer presidency in Brazil. The analysis of democracy promotion efforts post-2018 therefore exceed the scope of this dissertation.

Historical contextualization of the Venezuela crisis

Venezuela's history was turbulent, as it experienced colonial rule, wars of independence, the creation of an independent republic, followed by years of military dictatorship. While this short historical overview cannot describe Venezuela's state building process in detail, the period of military rule requires attention, due to the continued relevance of the military in Venezuela's political system after the democratization process. The following section therefore discusses three main periods of Venezuela's history. It starts with a discussion of the military era, continues with a discussion of the transition to democracy and finishes with the Chavez era. The historical overview serves as a background for understanding the causes of the structural problems that Venezuela's political system faces today.

The years of military rule (1908-1945 and 1948-1958) and the transition to democracy

Venezuela was ruled by the dictator Juan Vicente Gomez between 1908 and 1935. During this time Venezuela became the world's largest oil exporter. The military regime proved to be relatively stable for many years, with the exception of a coup in 1945, establishing the first civilian government under the leadership of Rómulo Betancourt, that paved the way for democratic elections in 1947. However, military rule was soon re-established in 1948, only 8 months after elections had let to the victory of presidential candidate Romulo Gallegos of the Democratic Action Party (AD), which quickly marked the end of Venezuela's first attempt of democracy (a period sometimes referred to as "el trienio"). It took 10 years for the military regime to be finally ousted in 1958. As the military leadership was weakened, and the (underground) civic opposition grew stronger, General Marcos Perez Jimenez fled Caracas, allowing for the holding of elections. The elections were won by the Democratic Action Party, who formed a coalition government with the Social Christian Party (COPEI) and the Democratic Republican Union (URD) and brought Rómulo Betancourt back to power as president of Venezuela.

As argued by Levine (1985, p. 49), the history of failed coup attempts led to an understanding within the political elite that a civic government needed to be based on inter-elite consensus, coalition building and controlled political participation. The AD deliberately excluded left-wing parties from the coalition in order to align its policies with business elites and the military. Feeling excluded from the political process, the left organized itself in armed opposition groups

(op. cit. p.51). Made up of former members of the AD that had split from the party, and youth leaders, the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR - Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria) was founded with an aim to bring socialism to Venezuela by the means of a revolution. Together with the Communist Party of Venezuela (Partido Comunista de Venezuela - PCV) they engaged in armed struggle against the government (Sánchez, 2006, p. 75).

To conclude, the transition to democracy was made possible through the incorporation of existing elites into the new pact of leadership. This also meant that the military continued to play an important role in politics, even after the end of military rule. Moreover, it planted the seed for (armed) social movements in opposition to the elite government.

The Chavez era (1998-2013)

During the 1960s and 70s, Venezuela's economy benefitted from the country's oil wealth, which allowed for public spending and the preservation of relatively stable governments (Levine, 1985, p. 47). Venezuela's political system was dominated by the two main parties, the AD and COPEI, which represented the interests of the economic and military elite. However, because of the economic prosperity (Venezuela had the highest growth rates and lowest inequality in Latin America in the 70s) and the co-option of civil society through a system of patronage (Polga, 2017), the social peace between Venezuela's citizens was intact. That changed during the global economic depression in 1989, when the prices for oil declined, and Venezuela had accumulated high public debt. The devaluated Venezuelan currency made it difficult for Venezuela to pay back its international loans. The elected president Carlos Andres Perez implemented austerity measures based on the requisites of an IMF loan. The austerity measures proved to be very unpopular and were contested in the form of protests, strikes and riots, which left hundreds of people killed (BBC, 2018a).

In this time of popular unrest and economic instability, Hugo Chavez (a member of the armed forces of medium rank) attempted a coup against the government of the AD in 1992 (Buxton, 2019). As the coup was unsuccessful, Hugo Chavez was arrested, and spent two years in jail before he was pardoned.

In the time between 1993 and 1995 President Perez faced corruption charges which led to his impeachment. Based on the population's discontent with the political mismanagement of

previous administrations, Hugo Chavez was elected president of Venezuela in 1998 and started his "Bolivarian Revolution"[78]. Chavez's policies were characterized by a socialist and populist character. Through his policies, Chavez nationalized an increasing number of economic sectors including energy, telecommunication, oil, and finance. In his rhetoric, Chavez adopted an anti - US discourse. Furthermore, Chavez set out to unravel the representative model of democracy and substituted it with a more direct form of democracy, or "participatory democracy".

However, due to the changes to the political institutions, political power became increasingly centralized. Chavez redrafted the constitution, dissolved congress, undermined opposition parties, and dismissed judges (Mc Coy & Myers, 2004). Despite the socialist rhetoric, Chavez also undermined labour organizations and cooperatives (Posner, 2016).

A failed military coup in 2002 allowed Chavez to restructure the military to ensure the military's loyalty (Polga, 2017, p. 2). Based on Chavez' success in a referendum in 2004 and in presidential elections in 2006, he served three consecutive terms. In a referendum in 2009, the term limits for presidents were abolished, allowing Chavez to run for office for a fourth time.

During the Chavez era, public spending was still dependent on Venezuela's oil revenues. As the global oil prices fell in 2011, Venezuela's economy had not diversified and the (formerly nationalized) state-run sectors were largely inefficient, which forced Venezuela to import many goods from abroad. The fixed exchange rates for foreign currencies led to a vibrant black market for currency exchange and an increasing problem with inflation. Chavez's economic policies were successful in the short, but not in the long run (op.cit).

After 14 years in power, Chavez secured a 4th term in office in presidential elections in October 2012 with 54.4 % of the vote against his opponent Henrique Capriles who had secured 44.9 % (Watts & Lopez, 2012). The relatively close election result demonstrated the decrease in Chavez's popularity.

[78] The Bolivarian Revolution was a political agenda implemented by Chavez, which proclaimed a participatory approach to democracy and a critical stance towards neoliberalism (Buxton, 2019). It is named after Simón Bolívar, a Venezuelan who fought for the independence of South America from the Spanish Empire in the 1810s.

Venezuela under Chavez can be characterized as a hybrid regime that increased its authoritarian practices and thereby became more autocratic in a short period of time. This development towards authoritarianism was most notable during the last 5 years of his presidency. While Chavez's Party, the United Social Party of Venezuela (PSUV), officially competed in elections, as would be characteristic of a democracy, the checks and balances between state institutions were weakened, the agency of the opposition and of civil society were undermined (Corrales, 2015, pp. 37–38) and the independence of the judiciary decreased (Taylor, 2014).

After the death of Hugo Chavez in April 2013, Nicolas Maduro, who had been chosen as a successor by Chavez, was elected president of Venezuela. The close election result of a 2 percent lead over opposition candidate Henrique Capriles (of the MUD - Mesa de la Unidad Democrática) was contested by the opposition. What followed were public protest and increasingly violent measures by the Maduro government against the protesters, paired with an intensifying economic crisis and devaluation of the currency. As argued by Maya (2014, p. 68), the death of Chavez created an immense political vacuum, that was the result of the centralization of power under his presidency. Combined with the economic crisis, Venezuela was on the direct path to political and economic instability.

8.1. The Venezuelan crisis 2013-2018

This section details the political events that unfolded under Maduro's presidency since his election in 2013, as it concerns the fight for power by the government and the opposition, in a climate of economic deterioration and public unrest.

After the election of Maduro in April 2013, which was followed by public protests, the National Electoral Council completed an audit of the close election results. It attested that there was no electoral fraud. However, a domestic observer group criticized the use of public funds for Maduro's political campaign (Sullivan, 2017, p. 10).

In November 2013, with a continued economic crisis and inflation rates of over 50 per cent per year, the National Assembly granted Maduro emergency powers for a year. The decision was followed by public protests. In February 2014, continued public protests against the

government left 28 people dead. Opposition leaders were charged with plotting a coup against the government, and protests were suppressed. The US declared that the situation in Venezuela posed a threat to US national security and imposed sanctions on seven Venezuelan government officials (BBC, 2015). Venezuela in turn accused the US of interference in domestic affairs. By June 2014 the protests were largely dissolved, but during the clashes a total of 43 had been killed, 800 injured and more than 3000 people had been arrested, among them Leopoldo López, an important leader of the opposition (op. cit. p.13).

During elections in December 2015 the opposition coalition won a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly. The power over the legislative would have allowed the opposition to change fundamental laws, block Maduro's proposals and to potentially remove Maduro from office. As Maduro controlled the executive and the judiciary, the political impasse between government and opposition deepened (Cannon et al., 2017, p. 614).

Before Maduro's government lost the majority in the National Assembly, the government enhanced its control over the Supreme Court. This step could later be used as an important tool to disempower the National Assembly, leading Venezuela to "the brink of a 'constitutional coup'" (Nolte, 2018, p. 145).

In January 2016 three opposition deputies of the Democratic Unity party resigned from Congress due to pressure by the Supreme Court and thereby ended the opposition's two-thirds majority.

In March, the Supreme Court passed a law that limited the power of the Parliament, restricting its oversight of the judicative, electoral, and civil bodies. In the same month, the opposition launched an initiative to drive Maduro from office, asking for a recall referendum[79] and constitutional reform to reduce his term from a six-year to a four-year period. The Supreme Court dismissed the call. However, in April electoral authorities granted the opposition permission to collect signatures for a recall referendum.[80]

[79] A recall referendum allows voters to vote on the early removal of an official from office. The recall referendum is a tool of a system of a direct democracy (Welp, 2017).

[80] The recall referendum requires a 3-stage process. First, the opposition needs to gather signatures from 1 percent of the voting population in favour of a referendum. If the signatures are validated by the Electoral Council, 4 million signatures need to be collected within 3 days (representing 20 percent of the electorate) and once again need to be validated by the Electoral Council. If successful, the recall referendum can take place, in which the

In May 2016, the opposition had gathered 1.85 million signatures in the first stage of the process for a recall referendum, which would have been sufficient to move to the next stage in the process to remove Maduro. To move ahead, the signatures needed to be validated by the Electoral Council. However, in October the Electoral Council declared the call for a referendum invalid due to fraud (BBC, 2016a), which sparked public protests in favour of a referendum.

In March 2017, the Venezuelan Supreme Court took over the legislative powers. The court decided to lift immunity of the parliamentarians. The decision was an important step marking the formal end of separation of powers (Thofern, 2017). The move was contested in the region of South America.[81]

In August 2017 Maduro established a Constituent Assembly to circumvent any opposition in the legislative. The Assembly had been granted powers to legislate on matters of security, peace and sovereignty, which overruled the powers of the National Assembly (dominated by the opposition) (Casey, 2017). With the election of a body comprised of 454 members, Venezuela created an official body for a legislative branch that had already been run by the Supreme Court, which had invalidated any law that congress had approved when the opposition had won the majority of seats. The move was the final step by Maduro to eliminate opposition and undermine democratic institutions. With the decline of the judicial independence under Chavez (Taylor, 2014), the National Assembly had been the only state institution not under the influence of the government.

The creation of the Constituent Assembly sparked regional and international criticism. The OAS and MERCOSUR issued declarations to condemn the move. In August 2017, the Trump administration of the United States imposed further sanctions, which prohibited Venezuela to trade bonds in the US financial market. However, the sanctions did not restrict US oil imports from Venezuela (Krauss, 2018). UNASUR remained quiet.

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opposition needs to get more than 7,587,532 votes in favour of Maduro's removal, i.e. more votes than he received in his election in 2013 (Rathbone, 2016).

[81] As a response six members of UNASUR issued a statement to condemn the act and called for the restoration of democratic order. The statement was not signed by Bolivia nor Ecuador (Reuters, 2017a).

In May 2018, Maduro won the presidential elections and secured a second term in office. Opposition had been advocating for a boycott of the elections (since the main opposition parties had been prevented from running for office), leaving voter turnout under fifty percent. The poor electoral conditions and the government's control of the electoral process prevented the election result from being considered a democratic outcome (Colina & McCoy, 2018).

The United States declared the elections as undemocratic, even before they happened, and threatened to increase sanctions. Open criticism also came from the region of South America. Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos criticized Maduro on twitter, stating: "I reiterate my condemnation of the Venezuelan regime. A regime that does not listen and that remains in a state of total denial" (J. M. Santos, 2018).

With the economic crisis deepening (and expected inflation rates of 13,000 percent for the year of 2018), shortages in food and medicine, migration flows to Colombia and Brazil increased dramatically (Neuman & Casey, 2018). According to estimates of the United Nations, 2.3 million Venezuelans had left the country between 2014 and 2018. The largest number, 1.5 million moved to Colombia. According to the Brazilian government, 50,000 migrants were said to have fled to Roraima in Brazil between 2017 and 2018. Around 547,000 to 560,000 crossed the border of Ecuador on their way to Peru and Chile, of which around 20 percent ended up staying in Ecuador (Romero Castillo, 2018).

Brazil's president Michel Temer sent military troops to the border. The border region of Roraima had seen an increase in violence in the wake of the migration crisis with clashes between residents and Venezuelan migrants (Mc Kirdy & Charner, 2018). Peru and Ecuador announced in August 2018 that they would close their borders to Venezuelan refugees without passports (which could not be issued by Venezuela at this time).

In September 2018, Maduro announced that he had secured funding from China for the Venezuelan oil and gold industry and investments for a number of development projects. China had already lent Venezuela $50 billion, which the country pays back in oil revenues. Venezuela still owes China $20 billion (Salzburger Nachrichten, 2018).

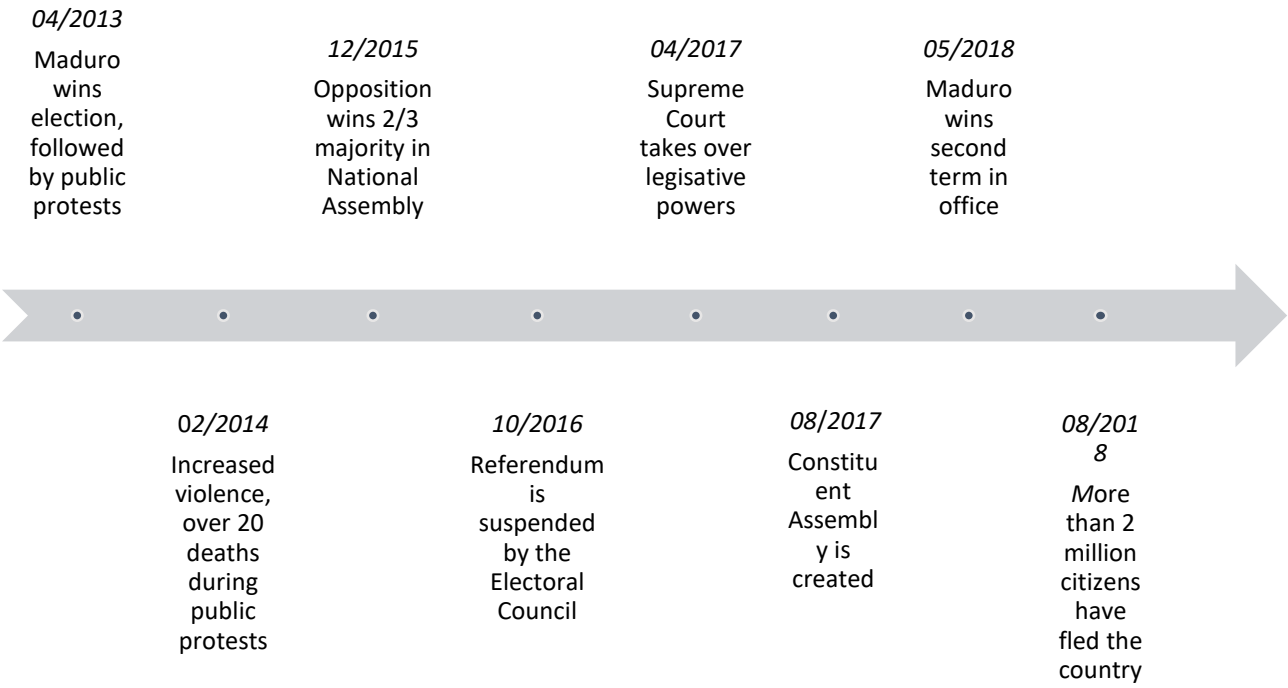
In January 2019 Juan Guaidó, head of the National Assembly, declared himself president of Venezuela. He was recognized as the interim president by the United States and several European countries. China and Russia did not recognize his presidential claim as legitimate

(Baczynska & Rodríguez, 2019). Also the OAS accepted Guaido's delegation as a representation for Venezuela in the organization (Melimopoulos, 2019).

While the political and economic events in Venezuela continue to unfold, this dissertation limits its discussion to the political events until the end of 2018, which coincide with the end of UNASUR's operability and thereby terminate by default any possible interventions by UNASUR in the Venezuelan crisis, after 2018.

In a nutshell, the Venezuelan political situation between 2013 and 2018 can be described as a period of public protests, economic deterioration and inflation, tensions between the government and the opposition, measures by the government to increase its authoritarian practices and an unfolding humanitarian crisis, combined with migration of Venezuelans to neighbouring countries. Key events are presented in the following timeline:

Figure 7 Timeline of the Venezuelan crisis 2013-2018



© Source: own illustration

The following sections discuss how regional and international actors responded to the Venezuelan crisis. Before going into a detailed discussion of UNASUR's involvement in the Venezuelan crisis, it is necessary to discuss how other regional bodies have or have not engaged

in efforts to intervene in the Venezuelan case. The actions of other regional or international organizations are important to show the room for manoeuvre of UNASUR and potential rivalry or coalitions between regional organizations. The presence of different regional organizations also offered Brazil the opportunity to work through different organizations.

8.2. The response from the OAS and MERCOSUR

The two main regional organizations relevant to democracy promotion in Venezuela, apart from UNASUR, are the OAS and MERCOSUR. The response of the OAS and MERCOSUR show the difference in the approaches taken by the different regional bodies.

The response from the OAS (2014-2018)

As the protests against the government became increasingly violent, Panama suggested sending a mission under the OAS to Venezuela. However, Maduro insisted that the OAS was not welcome in Venezuela and that he would not allow an OAS mission to enter the country (Diaz, 2014). Maduro stated that he would not accept intervention in Venezuela orchestrated by Panama's right-wing government (Scharfenberg, 2014).

The OAS then issued a resolution condemning the violence and asking all parties to resume dialogue. The statement also gave support to the democratically elected government of Maduro to pursue dialogue. The statement was approved by 29 member states, with the exception of the United States of America, Panama and Canada who perceived that the resolution's wording was too supportive of Maduro (Saiz, 2014).

Luis Almagro, a Uruguayan diplomat who was elected Secretary General of the OAS in March 2015, offered to send a team of election observers to Venezuela to observe the Venezuelan Parliamentary elections scheduled for December 2015. His offer was rejected by the Venezuelan Electoral Council, to which he responded in an open letter detailing democratic deficits of Venezuela:

> "Because of all that I have mentioned in this letter, there are reasons to believe that the conditions in which the people will vote on December 6 will not enjoy the level of

> transparency and electoral justice that you, at the National Electoral Council, should guarantee" (Almagro, 2015).

While the OAS had no presence during the elections, the UNASUR electoral mission confirmed the legitimacy of the electoral process, which led to the victory of the opposition party (Nolte, 2018, p. 144).

In May 2016, Luis Almagro criticized Venezuela's "grave alterations of democratic order" (Associated Press, 2016) and called for an emergency meeting of heads of state of the OAS to discuss whether Venezuela had violated the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Due to disagreement between member states, and heavy opposition from Bolivia and Nicaragua the OAS did not activate the democratic charter against Venezuela. Bolivia and Nicaragua, accused Almagro of intervention in domestic affairs and overstepping his authority (Ordonez, 2016), thereby demonstrating their continued support for the fellow left-wing administration in Venezuela.

In April 2017 the OAS reacted to Maduro's move to suspend the impunity of parliamentarians and to let the Supreme Court take over legislative powers by adopting a resolution after a special meeting of the Permanent Council. In the resolution, the OAS declared that "The decisions of the Supreme Court of Venezuela to suspend the powers of the National Assembly and to arrogate them to itself are inconsistent with democratic practice and constitute an alteration of the constitutional order of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela" (OAS - Organization of American States, 2017).

In August 2017, 12 members of the OAS formed the Lima Group (comprised of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Peru) to "address the critical situation in Venezuela and explore ways to contribute to the restoration of democracy in that country through a peaceful and negotiated solution"(Lima group, 2017).[82] In a joint declaration they expressed that they did not recognize the legitimacy of the Constituent Assembly and emphasized their support of and solidarity with the National Assembly (op. cit).

[82] Original quote in Spanish: "para abordar la crítica situación en Venezuela y explorar formas de contribuir a la restauración de la democracia en ese país a través de una salida pacífica y negociada."

In June 2018, the OAS declared in a statement that they would not recognize the presidential elections as valid, stating that "the electoral process as implemented in Venezuela, which concluded on May 20, 2018, lacks legitimacy for not complying with international standards, for not having met the participation of all Venezuelan political actors, and for being carried out without the necessary guarantees for a free, fair, transparent and democratic process" (OAS - Organization of American States, 2018). Furthermore, it stated that it urged Venezuela to "take steps to guarantee the separation and independence of the constitutional branches of power and restore the full authority of the National Assembly, the rule of law, and the guarantees and liberties of the population", and to "allow the entry of humanitarian aid and to implement epidemiological surveillance measures in its country to prevent the aggravation of the humanitarian and public health crisis" (op.cit). Moreover, the OAS urged member states to take "appropriate" measures against Venezuela. While the resolution could help to legitimize the implementation of sanctions by member states (Oppenheimer, 2018), sanctions were only implemented by the United States.

During the same meeting in June 2018 the suspension of Venezuela from the OAS was discussed and pushed by the United States. During the vote, 19 members voted in favour and 4 members voted against Venezuela's suspension; 11 members abstained (Reuters, 2018).[83] In September 2018, the head of the OAS, Luis Almagro stated in a visit to Colombia that military intervention in Venezuela could not be ruled out (Deutsche Welle, 2018b).

In January 2019, the OAS Permanent Council approved a resolution that declared that the organization would not recognize the legitimacy of Maduro's government (based on 19 votes in favour of the resolution, 8 against, 6 abstentions and 1 absence). A few months later, in April 2019 the OAS voted in favour of accepting Guiadó's delegation as the legitimate representation of Venezuela within the organization, until new elections were held (Melimopoulos, 2019). In the same month, the Venezuelan government announced that it would withdraw its membership from the OAS (a process that takes 24 months).

[83] The US's plead to suspend Venezuela had been backed by the members of the Lima Group and by the Dominican Republic, Bahamas, Jamaica, and Barbados. While the vote did not secure immediate suspension (24 votes would have been needed) it paved the way for steps to start a suspension process. The Venezuelan government however had announced previously that it would cede voluntarily from the organization (with effect in 2019) (Telesur, 2018).

Given the voting behaviour on the resolution to not recognize Maduro's government it is clear that the member states were not in consensus regarding their position towards Guaidó. When the OAS Secretary General Almagro officially endorsed Guaidó, he was criticized by some member states of CARICOM who accused him of speaking on behalf of the OAS without authorisation (Singh, 2019). The voting behaviour however demonstrated that some states in the Caribbean, which had previously supported Maduro due to the oil dependency and public debt to Venezuela through Petrocaribe[84], had changed their alliances. In early 2019, the US administration offered six Caribbean nations, which had publicly endorsed Guiadó, the prospects of economic assistance and investments (Looney, 2019).[85] Regional alliances in the Caribbean at this point hence were mainly related to economic prospects and dependencies.

In short, the OAS, and especially its Secretary General Luis Almagro openly voiced their criticism of the Maduro government. Because of the critical stance of the US government towards Maduro, and the US influence within the organization, any intervention by the OAS in the Venezuelan crisis was rejected by Maduro. Because of the continued support of Maduro by Caribbean states within the OAS, the organization was unable to suspend Venezuela or to issue a unanimous critique of the Maduro government for a long time, until the beginning of 2019, when Maduro lost further support in the Caribbean.

The response from MERCOSUR

As the protests against the Maduro government intensified in 2014, MERCOSUR did not take action. The suggestion of the Argentinian president Mauricio Macri to invoke the Ushuaia Protocol in 2015, and to suspend Venezuela, did not find support among MERCOSUR's members. However, in September 2016 MERCOSUR blocked Venezuela from taking over the pre-tempore presidency of the regional organization (Rojas, 2016) and urged Venezuela to put MERCOSUR's founding charter into effect until December. More specifically, Venezuela was requested to incorporate MERCOSUR trade rules into national legislation. When Venezuela failed to comply with MERCOSUR's rules in December 2016, the four members of

[84] Through Petrocaribe, Venezuela financed Caribbean nations' oil purchases, which allowed the members to import oil from Venezuela at cheap rates on credit. However, the program required nations to pay back their debt to Venezuela in the timeframe of 25 years with 1-2 percent interest rate (Jacome, 2011, p. 5), which led many countries to accumulate huge amounts of public debt.

[85] According to Looney (2019), Haiti, the Dominican Republic, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Guyana and Saint Lucia support Guiadó, while Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname support Maduro, and St. Kitts, Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and Belize remain neutral.

MERCOSUR decided to stop Venezuela's right to participate in the meetings or to cast its vote in the common market (BBC, 2016b).

While Venezuela's status in the organization was technically similar to a suspended member, Venezuela was not yet officially suspended from MERCOSUR. The decision to revoke Venezuela's right to participate in MERCOSUR was based on Venezuela's non-compliance with MERCOSUR's membership requirements linked to economic, human rights, and immigration issues. The move was, hence, not explicitly a sanction of Venezuela's undemocratic practices, because the critique of Venezuela was embedded in Venezuela's failure to meet technical requirements of membership in the trade bloc rather than voiced through the application of MERCOSUR's tools for democracy promotion.

The stance of MERCOSUR towards Venezuela became more critical when Michel Temer took over Brazil's presidency in August 2016. Venezuelan membership also became an increasing issue for MERCOSUR's negotiations of a trade agreement with the EU. During a meeting of Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy and Brazilian president Michel Temer in April 2017, Rajoy expressed his interest in wrapping up the trade deal between MERCOSUR and the EU which had been under negotiations for 15 years, however expressing his concern regarding the political situation in Venezuela (Reuters, 2017b).

Following the creation of the Venezuelan Constituent Assembly in July 2017, MERCOSUR announced that it would not recognize any decision made by this body. The statement released by Brazil's foreign minister called the events an usurpation of legislative powers (Bronstein & Cobb, 2017).

In August 2017, MERCOSUR unanimously decided in a meeting in São Paulo to suspend Venezuela from the bloc, based on Venezuela's "rupture of the democratic order", thereby activating the democratic clause. Brazilian Foreign Minister Aloysio Nunes stated that Brazil and the members of MERCOSUR would fight in all international fora for Venezuela to restore democracy. During a press conference, he stated:

> "We issued a sanction of a political nature. Even if Venezuela meets all the requirements and agreements of Mercosur, if it has not re-established democracy, the country will remain suspended" (Presidency of the Republic of Brazil, 2017).

As pointed out by a researcher, the creation of the Constituent Assembly was a turning point for the region's perception of the Venezuelan regime, when countries decided that Venezuela had overstepped the mark. He further argued that it was easier to take steps against Venezuela through MERCOSUR because Venezuela had already been suspended from taking part in the organization (Mauricio Santoro, 09.08.2017, Rio de Janeiro).

Another critical point, allowing for MERCOSUR to act, was the changing political orientation of its members. In 2017, Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay were governed by right-wing parties which were more critical of the Maduro government. In Paraguay, Horacio Cartes had started his term as president in 2013 (until 2018). When Mauricio Macri was elected president in Argentina in November 2015, he stated in his first press conference that he would press for Venezuela to be suspended from MERCOSUR because of the human rights violations of the government (Merke et al., 2015). Michel Temer's interim government in August 2016 started a tougher rhetoric against Venezuela. The only left-leaning member of MERCOSUR was Uruguayan president Tabaré Vázquez, who had assumed office in 2015.

To summarize, MERCOSUR remained largely inactive at the beginning of the Venezuelan crisis. However, as of 2016 MERCOSUR continuously limited Venezuela's right to participate in the bloc, starting from preventing Venezuela from taking over the Pro-tempore Presidency, to suspending its participation in meetings, to its final suspension from the organization in August 2017. While the deepening of the crisis in Venezuela did provide an incentive for MERCOSUR members to take action, vested interests in moving forward with the trade deal with the EU and the change in political orientation of MERCOSUR member states are important factors that explain the revision of MERCOSUR's strategy towards Venezuela.

To conclude, both the OAS and MERCOSUR openly criticized Maduro. As the Maduro government did not respond to the criticism and increased its undemocratic practices, Venezuela was suspended from MERCOSUR, and a suspension process was started against Venezuela in the OAS (from which Venezuela split in April 2019, based on the decision by Maduro to leave the organization in April 2017). Neither of the two organizations engaged in mediation or electoral monitoring, while OAS involvement was particularly unwelcome due to the perceived influence of the US government in the organization. The only regional organization that could potentially mediate in Venezuela was UNASUR. The efforts taken by

UNASUR to mediate between the government and the opposition in Venezuela are detailed in the next section.

8.3. UNASUR's effort to mediate in Venezuela

UNASUR was involved in the Venezuela crisis in several attempts of mediation (in different formats) and in conducting electoral missions. The events are detailed in chronological order from 2013 to 2018, which demonstrate how and why UNASUR attempted, but failed, to bring a lasting solution to the Venezuelan crisis.

In 2013 UNASUR engaged in an electoral mission in Venezuela. While the government asked for UNASUR's involvement, the opposition advocated for the involvement of other players, such as the Vatican, the OAS, and the EU (Closa & Palestini Cespedes, 2015, p. 8) as it feared that UNASUR was biased and too "pro-Maduro". The mission was led by the former Vice President of Argentina, Carlos Alvarez, who issued a positive statement regarding the election process, and said that the election results published by the Electoral Council should be respected (Carter Center, 2013, p. 17).

In February 2014, when anti-government protests hit Venezuela and leaders of the opposition were arrested, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of UNASUR met in Santiago, Chile to discuss the situation. UNASUR issued a statement rejecting any form of violence, and called upon all actors to use dialogue as a means to overcome their differences (La Prensa, 2014a). Furthermore, it was agreed that UNASUR would mediate between the government and opposition in the form of a group of the foreign ministers of Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador.

The three foreign ministers and UNASUR Secretary General Ernesto Samper were invited by Maduro to visit Venezuela in March 2014. This happened after a failed attempt of Panama to send an OAS mission to Venezuela (as mentioned previously). This left UNASUR as the only organization trying to mediate between the government and the opposition. As stated by a UNASUR official:

> "In the case of Venezuela, the OAS was very critical of Venezuela. Current Secretary General criticized Venezuela through twitter. The position of UNASUR was to

> establish dialogue. It was possible for UNASUR to intervene in Venezuela because UNASUR seems independent from the United States. There is no room for the current OAS Secretary General to be part of dialogue in Venezuela" (David Alvares, 20.02.2020).

The foreign minister of Ecuador, Ricardo Patiño, member of the group of foreign ministers, stated that the group would not be the judge of the situation in Venezuela. However he expressed a clear support for the "legitimate" government of Maduro (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana, 2014).[86]

The three foreign ministers visited Caracas in late March and early April of 2014. During the second visit UNASUR managed to broker talks between the government and the opposition. Maduro and his main opponent Henrique Capriles met for a roundtable in April 2014 aimed at ending the public violence. The meeting was broadcasted on television in Venezuela (La Prensa, 2014b). The meeting was the first encounter of this sort of the government and the opposition since the start of the protests.

UNASUR Secretary General Ernesto Samper and the foreign ministers urged that a solution could only be found through the holding of elections. However, despite the talks, UNASUR left Venezuela empty handed (A. Hoffmann et al., 2015, p. 2). In May, the consortium of Venezuela's opposition groups (MUD - Mesa de la Unidad Democrática) left negotiations with the government because of the continuing repression of protests by the government. The head of the MUD, Ramon Guillermo Aveledo said that he would keep in contact with UNASUR's mediators, so that they could return when needed. However, he criticized the government's imposition of its views and the fact that none of the problems had been resolved (Ulmer, 2014). The mediation of UNASUR stalled until a new effort was started in February 2015. UNASUR Secretary General informed the group of foreign ministers of the UNASUR about his meeting with Maduro and attempts to restart dialogue. The foreign ministers of Brazil, Ecuador and Colombia were invited by Maduro to visit Venezuela. Speaking of the planned visit of the three foreign ministers to Venezuela, Secretary General Samper voiced his hopes for a successful

[86] Full statement: „We did not want to become judges, it is impossible for UNASUR to become judge, we have come here to support a democratic regime, but also to listen to those people or political and social organizations that have differences with the government, raising the need to respect the legitimacy of the government of President Nicolas Maduro".

meeting in terms of a depolarization of the political environment and the adjustment of the economy (UNASUR, 2015b).[87] In this climate of hope, Samper criticized the steps taken by the US to increase sanctions against Venezuela, which would undermine the UNASUR's resumed efforts to mediate, after the path for political dialogue had been close for a year (UNASUR, 2015d).[88]

The groups of foreign ministers visited Caracas twice in 2015 and received guarantees from Maduro and the National Electoral Council, that elections would be held in December of 2015 (Brazilian diplomat A, 10.01.2017, online).[89]

Following the request by the Electoral Council of Venezuela, UNASUR deployed a mission to follow the opposition's primaries on 17 May 2015, where candidates were chosen for the parliamentary elections in December the same year. The mission was a technical mission under the leadership of the Venezuelan electoral body. The UNASUR report was not communicated to the public, but solely to Venezuelan authorities.

UNASUR also vowed to assist Venezuela in its humanitarian crisis. In August 2015, Samper met with Venezuelan ministers to discuss the issue of shortage of products in Venezuela, in order to specify a proposal of cooperative support for the effective provision and supply of food and medicine (UNASUR, 2015c).

At that point, UNASUR had set its main hopes on fair parliamentary elections in December 2015. In October, UNASUR announced that it would send an electoral mission to accompany the elections, headed by the Brazilian Supreme Court President and former cabinet Minister

[87] Original quote in Spanish: "Considero que la próxima visita de los Cancilleres puede ser muy útil en el propósito de contribuir a una despolarización del ambiente político que se vive en la hoy compleja realidad de Venezuela y ayudar a concitar un acuerdo nacional sobre el manejo de temas como el ajuste social de la economía que parece ser inevitable. Los venezolanos y la opinión internacional deben entender, que las salidas que se examinen y acuerden para apoyar al pueblo de Venezuela tienen que ser democráticas, pacíficas y ajustadas a la Constitución y las leyes."

[88] Original quote in Spanish: "No es una buena señal que precisamente, antes de la Cumbre de las Américas y cuando nos aprestábamos a celebrar el regreso de Cuba a este escenario, los Estados Unidos intervengan unilateralmente en los asuntos internos de Venezuela y descalifiquen los esfuerzos de la Comisión de Cancilleres de Brasil, Colombia y Ecuador, quienes tras la visita del pasado viernes 6 de marzo, abrieron caminos para el diálogo político que estaba cerrado hace más de un año."

[89] Original quote in Portuguese: "A partir da imposição de sanções pelos EUA à Venezuela e num contexto de deterioração econômica e polarização política, a Comissão reduzida de Chanceleres reuniu-se duas vezes em 2015. Em visita a Caracas, o grupo recebeu garantias do Presidente Maduro e do Conselho Nacional Eleitoral sobre a realização das eleições legislativas, que viriam a ocorrer em dezembro daquele ano."

Nelson Jobim. However, Venezuela vetoed the choice of Jobim to lead the mission, which led Brazil to withdraw its participation.

The Brazilian electoral board explained its decision to withdraw, stating that Venezuela did not allow for fair observation as it prevented the mission from auditing the electronic voting system or assessing the fairness of the electoral contest (Vyas, 2015). The statement contrasts with previous evaluations by Brazil's Superior Electoral Court (TSE) of UNASUR's electoral monitoring in Venezuela and Brazil's contribution to it, which had been evaluated positively.[90]

In November 2015, delegates of the UNASUR mission met with representatives of the MUD and with the government (UNASUR, 2015e), as the Venezuelan opposition was sceptical whether UNASUR's mission would be impartial (Miroff, 2015). In December 2015, the small delegation, headed by Leonel Fernandez, the former President of the Dominican Republic, was accompanying the process with the help of a team of around 50 people made up of UNASUR delegates and technical officials. UNASUR was the only regional organization present during the elections, as Maduro had rejected an OAS and EU electoral mission.

After the elections and the victory of the opposition party, the UNASUR Secretary General praised the election process as "the most transparent, nearly flawless and most effective" that UNASUR had witnessed, and concluded that "Venezuela is still a democratic country governed by democratic principles, and has a strong institutional framework which supports it" (UNASUR, 2015a).

In April 2016, the Pro-tempore Presidency of UNASUR was taken over by Venezuela (as set out in the rotation principle of the Pro-tempore Presidency), which had an effect on UNASUR's capability to intervene in Venezuela.[91] As highlighted by a UNASUR official, the job of the Pro-tempore Presidency was to establish the pace in which different topics were addressed in UNASUR, and Venezuela tried to set the focus on other issues than the situation in Venezuela (David Alvarez, 20.02.2020).

[90] The TSE then issued a positive evaluation of Brazil's contribution to the UNASUR electoral missions in Venezuela in April 2013, where Minister Dias Toffoli highlighted the importance to affirm UNASUR's role in the field of electoral missions and the appreciation by Venezuela of the Brazilian input into technical aspects concerning the biometric identification system (Tribunal Superior Eleitoral, 2013).

[91] Since Venezuela was a full member of the organization, and UNASUR had not engaged in any open criticism of the Maduro government, there was no official reason to prevent Venezuela from taking over the Pro-tempore Presidency.

As Maduro undermined the powers of the opposition in the National Assembly, it was clear that the elections had not solved the Venezuelan political crisis. In May 2016, UNASUR resumed its efforts to mediate in the crisis of Venezuela, albeit in a different format, under the leadership of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero (former president of Spain), Leonel Fernandez (former president of the Dominican Republic) and Martín Torrijos (former president of Panama). The Secretary General announced that the former presidents had confirmed that there was a willingness to dialogue on both sides (i.e. the government and the opposition) (UNASUR, 2016a).

In June 2016, in addition to the attempts to mediate between the government and the opposition, UNASUR offered economic recommendations and a report on the Venezuelan economy to Venezuela (UNASUR, 2016b). One month later, UNASUR renewed its mediation efforts and included a representative of the Vatican in its team (Telesur, 2016).

The OAS backed the UNASUR mediation strategy in a statement in June 2016, calling for dialogue between the conflicting parties. On the request of Venezuela, the OAS also met up with the UNASUR mission to discuss the situation. While Secretary General Almagro was outspoken in his criticism against Maduro, the overall position of the OAS was much softer. At that point, the OAS did not call for sanctions against Venezuela, and the United States said it would refrain from further sanctions as it saw them as counterproductive (Shifter, 2016).

The Vatican was included in the mediation mission to bring the opposition to the negotiating table. The Venezuelan Catholic Church had been an open critic of the Maduro government. In 2013, Pope Francis had already met both Maduro and Capriles in the Vatican, and a representative of the Vatican, Nuncio Aldo Giordano, had accompanied the UNASUR mission as a “casual witness” (C. dos Santos, 2015, p. 14).

In October 2016, the UNASUR mediation mission with the participation of the Vatican made some progress. A meeting was arranged between the government and three out of four main opposition parties. The government agreed to release four political prisoners, and in exchange the opposition refrained from initiating a trial against Maduro and from organizing a demonstration (Weisbrot, 2016). However, in November the mediation efforts of UNASUR and the Vatican were officially suspended because the opposition accused the government of

failing to meet minimal conditions for dialogue (such as the release of political prisoners, the respect for human rights, and the respect of the constitution) (Sabatini, 2017).

As the Venezuelan supreme court took over legislative powers in March 2017, it became clear that Maduro was using UNASUR mediation as a tactic to postpone any resolution of the conflict. Most members of UNASUR (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Uruguay, Paraguay) condemned the move in a statement, where they asked for the restoration of democratic order. However, Bolivia and Ecuador refrained from signing the statement (Reuters, 2017a), thereby siding with their fellow left-wing government.[92]

In April 2017, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and ten other governments called on Maduro to provide a timetable for elections, to recognize the legislature and to free political prisoners (at that time Venezuela held an estimated number of 114 political prisoners, having arrested almost 7000 people since 2013 for political reasons) (Casey & Herrero, 2017). In June, Ecuador called on UNASUR and CELAC to help mediate in Venezuela amid the aggravating political crisis (Abdenur & Muggah, 2017), but UNASUR did not come up with a new strategy.

In the months leading up to the vote on the creation of the Constituent Assembly, which were marked by violent protest (in which an estimated 113 people died), UNASUR was absent. As stated by the former Secretary General of UNASUR, Ernesto Samper, "The intervention of Unasur in the Venezuelan process is absolutely frozen"[93] (as cited in El Universo, 2017).

As Maduro went ahead with plans to create the Constituent Assembly in July 2017, Argentina and Panama announced that they would not recognize the legitimacy of this body. However, despite the international outcry (including by MERCOSUR and the OAS), UNASUR remained inactive.

There are two main reasons why UNASUR went from chief mediator to quiet observer. One the one hand, the mediation approach taken by UNASUR had been ineffective up to that date and UNASUR did not have an alternative strategy. On the other hand, UNASUR was dealing with internal issues. UNASUR had been left without leadership at the beginning of 2017,

[92] For more details on the solidarity between Bolivarian leaders read Torre (2017).
[93] Original quote in Spanish "La intervención de Unasur en el proceso de Venezuela está absolutamente congelada."

unable to elect a new Secretary General due to a divide between left-wing and right-wing governments within the organization. Hence, UNASUR was functioning only on an administrative level, but not on a political level since the beginning of the year 2017.[94]

In April 2018, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Paraguay (i.e. the newly elected right-wing governments in South America) suspended their membership temporarily from UNASUR. Their announcement followed the take-over of the Pro-tempore Presidency of UNASUR by Bolivia after the end of Venezuela's term. The six members asked for concrete results that would ensure the functioning of the body (such as through the election of the Secretary General) and a change of the unanimity rule, which had stopped UNASUR from functioning due to the vetoes of one or more member states (Sanahuja & Comini, 2018). In August 2018, Colombia was the first country to officially leave the bloc. The Colombian president Iván Duque Márquez stated that UNASUR due to its silence and complacency had been "the greatest accomplice of the Venezuelan dictatorship" (Deutsche Welle, 2018a).

To summarize, UNASUR followed a strategy of mediation in contrast to other regional bodies that tried to put pressure on Maduro through suspension from the organization or the threat of sanctions. Therefore, UNASUR was the only actor trying to facilitate dialogue between the opposition and government. UNASUR was also the only regional body that was accompanying elections in Venezuela. Despite the mediation efforts by UNASUR in 2014, 2015 and 2016, Maduro continued to undermine democratic institutions.

The failed mediation and continued crisis in Venezuela not only proved the inability of UNASUR to exert any pressure on Maduro, it also had a destabilizing effect on the organization of UNASUR itself, which was unable to develop a unanimous response in a climate of ideological divide between member states.

8.4.The Brazilian strategy and its limits

This section analyses which strategies Brazil pursued in the Venezuelan crisis from 2013 to 2018 and why. Starting with a description of Brazil's mediation in UNASUR and alternative

[94] The details of UNASUR's internal crisis will be discussed in Chapter 9.

democracy promotion strategies, the Venezuelan case highlights the limits of Brazil's consensual hegemonic approach to regional democracy promotion.

The Brazilian strategy

Brazil's strategy in the case of Venezuela went through several stages in the timeframe of 2013 to 2018: from mediation through UNASUR, to bilateral talks with the government (and later with the Venezuelan opposition), to open criticism in regional fora of the OAS and MERCOSUR, to a strategy of quiet observation. The Brazilian strategy is discussed below in chronological order.

1.) Mediation

After Maduro's contested election in April 2013, he received strong backing from Brazil. Following a meeting with Maduro (that entailed discussions over cooperation between the two countries concerning food supply for Venezuela, the oil and gas sector and a construction project by Brazilian firm Odebrecht), Dilma Rousseff stated that she would wish Maduro great success with his mandate, and that she would offer him the same close relationship that Lula and Chavez had. Unofficially, it was said that Rousseff advised Maduro to tone down his rhetoric against the opposition. At that time Venezuela was Brazil's second largest market for exports of manufactured goods after Argentina (P. Murphy et al., 2013).

Maduro's election had also been favoured by Brazil's business elite, because of the business deals that Chavez and Lula had set up, with favourable conditions for Brazil's companies which did not face nationalization or foreign exchange controls. Brazil's investments in Venezuela were estimated to amount to $20 billion (Esteban, 2013).

However, when Maduro's government was increasingly repressing street protests and any political opposition in Venezuela in 2014, the relationship between Rousseff and Maduro became less amicable (Winter, 2014). Brazil then turned to UNASUR to mediate in the increasingly violent clashes between the Maduro government and the opposition.

In 2014 Brazil grew more and more sceptical of Maduro's governing practices. The Brazilian government tried to encourage Maduro to change his practices, but to no avail. While Brazil still officially endorsed Maduro's government, the support was less and less enthusiastic. Some

subtle changes in Brazil's stance towards Venezuela have been noted by Winter (2014). He points to the event of Chilean President Michelle Bachelet's inauguration in March 2014. Maduro wanted to use the opportunity to meet with South American leaders to have a declaration of support issued for his government. Rousseff however did not like the idea and left Chile shortly after the inauguration. When becoming aware of it, Maduro abruptly cancelled his trip. When the foreign ministers of UNASUR met the next day, they decided not to issue a declaration of support for Maduro and refrained from taking any side. Instead, they issued a statement condemning violence and asking all parties to come together for dialogue.

At the beginning of UNASUR's efforts to mediate in Venezuela, Brazil was a very active member involved in facilitating dialogue between the government and the opposition. As a Brazilian diplomat states, the UNASUR mediation team made up of foreign ministers of Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador visited Venezuela in 2014 six times, during which the level of violence in the protests were reduced and the discourse between the government and the opposition was toned down (Brazilian diplomat A, 10.01.2017, online).

The mediation efforts of UNASUR at the time were an interesting case to evaluate Brazil's capacity to promote democracy through UNASUR. Stuenkel (2014) argued, that since Brazil was the most important member of UNASUR, failure by UNASUR to defend democracy in Venezuela would have to be blamed on Brazil.

Despite Brazil's sincere effort to mediate in the form of UNASUR's team of Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador, with the main aim to de-escalate the tensions, the UNASUR mission only provided very limited results. While UNASUR's team managed to bring the government and the opposition to the negotiation table, no lasting resolution to the conflict could be found (as discussed in the previous section).
In November 2014, the Secretary General of UNASUR Ernesto Samper visited the Brazilian superior electoral court TSE to discuss Brazil's contribution to UNASUR's electoral missions, which it confirmed (Tribunal Superior Eleitora, 2014).

When UNASUR's mediation mission in Venezuela stalled in May 2014, Brazil tried to continue its strategy of mediation through bilateral channels by sending its foreign minister to Caracas. In late 2014, Brazil's foreign minister Luiz Alberto Figueiredo Machado (who was also a member of the UNASUR mediation team) worked intensively to mediate in Venezuela. As highlighted by a researcher, at some point Figueiredo travelled to Venezuela every two

weeks, but Venezuela used these visits just to postpone a solution, so Brazil abandoned that strategy (Researcher, 12.07.2017, Sao Paulo).

2.) Talks with the Venezuelan opposition

In June 2015, the Venezuelan opposition called on Rousseff to speak to Maduro on behalf of the political prisoner and Venezuelan opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez. Thereby the political crisis in Venezuela also entered domestic politics in Brazil. Criticizing the alignment of the PT with the Maduro government, Senator Aécio Neves, president of the PSDB, planned his own visit to Caracas with an official delegation of Deputies (Venceslau & Decat, 2015), in which he intended to visit Leopoldo Lopez. However, the visit was stopped by protesters who attacked the bus of the Brazilian delegation (BBC News, 2015).[95]

The relationship between Brazil and Venezuela hit a new low in October 2015 when Venezuela vetoed Brazil's leadership of UNASUR's electoral mission in Venezuela, which should have been led by the Brazilian Supreme Court President Nelson Jobim. Brazil withdrew from the mission, stating that Venezuela did not provide the conditions for fair observation (Vyas, 2015).

From this moment on, Brazil did not take on any official leadership role in UNASUR's mediation. As mentioned before, the new team of mediators in 2016 was comprised of former presidents and prime ministers outside the region of South America (from Panama, Spain and the Dominican Republic) and was initiated mainly by UNASUR's Secretary General Ernesto Samper.[96]

As Brazil decreased its efforts in mediation through UNASUR, it did not become inactive. In February 2016 Rousseff invited members of the Venezuelan opposition to Brasilia. Then foreign minister Mauro Vieira officially welcomed representatives of the opposition Luis Florido and Williams Dávila in Brasilia, a visit that happened for the first time in 17 years

[95] Lopez was later released from prison in July 2017 but remained under house arrest.

[96] By inviting former and not active politicians outside of South America to mediate, UNASUR tried to find mediators who would be considered impartial and accepted by both the government and opposition. It is important to note that the former politicians did not act on behalf of their countries, but in a personal capacity. The three main negotiators were members of centre-left parties (Jose Luis Zapatero from Spain's Socialist Workers' Party, Leonel Fernández of the Dominican Liberation Party and Martín Torrijos of Panama's Democratic Revolutionary Party) which allowed them to be initially accepted by both the Maduro government and opposition. However, the leftist leaning of the negotiators was mainly needed to ensure Maduro's approval.

(Stuenkel, 2016). The meeting between Venezuela's opposition and Brazil's government was highly contested by the Venezuelan government at the time (Stuenkel, 2017).

Hence, Brazil changed its strategy in 2016 from engaging through UNASUR to focusing on establishing contacts with the opposition, which was expected to come to power at that point (Researcher, 12.7.2017, Sao Paulo). The timing of the change in strategy is important, since it happened when Rousseff was still in office, and can therefore not be attributed to the change of the presidency that happened in August 2016, when Rousseff was impeached.[97]

In June 2016, when Rousseff's powers had been suspended during the ongoing impeachment proceedings, the Venezuelan opposition candidate Henrique Capriles paid a visit to Brasilia. He debated over Venezuela's turn to take over the MERCOSUR presidency with the new foreign minister Jose Serra of the PSDP party. Capriles said it would be inacceptable for Venezuela to take over the MERCOSUR presidency, and he also criticized UNASUR, and more specifically its Secretary General Ernesto Samper, who (according to Capriles) voiced his personal opinion in the name of the regional organization. Capriles said that the UNASUR strategy should be revised, and that the bloc should not be acting as a club of friends (EFE, 2016).

3.) Open criticism in MERCOSUR and the OAS

With the impeachment of Rousseff in August 2016 and the taking over of the presidency by Michel Temer, Brazil's relationship with Venezuela became even more distant, as stated by a Brazilian diplomat:

> "The situation has changed radically. With the centre-right government we had clashes in our relationships with Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador. The ambassadors were requested to leave their posts. The bilateral relations with these countries were frozen" (Brazilian diplomat D, 4.8.2017, Brasilia).

[97] Rousseff's impeachment was condemned publicly by Maduro, who stated that the events were a coup and danger to regional stability (Chinea, 2016).

As Michel Temer took office, he also paid increasing attention to MERCOSUR, rather than UNASUR, as a forum for regional cooperation. The shifted focus can be attributed to a change in foreign policy priorities (such as the prioritization of trade issues and relations with the EU and US), but also to the political orientation of member states of the respective organizations. While Brazil's interim government was scrutinized by left-wing governments in UNASUR, it had the support of fellow right-wing governments in MERCOSUR. As a result, the Temer administration had much more leverage in MERCOSUR than in UNASUR at the time, which allowed Brazil and the other members of MERCOSUR to suspend Venezuela's participation in the trade bloc in December 2016.

With the Temer administration in power, the tone between Temer against Maduro became more confrontational. Criticism was voiced more openly by both sides. Maduro called the Temer government "fascistic" (Todo Noticias, 2017).

Brazil put pressure on Maduro through the indefinite suspension of Venezuela from MERCOSUR in August 2017, after Maduro had created a pro-government Constituent Assembly to circumvent democratic institutions and further cement his power (Reuters, 2017c). Since MERCOSUR was comprised of right-wing governments, and Argentina advocated strongly for Venezuela's suspension, MERCOSUR offered a better platform for Brazil to exert pressure on Maduro. The expulsion of Venezuela from the trade block also came in handy as the EU and MERCOSUR were taking up talks for a trade partnership.[98]

In addition to the suspension of Venezuela from MERCOSUR, Brazil also joined the Lima group (comprised of 12 members of the OAS), that issued a statement in August 2017 to condemn the creation of the Constituent Assembly and to stress that the group would not recognize the legitimacy of this body.

The Brazilian strategy towards Venezuela after the creation of the Constituent Assembly was criticized by some high-ranking members of the PT. Venezuela's suspension from MERCOSUR was criticized as illegitimate by former president Dilma Rousseff in an interview with the German press in October 2017 (RT Deutsch, 2017). The leader of the Brazilian Workers Party, Gleisi Hoffmann, expressed his solidarity with Maduro and his Constituent Assembly in a statement (as cited in Stuenkel, 2017). However, Hoffmann was then criticized

[98] The suspension of Venezuela did not have any immediate economic impacts on either Venezuela or MERCOSUR members, since MERCOSUR did not implement economic sanctions and kept existing trade and migration policies unchanged (Dilorenzo, 2017).

by Lula, who wanted Brazil to have a more neutral position towards Venezuela. The diverging views highlighted the disagreements over the strategy towards Venezuela within Brazil and within the PT at the time (C. Saebra, 2017).

Overall, the PT had been very careful in openly criticizing the Maduro regime. As argued by a Brazilian researcher, the Brazilian left responded to Maduro by applying a strategy of quiet diplomacy. He furthermore argued that the Brazilian Foreign Policy Advisor to the President of Brazil (2006-2016) Aurelio Garcia was critical of Maduro, but that he would not voice his criticism in public (Santoro, 9.8.2017, Rio de Janeiro).

The Temer administration did not have any ideological link or feeling of solidarity with the Venezuelan government. However, despite the change in rhetoric, Temer refrained from implementing sanctions against Venezuela, thereby continuing the foreign policy tradition of non-intervention in domestic affairs.[99]

4.) Observation

As the strategy of criticism and suspension from MERCOSUR did not lead to any tangible results, Brazil opted to observe the situation in Venezuela quietly through its diplomatic and military contacts in Caracas. As pointed out by a Brazilian diplomat:

> "Our [diplomatic] missions in Caracas have been reinforced. We are sending more diplomats. The risk of an escalation is tremendous. (…) In the most part what we have done is watch. Watch very closely" (Brazilian diplomat B, 25.7.2017, Brasilia).

Brazil and Venezuela also communicated through the channels of the military personnel of each country. As highlighted by a Brazilian diplomat in an interview, the Brazilian military has "sensitive talks with Venezuela today. The military has contact. The military keeps their channels of communication open" (Brazilian diplomat C, 25.7.2017, Brasilia). This statement was confirmed by another Brazilian diplomat, who stressed that that the correspondence

[99] In September 2017, US president Trump invited the presidents of Brazil (Michel Temer), Colombia (Juan Manuel Santos), Panama (Juan Carlos Varela) and the Argentinian vice president (Gabriela Michetti) to Washington to discuss the situation in Venezuela, stressing that additional measures should be taken to restore democracy in Venezuela. Temer stated in a press conference after the meeting that all presidents had agreed that international pressure needed to be increased, but without intervening in Venezuela directly (Holland & Boadle, 2017).

between the military "helps to promote an agenda of stability. It helps us to understand the problems better" (Brazilian diplomat B, 25.7.2017, Brasilia).

However, Brazil did not see the Venezuelan crisis as a threat that would justify the cost of intervention. As highlighted by a researcher, the only countries perceived to be capable of putting pressure on Caracas were China, Cuba, and Russia, who continued to support Maduro's regime (Researcher, 11.7.2017, Sao Paulo).

Brazil had already exhausted all diplomatic efforts. Military intervention was out of the question for the administrations of Rousseff and Temer, and Brazil also did not see any benefit in imposing economic sanctions. As pointed out by a Brazilian official:

> "General economic sanctions won't be productive. They provide just another excuse for Maduro (…) There is not much we can do. We can talk to countries that support Maduro. (…) It is something we should do. We should step up efforts to contact Cuba, China, Russia, and countries in the Caribbean that receive cheap oil and therefore support Venezuela in the OAS" (Brazilian official A, 28.07.2017, Brasilia).

In contrast to the Brazilian official who suggested working with Maduro's supporters outside the region to put pressure on Maduro, the involvement of China or Russia has also been perceived as a potential threat by members of the Itamaraty. A Brazilian diplomat mentioned "a threat of growing interference of China and Russia" (Brazilian diplomat D, 4.8.2017) but voiced hopes regarding the reviving of UNASUR's efforts in mediation, including potential involvement of the Cuban government.

At this point, there was internal disagreement within the Itamaraty as to which regional mechanisms could be most useful in promoting democracy in Venezuela. Pointing at the political deadlock in UNASUR, one Brazilian official mentioned MERCOSUR and the OAS as potential instruments for Brazil's foreign policy (Brazilian official A, 28.07.2017, Brasilia). While the PT government had been very hesitant to work with the OAS because it wanted to keep US influence outside the region, the Temer government had no opposition to cooperating with the US within the context of the OAS. An EU official emphasized that the interim government tried to work increasingly through the OAS, although without success (EU official, 31.7.2017, Brasilia).

In December 2017, the bilateral relationship between Venezuela and Brazil deteriorated further. Venezuela expelled Brazil's ambassador from Caracas, stating that "diplomatic relations with Brazil will not be restored until the government reinstates the constitutional order it has effectively broken" (as cited in BBC, 2017), referring to the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, which the Venezuelan government had interpreted as a right-wing coup. In the following days, Brazil reacted in declaring Venezuelan diplomat Gerardo Delgado a persona non grata.

In May 2018, Brazil joined forces with other Latin American governments to criticize the Maduro government in a statement by the Lima group. In a joint statement in May 2018 the group stressed that Venezuelan elections did not comply with the international standards of free and fair elections. They further announced that they would recall their ambassadors in Caracas for consultations. Moreover, they reiterated their concern about the deepening political, economic, social and humanitarian crisis, pointing to the migration flows to their countries and the loss of democratic institutions, the rule of law and political freedoms (Lima group, 2018).[100]

As the economic and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela deepened, an increasing number of refugees crossed the border to Brazil. As a response to the influx of refugees in Brazil's border region, violence against Venezuelans increased, including violent attacks on refugee camps. The Brazilian government increased its military personnel in the region, however it refused to close the border because it would have been illegal to do so (as stated by Brazil's minister of security Sergio Etchegoyen) (BBC, 2018b). The decision was based on a ruling by the Brazilian Supreme Court, which overturned a decision by the Federal Judge in Roraima, who had closed the border temporarily, and stopped the admission of Venezuelans (UNHCR, 2018).

As the Venezuelan crisis continued, Jair Bolsonaro won the presidential elections and took office on the 1st of January 2019. Vowing to take a harder stance towards Venezuela jointly with the US at the beginning of 2019, Bolsonaro's foreign policy towards Venezuela was harsh in rhetoric but lacked corresponding action. Officially recognizing Juan Guiado as Venezuela's

[100] In their declaration they also announced that they would submit a new resolution on the situation in Venezuela to the General Assembly of the OAS. The declaration also included an action plan on how to address the situation, which includes the convening of a high-level meeting to discuss how to deal with the migration and refugee matters in the receiving countries as well as the public health situation and the outbreak of diseases.

legitimate president, Bolsonaro criticized Maduro openly. However, after initial comments not to rule out military intervention, Bolsonaro told Trump in August 2019 that Brazil would not participate in a military intervention in Venezuela (Fernandes, 2019). At the time of writing, the discourse between Bolsonaro and Maduro became increasingly hostile, and Brazil withdrew its diplomatic corps from Venezuela (Deutsche Welle, 2020). As Brazil under Bolsonaro is still in the process of deciding on its strategy towards Venezuela and in reworking its bilateral relations with the US, the analysis of Brazil's foreign policy under Bolsonaro's administration goes beyond the scope of this dissertation.

To conclude, Brazil initially opted for a strategy of mediation through UNASUR, in which it played a leading role. As the intensive efforts to mediate between the Venezuelan government and opposition did not have a major impact on the Maduro government's undemocratic practices, and Maduro rejected Brazilian leadership in UNASUR's mediation mission, Brasilia abandoned the mediation efforts and turned to establishing contacts with the Venezuelan opposition. As the Temer government came to power in Brazil, the discourse towards Venezuela became more openly critical, and Temer tried to work through MERCOSUR and the OAS to put pressure on Maduro (while refraining from adopting any sanctions). As both the mediation and the open criticism did not seem to have any effect on Maduro, Brazil opted to take on the role of an observer.

There are two questions that need to be answered in order to explain why Brazil adopted and modified its strategy towards Venezuela. First, why (and to what extent) was Brazil motivated to promote democracy in Venezuela. And second, why was Brazil (not) capable of promoting democracy in the Venezuelan case. The next sections therefore deal with Brazil's willingness and capacity in democracy promotion.

Brazil's willingness to promote democracy in Venezuela

Brazil had a strong interest in solving the Venezuelan crisis, since the stakes of an escalation of the conflict were especially high for Brazil in this case. The deteriorating political, economic, and humanitarian situation in Venezuela had direct negative impacts on Brazil. As consensual hegemon, Brazil was compelled to promote democracy based on its interests in economic and political stability, thereby defending the underpinnings of its regional hegemonic project.

From an economic perspective, Brazil's investments in Venezuela's infrastructure were threatened by the crisis. Brazilian companies therefore pushed the government of Rousseff to act in the Venezuelan crisis in 2015 in a more assertive way, as the Venezuelan public sector owed Brazilian companies $2.5 billion US dollars (Merke et al., 2015).

Venezuela was the second biggest trading partner of Brazil. During the Lula and Rousseff administrations Brazil's national development bank (BNDES) financed development projects in Venezuela worth 3.2 billion US dollars. Only in 2016 the BNDES stopped issuing new credits to Venezuela and stopped the financing of development projects in 2017 (Landim & Carneiro, 2017). When Venezuela failed to pay back its debt to Brazil in 2018, the Brazilian Congress voted to cover Venezuela's loans to the BNDES using public funds, since Brazil under Rousseff had agreed to act as a guarantor of the loans (Brooks, 2018).

When it became clear that Brazil's economic investments in Venezuela were lost as Venezuela was unable to pay back its loans, the Temer government changed its focus on trade relations with the EU. In this setting, the Venezuelan membership in MERCOSUR turned from an opportunity for Brazilian exports, to a hurdle in negotiations for a MERCOSUR-EU trade deal.[101] The suspension of Venezuela from MERCOSUR was therefore mainly motivated by Brazil's economic interests rather than an interest in sanctioning the undemocratic practices of the Venezuelan government.

Another major concern for Brazil was the deepening humanitarian crisis, which led to migration flows in Brazil's border region. As pointed out by a Brazilian official, the situation at Brazil's northern border became an increasing issue, as the region is one of the poorest regions in Brazil (Brazilian official A, 28.07.2017, Brasilia). As more than ten thousand Venezuelans crossed the border to Brazil (Human Rights Watch, 2017), the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela became an increasing security threat in Brazil.

Over the course of the crisis since 2013 Brazil had a major interest in stabilizing Venezuela and in de-escalating the tensions. Based on Brazil's consensual hegemonic approach to democracy promotion its options were limited. In this context, it is important to ask to what extent UNASUR provided a useful platform for Brazil's efforts to promote democracy and (above all) regional stability.

[101] Venezuela's membership in MERCOSUR had posed problems to the negotiations since the EU was critical of Venezuela's human rights abuses (Miraglia, 2016). Moreover, the internal conflict between MERCOSUR member states made it more difficult for MERCOSUR to negotiate coherently with an external partner.

Brazil's motivation to promote democracy through UNASUR

As mentioned before, Brazil changed its strategy from mediation to open criticism and to observation. Depending on the strategy chosen, Brazil used different channels to pursue its foreign policy goals.

It is clear, that UNASUR was the ideal organization for Brazil's initial strategy of mediation. Since UNASUR was the only organization engaged in mediation in the crisis in Venezuela, and the UNASUR mission was respected by the government and the opposition, Brazil had to work through UNASUR if it wanted to work through a regional organization. The institutional mantle of UNASUR was necessary for Brazil's preferred strategy of consensual hegemony. Working through UNASUR allowed Brazil to circumvent accusations of (coercive) hegemonic behaviour and of intervention in internal affairs of Venezuela. Since Maduro had invited UNASUR to mediate, Brazil's involvement in UNASUR's first mediation effort in 2014 was in line with the regional norms of respect for national sovereignty and multilateralism.

This initial strategy was abandoned due to two main factors: first, Brazil realized that the strategy was not effective, since it failed to persuade the Venezuelan government to change its practices. Second, Brazil's leadership of UNASUR's election mission was vetoed by Venezuela, which hindered Brazil's use of consensual hegemony in the Venezuelan case (as Venezuela refused to consent to Brazil's leadership). While the election mission was only part of UNASUR's engagement in Venezuela, the rejection of Brazil's leadership of the election mission was a sign for Venezuela's unease with Brazil's leadership in UNASUR overall.

While UNASUR continued the strategy of mediation, led by former Secretary General Ernesto Samper, Brazil looked for other means to pursue a new strategy. UNASUR did not provide a regional space in which Brazil could put pressure on Maduro because of the continued support of Maduro by Bolivia and Ecuador. The inability of Brazil to create a consensus-based response to Venezuela is demonstrated by UNASUR's reaction of Venezuela's Supreme Court's power grab in March 2017 when Bolivia and Ecuador refused to sign the communiqué.

The democracy promotion tools developed for UNASUR are dependent on a consensual approach, which worked in the climate of regional ideological coherence under the Lula presidency. However, Brazil could not fabricate consensus in the context of an increasing regional divide between left-wing and right-wing governments. Moreover, Brazil's ability to work through UNASUR was fundamentally weakened by Rousseff's impeachment and by the regional scepticism towards Temer's interim government.

Brazil's choice to work through MERCOSUR and the Lima Group was motivated by the possibility to work with governments that respected Brazil's government and that had a similar foreign policy agenda towards Venezuela. Brazil hence deployed a strategy of forum shopping, looking for a regional forum in which it could assert a consensual hegemonic leadership approach.

When the suspension from MERCOSUR and the open criticism in the OAS also failed to lead to any change in Venezuela, Brazil ran out of options. Brazil, committed to fostering a non-interventionist solution to the crisis, had no other (non-military) means of exerting pressure on the Maduro government, especially since economic sanctions were not considered a viable option.

To summarize, it can be argued that Brazil had economic and security interests that motivated its agenda of democracy promotion in Venezuela. A stable political climate and economy in Venezuela would have benefitted Brazil's economic and security interests. Brazil opted for a strategy of working through regional organizations (by trying to mediate and to put pressure through criticism), and it did not consider a more assertive, coercive strategy. Military intervention and economic sanctions were not on the table due to Brazil's continued conformity with the norm of non-intervention, the cost-benefit calculation of implementing sanctions and the commitment to not appear as a regional big bully. Despite the lack of success, Brazil remained committed to its strategy of consensual hegemony.

The case of Venezuela demonstrates the limits of Brazil's leadership capacity in democracy promotion through consensual hegemony in the context of UNASUR. The next section therefore looks at the constraining factors, that hampered Brazil's ability to lead democracy promotion.

Enabling and constraining factors for Brazil's leadership

Given the importance of Venezuela with regard to regional stability and Brazil's economic interests, it is clear that Brazil's unfruitful democracy promotion strategy did not result from a lack of motivation to solve the crisis, but rather from the limited capacity of Brazil to exert leadership through its consensual hegemonic approach. In the following section, the domestic, regional, international, and bilateral factors that hampered Brazil's approach are discussed.

1.) Domestic factors

During Rousseff's term, Brazil faced an economic decline and rising inflation which limited Rousseff's political leeway (A. Hoffmann et al., 2015) and demanded a greater focus on domestic political issues (compared to Lula's emphasis on foreign policy). With the start of the impeachment proceedings against Rousseff, Brazil's foreign policy agenda was weakened further. As pointed out by a European Union official, commenting on Brazil's lack of leadership in regional issues:

> "The government in Brazil is focused on itself. They are doing the minimum for regional organizations. They don't fund new initiatives" (EU official, 31.7. 2017, Brasilia).

The weak foreign ministry during the Rousseff presidency can be witnessed by the rapid change of foreign ministers. During the Lula presidency, Brazil had a strong foreign ministry. As highlighted by a researcher: "Cardoso and Lula dedicated a lot of time to foreign policy; they had strong foreign ministers" (Mauricio Santoro, 09.08.2017, Rio de Janeiro). However, during the Rousseff presidency, Brazil had five different foreign ministers. The ministers did not have enough time to create a strong foreign policy. Hence, Brazil had more difficulty projecting power, not just because of the recession but also because of the internal political instability (Santoro, 9.8.2017, Rio de Janeiro).

Rousseff was not able to create consensus among policy makers in Brazil. Gomes and Saraiva (2016, p. 91) argue that internal disputes in Brasilia and the lack of will of the presidency to create a consensus on how to act in the crisis of Venezuela made it difficult for Brazil to assert a leadership role.

Rousseff's own political vulnerability became apparent as the impeachment proceedings against her started. The impeachment was a sign for the limited backing that Rousseff had within the Brazilian congress. It also demonstrated that Brazil was prone to suffer from power struggles between government and the opposition (similar to the problems that other governments had faced in the region). In addition, Rousseff struggled with internal disputes in her own party and her relationship with the Itamaraty was based on mistrust (the frequent change of foreign ministers under Rousseff being one example of this) (Malamud, 2017, p. 157). In this sense Brazil did not present itself as a country that could be followed.

After the impeachment of Rousseff, the foreign policy strategy of Temer towards Venezuela was also criticized by the PT, who in turn had internal disagreements on the strategy that should be followed. Brazil's discourse towards Venezuela was hence fractured depending on party lines and even within political parties. In this sense, Brazil did not offer a coherent idea for how to deal with the Venezuelan crisis that could have attracted coherent followership in the region or abroad.

As Michel Temer took over the presidency, Brazil's relationships with left-wing governments were problematic. As pointed out by a Brazilian diplomat, who refers to Brazil's role in the Venezuelan crisis:

> "the world needs Brazil as a leader. But what we have is a weak foreign policy. The Brazilian stance is contested by some because they don't believe that the government is legitimate. We see that by the postponements of foreign visits and cancellations of meetings" (Brazilian diplomat D, 4.8.2017, Brasilia).

The interim government was not recognized as legitimate by some governments in the region, which made it almost impossible for Brazil to draw on its consensual hegemonic power in the region. Brazil had to work hard to re-establish regional and international trust, which was a difficult starting point for an attempt to take on a leadership role.

2.) Regional factors

In the Venezuelan crisis, Brazil faced an ideologically divided South America. The increasing divide between right-wing and left-wing governments in the region made a strategy of consensual hegemony more and more difficult. Especially within the organization of UNASUR, where member states could not agree on a common strategy towards Venezuela, the ideological divide was most apparent.

As more and more right-wing or centre-right governments were elected in South America (in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, and Peru), the Temer administration found new allies in the region. The new alliance of 8 South American right-wing governments was then formalized through the creation of yet another regional organization - PROSUR – which will be briefly discussed in Chapter 9.

Changes in political orientation of governments in power changed Brazil's preference for working through different regional bodies. While the PT governments had preferred UNASUR,

the Temer government was faced with heavy criticism within UNASUR. However, Temer could count on support in MERCOSUR and within the Lima group.

While Brazil could opt for forum shopping to find the right environment of ideological coherence needed for its consensual hegemonic approach, the inability to create consensus in a forum such as UNASUR shows the weakness of Brazil's approach.[102]

3.) International factors

In the Venezuelan case, the US did not provide a hurdle for Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion. While the US employed economic sanctions against Venezuela's elite and voiced open criticism of the Maduro government, the US was uninvolved in mediation and refrained from military intervention. The US therefore left space for Brazil to potentially play the role of chief mediator. During the Temer administration, the US and Brazil worked together in the Lima group to criticize the Maduro government (however, with no effect). Trump's call for military intervention did not materialize, and therefore did not interfere with Brazil's strategy of non-intervention in Venezuela's affairs.

The relative absence of the US involvement in Venezuela however did not mean that Brazil's influence in Venezuela was not undermined by the presence of other external actors. In economic terms, the main facilitators and supporters of the Maduro government were Russia and China. Because of the financial support of China, Brazil's ability to put economic pressure on Maduro was limited.[103]

Regarding political support outside the region of South America, Maduro could rely on the loyalty of many Caribbean states and Cuba. Through their continued support, Brazil could not put pressure on Venezuela in the OAS for a long time and had to resort to smaller groupings, such as the Lima group, to voice open criticism.[104]

Maduro's allies did not directly interfere with Brazil's strategy of mediation, but they limited Venezuela's dependency on Brazil as a political partner within regional organizations and as an economic partner for investments in Venezuela.

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[102] Brazil's attempt to push for reform within UNASUR to overcome the political deadlock will be discussed in detail in Chapter 9.

[103] When the US imposed an embargo on oil from Venezuela's state company PDVSA in January 2019 (the US previously had been the largest importer of Venezuela's crude oil), Venezuela could rely on Russian companies to buy Venezuela's crude oil and distribute it to third states, among them China (Faiola & DeYoung, 2020).

[104] As mentioned before, some Caribbean nations endorsed Guiadó as the rightful president of Venezuela in 2019.

4.) Bilateral factors

During the PT presidencies, the relationship between Brazil and Venezuela were relatively friendly. However, the relationship was increasingly impacted negatively as Maduro continued his undemocratic practices. At the beginning of Rousseff's presidency, Brazil's involvement in Venezuela under UNASUR was welcomed by Maduro and was also accepted by the opposition. However, the relationship was weakened by mutual distrust as expressed through Venezuela's veto against Brazil's leadership of UNASUR's electoral mission. When Rousseff invited the Venezuelan opposition for talks in Brazil, the relationship with Maduro deteriorated further. With the impeachment of Rousseff, the relationships between the two countries became hostile, which made it impossible for Brazil to take up a role as a mediator.

In contrast to the cases of Bolivia and Paraguay, Brazil did not have the economic or political influence in Venezuela to pressure the government into changing its course. Brazil also did not have the ideational capital to convince Maduro to return to a path of democracy. The case of Venezuela therefore highlights clearly how democracy promotion is more challenging in the context where the receiving state is not in a relationship of dependency with the providing state. The absence of a power imbalance in the bilateral relationship is hence an important limit to the potential success of a consensual hegemonic approach to democracy promotion.

Conclusion

To summarize, one can state that Brazil's capacity to promote democracy in Venezuela was hampered by several factors. First, Brazil struggled with its own domestic problems, which translated into a weak foreign policy and tensions in its relations with its neighbours. The region was divided over the Venezuelan crisis, which made a consensual leadership more and more difficult. Due to the continued financial support from China, Russia and some Caribbean states, Brazil's ability to put pressure on Maduro was weak.

Because of this combination of factors, Brazil's strategy of mediation through UNASUR and of asserting pressure through MERCOSUR and the Lima group was unsuccessful. The Venezuelan case proved to be difficult for Brazil's leadership style, that was based on non-interference in domestic affairs and low-cost intervention, which had no impact on Maduro's government.

UNASUR stopped being a relevant regional organization for Brazil because of several reasons. First, the strategy of mediation was only used by Maduro to postpone any solution and to stay in power. Second, Brazil's participation in UNASUR's electoral mission was vetoed by Caracas, which ruled out a consensual hegemonic strategy which rests on the acceptance of Brazil's involvement in the target country. Third, Brazil's role within UNASUR was contested after the impeachment of Rousseff which affected Brazil's capacity to generate followership or consensual decision-making within the organization. Finally, UNASUR stopped being fully operational in 2017 due to the political deadlock.

The decline and eventual inoperability of UNASUR will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter, as it highlights the limits of the institutional architecture of UNASUR, which was based on Brazil's consensual hegemonic leadership approach.

CHAPTER 9 - The crisis within UNASUR

Given the limited operability of UNASUR in 2017 and 2018, which naturally affected Brazil's engagement with the organization, it is important to discuss in more detail how UNASUR changed from being the most relevant organization for political cooperation in South America to a non-functional regional body within only 10 years.

The internal crisis of UNASUR became apparent in January 2017 when Secretary General Ernesto Samper finished his term and UNASUR member states were not able to agree on a candidate to replace him. Without the position filled, UNASUR continued to exist, but was not fully operational. Failed attempts to overcome the political deadlock finally let 8 members to suspend their membership in 2018 and to announce the creation of an alternative body for regional cooperation – PROSUR.

As it is argued here, the political deadlock surrounding the election of a Secretary General was a symptom rather than a cause of UNASUR's decline. UNASUR's internal issues were related to its consensus-based decision-making structure and weak institutionalization (as described in Chapter 5.2.1), which could not function in a climate of regional ideological heterogeneity, which was exacerbated by the Venezuelan political crisis. Due to the increasing absence of Brazil's leadership within the organization, the unoccupied post of Secretary General led to a complete leadership vacuum within UNASUR. With a reorganization of the region's political and military ties to the United States, the purpose of UNASUR to create a political region safeguarded from US influence, became obsolete.

This chapter therefore looks at the causes for UNASUR's internal crisis in more detail and explains why the organization could not be revived in 2018, despite the efforts undertaken by Brazil and other member states. The chapter also examines the creation of PROSUR, as a follow-up organization of UNASUR. As will be discussed, PROSUR risks meeting the same fate as UNASUR since Brazil and other states in South America continue to create weak institutions that depend on regional ideological coherence to function properly.

The chapter has two aims. First, it highlights the shortcomings of Brazil's model for regional cooperation as demonstrated in the example of UNASUR's decline. Second, it explains why UNASUR ceased to be a relevant forum for Brazil's foreign policy strategy in a changing domestic, regional, and international political environment.

The chapter is divided into four sections that discuss the four main issues that can explain UNASUR's decline: First, the structural issues related to UNASUR's decision-making process; second, the Venezuelan crisis as a factor for further division within the region; third, Brazil's disengagement from UNASUR and the associated leadership vacuum; and fourth, the rapprochement of South American governments and the United States.

1.) *The consensus-based decision-making structure in the context of a regional ideological divide*

The institutional structure of UNASUR mirrors Brazil's approach of consensual hegemony to leading regional affairs. The consensus-based decision-making structure of UNASUR worked well in an ideologically homogenous environment. It had the advantage of not threatening the sovereignty of any government. However, with the increasing ideological and political divide in the region of South America, the possibility of a regional consensus became more and more elusive.

The question of ideology refers to two issues: the ideological component of UNASUR as a regional body, and the ideological divide between member states.

Regarding the question as to whether UNASUR is a neutral or a leftist organization, there was some disagreement among member states. While some perceived UNASUR as a neutral organization, some members raised concern about UNASUR's ideological underpinnings. Because of the context of its creation during the pink tide, UNASUR was sometimes perceived as a left-wing organization:

> "Lula has produced a South-Americanization of the region. The result of it is UNASUR. (…) UNASUR has the connotation of being a Brazilian project to establish its region. (…) The creation of UNASUR was possible due to heavy ideological trends. Therefore, UNASUR is subject to prejudices. We need to break them through a re-articulation of what UNASUR represents" (South American government official, 29.11.2016, Quito).

When governments of South America and representatives of South American regional organizations met at the "Mesa de Covergencia" in November 2016, ideological components and challenges of regional cooperation in the context of friction between left-wing and right-wing governments were a relevant topic. 2016 marked a time in South American history when

the pink tide came to an end and was followed by a conservative wave. Mauricio Macri had been elected in Argentina in 2015 and Michel Temer had taken over Brazil's presidency in August 2016 (and more right-wing governments would become elected in the following years). While the Secretary General stressed in his speech that changes of governments should not affect regional integration (Ernesto Samper, 23.11.2016, Quito), the increasing heterogeneity of political views in the region had already started to affect UNASUR.

However, the election of right-wing governments in a region that was previously dominated by left-wing governments was not yet seen as a threat to the functioning of the organization by everyone. As stressed by a UNASUR official:

> "Fragmentation of political orientation is good for the organization. Different opinions are a challenge, but this is positive. The organization was born for people thinking alike. The challenge now is to survive with those [ideological] differences" (UNASUR official B, 22.11.2016, Quito).

Another UNASUR official (Ricardo Malca, 28.02.2020) stressed that UNASUR was established at a time when there was a majority of socialist governments in South America, and that it was a regional body that was coordinating public policies. He stressed that regional cooperation is not ideologized.

However, as time passed, it became clear that the organization suffered greatly from the ideological divide between the left and right-wing governments. This was clear when UNASUR members failed to reach a consensus on the election of a new Secretary General after the end of Ernesto Samper's term in January 2017. The main divide was between the right-wing governments in Argentina and Brazil and the Bolivarian member states (Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela). As highlighted by a Brazilian official:

> "UNASUR worked well when the countries were almost on the same page ideologically. With the change of governments in Argentina and Brazil, Bolivarian countries felt like they were losing control of UNASUR" (Brazilian official A, 28.07.2017, Brasilia).

In this climate of ideological divide, UNASUR was not able to run based on its consensus-based decision-making structure. As a result, meetings between heads of state were cancelled, and UNASUR limited its work to cooperation on issues that were seen as less political, such

as technical cooperation in the domain of infrastructure (as pointed out by several Brazilian officials during interviews in Brasilia in July and August 2017).

After the (rotating) Pro-tempore Presidency of UNASUR was taken over by Bolivia in April 2018, the governments of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Peru announced that they would suspend their participation in the organization temporarily, demanding the appointment of a new Secretary General and the revision of UNASUR's decision-making structure. The bold move by the region's right-wing governments has been identified as an "empty chair strategy" (similar to France's suspension from the European Economic Community in 1965)[105], aimed at putting pressure on other member states (Sanahuja & Comini, 2018). The threat of dismantling the membership of the organization was intended as a step to force other members to resolve the political deadlock within UNASUR, which had already paralyzed the organization for more than a year. The strategy was a last move to try to revive UNASUR.

In August 2018 Colombia announced that it would leave UNASUR, initiating a withdrawal process of 6 months. In March 2019, Ecuador followed, and in April 2019 Argentina, Paraguay, Chile and Brazil followed suit. Brazil declared its wish to leave UNASUR just after it had taken over the Pro-tempore Presidency from Bolivia.

Eight original members of UNASUR (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay and Peru) created an alternative regional body in Santiago de Chile on the 22nd of March 2019, called PROSUR (El Foro para el Progreso de América del Sur). The creation of PROSUR had been initiated by the president of Chile, Sebastián Piñera and the president of Colombia Iván Duque. Since the new regional organization was made up of right-wing and centre-right governments in the region, Herrera (2019) argued that the creation of this regional organization follows a trend of regionalism in Latin America, where regional bodies are ideological franchises of the governments in power.

In comparison to UNASUR, PROSUR is less institutionalized. While the member states declared that PROSUR would be a space for cooperation regarding infrastructure, energy, health, defence, security, and natural disasters (Frenkel, 2019), PROSUR does not have any bureaucratic apparatus that would organize and manage cooperation in these domains in a

[105] For more details read Bajon (2009).

sustained manner. As set out in its founding document, the Santiago Declaration, PROSUR's structure is supposed to remain "flexible" (Declaración Presidencial Sobre La Renovación y El Fortalecimiento de La Integración de América Del Sur, 2019). As pointed out by a researcher, „PROSUR is not really an organization. PROSUR is an idea" (Raul Salgado, 19.02.2020, Skype). While UNASUR's administrative structure was strictly multilateral, and therefore UNASUR can be said to have lacked institutionalization, PROSUR did not build an institutional structure at all. It can be therefore argued that PROSUR did not replace UNASUR, even if that was the intention behind the creation of PROSUR.

PROSUR was created upon the initiative of Chile and Colombia, while Brazil *followed* and joined the initiative, rather than playing a leadership role. This circumstance poses interesting questions (for further research) regarding Brazil's role in the region since Bolsonaro's presidency, as well as regarding Brazil's new foreign policy strategy towards South America. From a first review it can be regarded as a sign of Brazil's deteriorated leadership role in South America and it clearly reflects how the domestic political crisis within Brazil reverberated onto Brazil's role within the region and within UNASUR and PROSUR.

To conclude, the weak institutional structure of UNASUR based on the unwillingness of governments to lift UNASUR's responsibilities to a supranational level, and the strictly multilateral character reflected in the consensus-based decision-making structure, meant that UNASUR could only function in a relatively coherent ideological regional environment that allowed for consensus creation. In the context of PROSUR, governments continued to create a regional body for governments with similar political views.

2.) Venezuela as a divisive factor in the region

One of the most divisive topics within UNASUR was how to handle the crisis in Venezuela. While some countries, most importantly Bolivia, still sided with Maduro, other states became increasingly frustrated by the inability to take on a more assertive stance against Venezuela in

UNASUR. Member states like Brazil and Argentina therefore started to voice their criticism through other regional bodies (such as MERCOSUR and the Lima Group).

During the crisis in Venezuela, the division between the left-wing and right-wing governments became more profound. According to an EU official:

> "Venezuela is causing a division in Latin America. Both, UNASUR and CELAC are suffering" (EU official, 31.7.2017, Brasilia).

Venezuela was not only a contested political topic, but also played a role actively in blocking decision-making within UNASUR. As Venezuela was holding the UNASUR Pro-tempore Presidency from April 2016 and April 2017, it made sure that the organization would not concern itself with Venezuela's domestic crisis in a critical manner.

When Argentina took over the Pro-tempore Presidency in April 2017, it attempted to reorganize the organization. It was at this time that an Argentinian candidate was suggested as a candidate for the post of Secretary General: José Octavio Bordón, an Argentinian diplomat and former ambassador to the United Nations.

While other members had endorsed the candidate, he was vetoed by Venezuela, who insisted that the Secretary General should be at least a minister or former president (Brazilian diplomat D, 4.8.2017, Brasilia). The Venezuelan position was backed by Bolivia and Ecuador, who continued to uphold the solidarity between Bolivarian nations.

As the post of Secretary General remained empty, UNASUR suffered greatly. As pointed out by an UNASUR official, the organization never had an adequate number of personnel, which made it difficult to overcome the absence of the Secretary General (Veloso, 2019).

The challenge of electing a Secretary General was also closely linked to the regional ideological divide. While the former Secretary General was a former president and political figure, the new candidate would have needed to be more neutral, in order to be accepted by all member states. As argued by a researcher, the position of Secretary General was never assigned with sufficient power to create a strong organizational identity, that would have helped UNASUR to survive the regional political fragmentation (Raul Salgado, 19.02.2020, Skype).

To summarize, Venezuela posed a problem for UNASUR on two levels: first, it blocked decision-making and was responsible for the persistent deadlock regarding the election of a new Secretary General; and second, the deteriorating crisis in Venezuela increased the divide between member states that were siding with Venezuela and other members who were critical of Maduro.

The unoccupied post of Secretary General left the organization without leadership since Brazil had already limited its presence in the organization since 2016, as will be discussed below.

3.) Brazil's disengagement from UNASUR and the associated leadership vacuum

Brazil's engagement with UNASUR started to decline in the second term of Rousseff's presidency. Lula's and Rousseff's role in the organization varied greatly. While Brazil participated in all meetings during Lula's and Rousseff's term, the two presidents' images were very different. As pointed out by UNASUR officials, Lula's presence in the organization was much stronger than Rousseff's. Since Rousseff did not have Lula's charisma, it affected the momentum of her presidential diplomacy (Lessa et al., 2020, p. 84). The weaker capacity for presidential diplomacy affected Brazil's role in UNASUR, where presidential diplomacy was key. Moreover, Lula's charisma had been an important factor for building confidence among South American governments towards Brazil's regional leadership ambition (Raul Salgado, 19.02.2020, skype).

As the Rousseff administration was more focused on domestic issues, Brazil's role in the region, and therefore also in UNASUR deteriorated. Brazil was late in its payment of membership contributions, and it played a decreasing role in UNASUR's democracy promotion efforts in Venezuela.

While UNASUR and the region of South America was still a cornerstone of Brazil's foreign policy, the foreign policy strategy of the Rousseff administration was far less ambitious compared to the Lula administration. Starting with Cardoso, and peaking during the Lula administration, South American regionalism had been deployed as a springboard for increasing Brazil's status in international affairs. As argued by Casarões (2020, p. 91), Brazil engaged in status-seeking behaviour based on ambitious diplomatic initiatives in order to become a global player. However, when the Rousseff administration faced economic and political turmoil at

home, the ambitious foreign policy project of Lula was downgraded. While the Rousseff administration kept the rhetoric of South American regionalism, the regional focus shifted to bilateral relations for economic cooperation and trade relations instead of focusing on political integration in South America (which was at the core of UNASUR).

In neglecting its focus and commitment to UNASUR, Brazil started to retreat from its quest for regional leadership. The downgrading of Brazil's leadership role in UNASUR also meant that the struggling UNASUR did not have an actor that could bring UNASUR back on track. Since the Secretariat never had enough political leverage, UNASUR was dependent on the leadership of its most powerful member.

The internal leadership vacuum and ideological divide became even more apparent when Michel Temer took over the presidency in Brazil. Rousseff's impeachment had led to frictions between the interim-government and left-wing governments in the region, who regarded Rousseff's impeachment as illegitimate. Three months after the impeachment, a South American official stated in a UNASUR meeting that "The Brazilian leadership has diminished" and that "Brazil should, at the current stage, have more interest in participating in UNASUR" (South American official, 29.11.2016, Quito). This view was also iterated by a UNASUR official (Ricardo Malca, 28.02.2020), who stressed that Brazil used to be very active supporting the organization worked, and that authorities would meet. When the Temer government took over, that stopped being the case.

During Temer's administration Brazil's capacity to lead regional cooperation in South America was diminished. Instead of leading the region, foreign minister Serra had to focus on rekindling relationships with left-wing governments, re-establishing trust in Brazil and countering the "coup narrative" (Casarões, 2020, p. 96) that had undermined the recognition of the legitimacy of Temer's administration.

Apart from the attempt to fix relationships with critical governments in the region, the Temer government did not show a lot of interest in UNASUR, since it was considered a project of the PT government. The lack of interest in the organization (during the Temer administration) was also expressed through a lack of funding. A Brazilian diplomat highlighted that Brazil stopped funding new projects, and left UNASUR to its core budget (Brazilian diplomat B, 25.7.2017, Brasilia).

To summarize, Brazil's retreat from leadership within UNASUR can be attributed to two factors: first, the diminishing foreign policy influence of Brazil in South America during the

Rousseff administration (due to Brazil's focus on its domestic political issues), and Brazil's realization that it could not apply its strategy of consensual hegemony in the context of a divided region (most evident during the Temer administration). Since Brazil had been an important instigator of UNASUR's action in regional cooperation, the missing leadership was another factor that paralyzed the organization.

4.) The re-rapprochement of South American governments and the United States

UNASUR had been designed as a project to counter US influence in the region of South America. With the election of right-wing governments in the region, many South American countries changed their policy direction concerning the US. While UNASUR was designed to shield the region from US interference, newly elected governments in the region preferred a closer relation with the US. In the case of Brazil this was already evident in Temer's focus on improving trade relations with the US and in his willingness to work jointly with the US to find a common response to the Venezuelan crisis. When Bolsonaro was elected president in Brazil, the change in discourse towards the US became even more evident. Bolsonaro, who was sometimes referred to as Trump of the Tropics, openly voiced his admiration for US president Trump (Spektor & Fasolin, 2018).

A change in policy direction could also be observed in the United States. The Trump administration revisited its foreign policy towards Latin America. While the Trump administration put a lot of emphasis on the renegotiation of economic relations (such as the renegotiation of NAFTA) and security politics (linked to an anti-immigration agenda) with Mexico (Sullivan, 2019), the US also started to re-establish itself as a player in South America. One example is the involvement in the Venezuelan crisis, expressed through increasingly hard sanctions against the Venezuelan government. The other example is re-establishment of military ties between the US and South American governments through SOUTHCOM – the United States Southern Command. One of the US's most important military allies in the region is Colombia (Raul Salgado, 19.02.2020, skype). However, in March 2020, Brazil also signed an agreement for military cooperation with the US Southern Command, which cut the bureaucratic hurdles for the sale of military equipment to the two respective countries (AFP, 2020).

The military cooperation between the US and Brazil marked an important change in the US's standing in the region. Since the rejection of US influence had been a factor that united South American governments at the time when UNASUR was created, the pro-US foreign policy approach of Brazil, Colombia and other right-wing governments in South America[106] was an additional factor that rendered UNASUR obsolete.

It has to be noted that regional political alliances and the relationship of South American government with the United States are subject to constant change. As long as regional integration in South America is tied to ideological coherence between governments, regional organizations risk falling victim to any change in domestic politics of their member states.

Conclusion

To conclude, UNASUR's decline can be attributed to several factors, which are linked to the limits of regional cooperation within an institutional structure that is based on consensual hegemony. The consensus-based decision-making of UNASUR proved to only work successfully when most member states were united by a similar political orientation, and when Brazil was the facilitator of consensus-based decision-making within the organization. In a time when regional governments were divided in their perspective on the Venezuelan crisis, when newly elected right-wing governments collided in their views (concerning the political orientation of the region and concerning the relationship with the United States) with established left-wing governments, and when Brazil was increasingly focused on domestic political issues instead of regional leadership, UNASUR's consensus-based decision-making model was impossible to implement. Hence, UNASUR's institutional structure, the importance of a homogenous ideological political environment for the functioning of regional cooperation, and Brazil's leadership decline led to the failure of UNASUR's operability and to a political deadlock from which UNASUR could not recover.

When regional hegemons build regional organizations with a consensus-based decision-making structure and when they do not grant regional organizations any supranational authority, they need to be aware that the protection of national autonomy also comes at a price.

[106] Argentina's president Mauricio Macri (2015-2019) was endorsed by Trump, who called him a „friend for many years" (White House, 2017). Improved relations with the US became central to Macri's foreign policy agenda, during both the administrations of Obama and Trump (Gullo Maravi, 2018).

The multilateral structure makes regional organizations more vulnerable to regional political dynamics and requires more leadership and consensus-facilitation by the regional hegemon in order to guarantee effective regional cooperation over time.

Even though Brazil's project of regional political integration through UNASUR's did not last, UNASUR did implement some regional cooperation projects successfully, and was a useful tool for Brazil's strategy of regional leadership for some time. The next chapter draws conclusions on Brazil's role in UNASUR's democracy promotion activities and highlights theoretical findings on the role of regional hegemons within regional organizations that can inform further research in this field.

CHAPTER 10 - Conclusion

The analysis of Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion through UNASUR in Bolivia, Paraguay and Venezuela demonstrates two key findings. First, the important role of regional hegemons in leading democracy promotion efforts through regional organizations in the Global South. Regional organizations with a (strictly) multilateral institutional structure (as opposed to a supranational institutional structure, as discussed in Chapter 5.2.1) benefit from a regional hegemon's leadership who can facilitate decision-making between heads of state. This is especially valuable in the diplomatically sensitive domain of democracy promotion, which constitutes an involvement in domestic issues of a member state, and therefore clashes with the norm of non-intervention in domestic affairs. Second, this study of Brazil's approach to democracy promotion also highlighted the limitations of a consensual hegemonic leadership approach, which depends on a domestic, regional and international environment that is conducive to a leadership style based on the provision of ideas and persuasion. Hence, the analysis of Brazil as an actor in regional democracy promotion provides us with an understanding of how (consensual) regional hegemons promote democracy, and under which conditions they can promote democracy successfully through regional organizations.

This final chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses Brazil's willingness and capacity to promote democracy. The section highlights why Brazil promoted democracy, how it promoted democracy using a strategy of consensual hegemony, and to what extent Brazil's strategy was successful, using the example of Brazil's democracy promotion through UNASUR in Bolivia, Paraguay and Venezuela. The section therefore answers the main research question: *How* and *why* has Brazil acted within UNASUR to promote democracy in South America? The second section establishes a link to the wider academic literature to discuss what the Brazilian example can tell us about democracy promotion by regional powers through regional organizations. The second section also provides an outlook for further research.

10.1. Brazil's willingness and capacity to lead regional democracy promotion

This section demonstrates *why* Brazil promoted democracy in each case of democratic disruption, *how* Brazil promoted democracy (through UNASUR), and under which conditions its approach was *successful*. The findings contribute to the debate of *why* regional hegemons are motivated to lead democracy promotion, *what strategy* they are using, and *to what extent* they promote democracy *successfully*.

10.1.1. Brazil's willingness to lead democracy promotion efforts

Brazil was an active leader in creating frameworks for democracy promotion under the umbrella of regional organizations, most importantly UNASUR. This strategy was part of Brazil's wider hegemonic project of leadership within the region of South America. Brazil's understanding of regional relations reflects the thesis of democratic peace theory which states that democratic neighbours are less likely to go to war. Furthermore, a stable region is expected to foster economic development. Brazil's goal was therefore to create and/or maintain a peaceful and economically fit regional environment, which furthered Brazil's domestic economic prosperity and provided a suitable environment for Brazil's regional leadership ambitions. A politically stable region was also important for Brazil as a springboard for larger international influence, which was based on its status as a regional leader. The link between regional leadership and a stable regional environment hence explains why Brazil was active in creating regional frameworks for democracy promotion, most notably within UNASUR.

The next question is, what motivated Brazil to implement democratic frameworks, and to promote democracy in specific cases of democratic disruption. The issue area chapters on Bolivia, Paraguay and Venezuela demonstrated that Brazil was motivated to intervene in domestic democratic crises based on Brazil's economic, security and political interests. Brazil's actions were not driven by a moral imperative to promote democracy. Rather, Brazil's democracy promotion was led by an understanding that escalating democratic crises in South America would impact Brazil negatively in economic and security terms. In the case of Bolivia, Brazil was concerned about the gas supply from Bolivia that was vital for Sao Paulo's industry. In the case of Paraguay, Brazil was concerned about a potential ripple effect of the Paraguayan president's impeachment, which would lead opposition groups in other countries to follow suit. In addition, Brazil used the political crisis in Paraguay to suspend Paraguay from

MERCOSUR and thereby follow its vested economic interests associated with Venezuela's ascension to MERCOSUR (which had been blocked by Paraguay). In the case of Venezuela, Brazil was wary of the economic and security implications linked to an escalating political and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. Venezuela had been an important economic partner and destination for Brazilian investments. With the escalating political crisis in Venezuela, Brazil not only lost its investment revenues, but also faced security issues in the Brazilian-Venezuelan border region, related to tensions arising after the influx of Venezuelan refugees.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Wolff and Wurm (2011) distinguished four main theoretical explanations for why states promote democracy: a materialist theory, a normative theory, a cultural theory and a critical theory. The analysis of Brazil's democracy promotion demonstrates that a neo-Gramscian model for democracy promotion allows for an incorporation of interests and norms, which feed into the establishment of a hegemonic project. Brazil did engage in democracy promotion on a case by case basis motivated by economic, security and political interests, as argued by materialist theory. However, Brazil's work on establishing regional mechanisms for democracy promotion also served a wider purpose. Brazil's effort to create an effective democracy promotion mechanism under the umbrella of UNASUR was part of a hegemonic project, to form a stable region for Brazil's projection as a regional power. How Brazil set up UNASUR and its democracy promotion tools was based on its consensual hegemonic leadership approach, that took regional norms of non-intervention in domestic affairs into consideration. Hence, Brazil developed a mechanism for democracy promotion under UNASUR for democracy promotion by consent.

Brazil's democratic identity was not the main driver for Brazil's engagement in democracy promotion (as would be argued by a cultural theory of democracy promotion). However, Brazil's democratic identity is not irrelevant, as it does feed into Brazil's foreign policy norms. While Brazil feels no moral obligation to promote democracy, its democratic identity prevents Brazil from promoting authoritarianism actively. Promoting authoritarianism would also run against Brazil's understanding of regional relations under the democratic peace paradigm. However, regional hegemons like Brazil could potentially support autocracy and authoritarianism through inaction.

Inaction could result from a situation where the regional hegemon perceives the cost of democracy promotion to be higher than the benefit of democracy promotion. Brazil's willingness to intervene in specific cases of democratic disruption was based on a cost-benefit calculation of intervention. Therefore, the economic, security and political interests were weighted against the costs of involvement in democracy promotion. This can lead to the hypothesis that regional hegemons like Brazil (with limited military and economic means) promote democracy when the benefit of democracy promotion outweighs the cost. The strategy of consensual hegemony, (which involved working through regional organizations), allowed for a low-cost strategy of democracy promotion, as will be discussed in the next section.

To conclude, a regional hegemon acts as a democracy promoter based on its domestic interests, however, guided by an understanding of regional norms and driven by an overarching strategy of creating a stable regional space for its consensual hegemonic leadership project.

10.1.2. Brazil's strategy of consensual hegemony in regional democracy promotion through UNASUR

Brazil was involved in promoting democracy in Bolivia, Paraguay, and Venezuela by using a strategy of consensual hegemonic leadership through regional organizations. The following section discusses Brazil's strategy of consensual hegemony in regional democracy promotion and the relevance of UNASUR for Brazil's strategy. The research findings contribute to the academic discussion of *how* regional hegemons promote democracy.

Brazil's foreign policy strategy of consensual hegemony was evidenced in its approach to regional democracy promotion in Bolivia, Paraguay, and Venezuela (as argued in Chapters 6,7,8 respectively). Brazil's leadership strategy consisted in applying a strategy of consensus creation through persuasion, co-option, and the provision of ideas in the context of regional organizations. In setting up regional organizations and their democracy promotion framework, most importantly within UNASUR, Brazil developed a regional structure for dealing with democratic crises, that suited its leadership style (as argued in Chapter 5). Brazil's approach of consensual hegemony allowed for leadership within South America, despite Brazil's lack of economic or military strength (i.e. lack of hard power) and despite Brazil's reluctance to devote a large budget to regional integration (as discussed in Chapter 4). Democracy promotion through regional organization was part of Brazil's low-cost leadership approach,

that allowed Brazil to intervene in democratic crisis in neighbouring states as part of a joint regional response. By working through regional organizations, Brazil could ensure that its actions would not be perceived as interventionist or hegemonic by other states in the South America. Brazil could offer its diplomatic capability to work with member states within UNASUR towards a common goal of regional stability. In doing so, Brazil could accommodate the regional norm of non-intervention in domestic affairs of neighbour states with its action of democracy promotion.

The relevance of UNASUR for Brazil's strategy

Working through UNASUR for regional democracy promotion was a central aspect of Brazil's consensual hegemonic strategy towards South America. In the pursuit of regional stability, economic prosperity and political autonomy, Brazil led the creation of UNASUR and its democracy promotion framework. The consensus-based decision-making structure of UNASUR can be interpreted as the institutionalization of Brazil's strategy of consensual hegemony (as argued in Chapter 5).

UNASUR's multilateral structure had two main advantages. First, Brazil created a regional body with weak institutionalization that preserved Brazil's national autonomy. Second, member states did not perceive UNASUR as a threat, since the consensus-based decision-making structure upheld the regional norm of non-intervention in domestic affairs. This aspect was pivotal for UNASUR's capability to get involved in democracy promotion. UNASUR's missions were not perceived as interventionist, which was a good condition for UNASUR to get involved in mediation between governments and opposition groups. In a similar fashion, UNASUR's electoral missions were set up as missions for technical assistance based on the demands of the concerned state (instead of independent observation missions, whose mandate was to oversee electoral behaviour). UNASUR's democracy promotion activities were hence based on approval by the affected state, thereby safeguarding the norm of non-intervention in domestic affairs.

Brazil was a key player in developing UNASUR's democracy promotion framework, most importantly the democratic clause. The clause that was added to the Constitutive Treaty in 2010, set out possible sanctions that could be implemented in case of a threat to the democratic order in a member state. The clause was designed to protect governments against domestic

threats. However, UNASUR was a useful forum for democracy promotion even before a democratic clause was added to the treaty. As the Bolivian case demonstrated, UNASUR's democratic clause was not a prerequisite for UNASUR (or Brazil through UNASUR) to get active in democracy promotion. The only time when the clause was activated (in the case of Paraguay), the measure was rather symbolic (as it led to Paraguay's suspension and underlined the demand for the holding of timely and regular elections). In the case of Venezuela, member states could not agree on invoking the clause. Despite the wide-ranging applicability of the clause (in the case of a pure threat to democratic order), its use proved to be selective, based on the interests of member states rather than on the legal applicability in cases of democratic disruptions. This study therefore shows that it is not the wording of the legal framework for democracy promotion that is of relevance, but its interpretation and the willingness of member states to apply it. The democratic clause remained relatively toothless because of UNASUR's institutional structure and the lack of leadership states (most importantly of Brazil) to ensure its application.

It can be concluded that the multilateral structure was UNASUR's strength, but also its weakness. Since Brazil and other member states refused to transfer responsibilities from the national to the supranational level, UNASUR's operability and agency depended on the ability of member states to reach consensus and on the willingness of affected governments to turn to UNASUR for democracy promotion assistance. UNASUR's ability to impose sanctions against elected governments (by invoking the democratic clause) was limited to a scenario in which a member state had no allies in the region. UNASUR was well equipped to mediate (as we saw in Bolivia and the early mediation efforts in Venezuela), but less equipped to sanction member states, especially the more powerful ones (as the case of Venezuela demonstrated). UNASUR's electoral missions also were accompanying elections based on the terms and conditions set out by the national government which was under scrutiny. Therefore, UNASUR's electoral missions did not allow impartial election observation.

UNASUR's institutional setup proved to work successfully when Brazil was capable of employing its consensual hegemonic leadership strategy. Brazil's ability to use UNASUR as a tool for democracy promotion rose and fell with Brazil's ability to apply the consensual hegemonic strategy successfully.[107] Hence, UNASUR's relevance for Brazil declined when

[107] The conditions for a successful consensual hegemony are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Brazil lost its ability to lead the region through consensus creation. This is an important point. It was not UNASUR's inoperability in 2017 that led Brazil to stop using UNASUR as its central platform for regional policy-making, but it was Brazil's decline in leadership capacity that contributed to UNASUR's decline (as argued in Chapter 9).

Relevant actors in democracy promotion

In the literature on democracy promotion (as discussed in Chapter 2), regional organizations are often analysed as actors of democracy promotion. Depending on the theoretical angle, regional organizations are either said to promote democracy due to the (democratic) member states' interests in democracy promotion, or due to the prevalence of democracy promotion as an accepted international norm. This study contributed to the analysis of state actors within regional organizations, which proved to be the central actors in a multilateral institutional setup like UNASUR.

The cases of democracy promotion in Bolivia, Paraguay and Venezuela highlighted how UNASUR served Brazil as a platform for presidential diplomacy. The foreign ministers of the respective member states were the second most important actors, who implemented the missions agreed upon by heads of state. Therefore, the presidents, their close foreign policy advisers and foreign ministers were the main actors in facilitating democracy promotion through UNASUR. Democracy promotion in this context can therefore be interpreted as a top-down, rather than a bottom-up approach.

In Bolivia, Brazil's foreign policy was largely based on Lula's presidential diplomacy as well as dialogue facilitation by Brazil's foreign minister through UNASUR's mission in Bolivia. In Paraguay, Brazil's president Rousseff used both UNASUR and MERCOSUR as a platform to sanction Paraguay's impeachment process. In Venezuelan, Brazil initially followed a strategy of mediation through UNASUR, which was spearheaded by Brazil's foreign minister and his participation in the UNASUR mission in 2015. When this strategy failed, Brazil's democracy promotion strategy and the actors involved diversified. This included the involvement of Brazil's opposition in visiting Venezuela's opposition, informal channels of communication

between the Brazilian and the Venezuelan military, bilateral talks between Brazil's government and Venezuela's opposition, and more overt criticism of Venezuela's government in the regional organizations of MERCOSUR (from which Venezuela was suspended) and the OAS under the Temer government.

Small diversions from Brazil's core foreign policy strategy of consensual hegemony

Brazil's foreign policy strategy of consensual hegemony was applied throughout the three administrations of Lula, Rousseff and Temer. While the political orientation of Temer's administration changed compared to the PT administrations of Lula and Rousseff, the foreign policy style remained the same. Brazil remained committed to its foreign policy tradition of consensual hegemony and the associated norms of non-intervention, autonomy, and multilateralism.

A small diversion from this strategy could only be observed when Brazil was operating through fora other than UNASUR. While Brazil was a leader in founding UNASUR and in developing its democracy promotion framework, Brazil did not restrict itself to working solely through UNASUR. To a limited degree it also worked through other regional organizations, such as MERCOSUR and the OAS. Hence, Brazil deployed a strategy of forum shopping. Brazil's choice of regional organization depended two interrelated factors: on the leverage that Brazil had in the respective institutions, and on the ideological affinity between Brazil's government and the political identity of the regional organization.

In MERCOSUR, Brazil used a more assertive application of pressure to ensure Paraguay's suspension from MERCOSUR, because Brazil had more leverage. In contrast to UNASUR where Brazil's influence was mainly based on structural power (i.e. the power to shape the structure of the organization), Brazil did possess the institutional power to influence member states behaviour within MERCOSUR through coercion.[108] While the decision for suspension was agreed upon by consensus (therefore ensuring the appearance of a consensual hegemonic approach), Brazil used direct pressure on Uruguay in addition to its strategy of persuasion.

[108] For more details on the differences between structural power and institutional power see Wolff (2015) or Chapter 3.4.3. in this dissertation.

This showcases that Brazil's idea-based leadership style is a product of Brazil's limited power in South America, and not solely the result of an adherence to Brazil's foreign policy norms.

The choice of regional organization was also linked to the affinity between the Brazilian government and the regional organization in ideological terms. The governments of Lula and Rousseff preferred UNASUR where they could count on the solidarity between left-wing governments. In contrast, the Temer government chose to work through the OAS because Brazil was subject to criticism by left-wing governments within UNASUR. Since UNASUR was founded by left-wing governments (most importantly by Brazil under Lula), the (right-wing) Temer government preferred to work with like-minded governments within the OAS. The Temer government intensified its (albeit unsuccessful) efforts to revive UNASUR in 2018 from its political deadlock only when the majority of UNASUR member states were governed by right-wing governments. This demonstrates the importance of ideological affinity between regional powers and the ideological identity of a regional organization (which is in turn linked to the political orientation of its members states).

While Brazil's strategy within UNASUR was based on consensual hegemonic leadership, Brazil's actions in the OAS cannot be regarded as an act of leadership, but as a hesitant followership of the US strategy towards Venezuela. This confirms that Brazil's regional leadership was confined to South America. Therefore, Brazil's leadership role in regional democracy promotion was most prominent in UNASUR. More specifically, in UNASUR's involvement in Bolivia, in UNASUR's and MERCOSUR's suspension of Paraguay and in the early stages of UNASUR's mediation in Venezuela.

When the initial strategy of democracy promotion through UNASUR failed in the case of Venezuela, Brazil became an observer rather than a leader of democracy promotion. This demonstrates that Brazil did not have a viable back-up plan when its consensual hegemonic leadership strategy faced its limits.

Table 3 on the following page provides an overview of Brazil's strategy of democracy promotion in all three cases.

Table 3 - Brazilian strategies of democracy promotion			
	Bolivian constitutional crisis 2008	**Paraguayan impeachment 2012**	**Venezuelan political and humanitarian crisis 2013-2018**
Brazil's role in democracy promotion	Leading role	Leading role (jointly with Argentina)	Leading role, observing role
Brazil's administrations	Lula administration	Rousseff administration	Rousseff administration, Temer administration
Main foreign policy actors in Brazil	President, Foreign minister	President	Presidents, foreign ministers, diplomats, Brazil's opposition, The Brazilian military
Relevant organizations for Brazil's strategy	UNASUR	UNASUR, MERCOSUR	UNASUR, MERCOSUR, OAS, Lima group
Type of action	Mediation	Suspension	Mediation Suspension Observation
Outcome	Constitutional crisis solved	Timely elections after impeachment	Failed mediation between government and opposition

Brazil's capacity to lead regional democracy promotion declined with Brazil's ability to pursue its consensual hegemonic leadership successfully. This was most evident regarding the Venezuelan issue. While Brazil experienced few hurdles in Bolivia and Paraguay, Brazil had to overcome domestic, regional, international, and bilateral hurdles in Venezuela. This explains why Brazil's democracy promotion strategy in Venezuela fell behind expectations (as mentioned as a research puzzle in Chapter 1). The next section therefore discusses the enabling and constraining factors for Brazil's strategy of consensual hegemony in the three issue areas.

10.1.3. Enabling and constraining factors for democracy promotion through consensual hegemony

Based on the findings of the analysis of the three issue areas, this section develops a theory that sets out the pre-conditions for a successful strategy of consensual hegemonic leadership.

Starting with the limits of the consensual hegemonic leadership approach, the section finishes with a discussion of the advantages of this approach.

1.) The limits of the consensual hegemonic leadership approach

Based on the application of the concept of consensual hegemony to the domain of regional democracy promotion (as discussed in Chapter 3), the researcher identified four levels of analysis to evaluate the leadership capacity of regional hegemons: the domestic, the bilateral, the regional, and the international level.

Regarding the domestic level, issues that affected Brazil's leadership capacity were mainly absent in the Bolivian case but started to emerge in the Paraguayan case and were most prominent in the Venezuelan case. One of the main issues that affected Brazil's leadership capacity was Brazil's domestic political turmoil, which became most evident during Rousseff's impeachment. Predominantly occupied with domestic political and economic issues, the Rousseff and Temer administration both had a lack of interest in foreign policy. The weak foreign policy was also linked to a difference in the personal capacity of the respective presidents (Lula, Rousseff and Temer) to successfully implement presidential diplomacy, which was crucial for working through regional organizations like UNASUR. As a result of Brazil's domestic problems, Brazil's ability to attract followership decreased during Rousseff's administration and remained low under the Temer administration, which affected Brazil's capacity to mediate in the Venezuelan crisis.

On the bilateral level, Brazil faced very different circumstances in the three cases of democratic crises. The relationship between Bolivia and Brazil was based on good relations between the respective presidents (Lula and Morales), and Bolivia had strong economic ties with Brazil. In the case of Paraguay, the small nation was even more dependent on economic relations with Brazil, to which it exports its hydroelectricity. This economic dependence created a strong power imbalance towards Brazil. The same cannot be said about Venezuela, which had the status of a secondary power within South America due to its oil wealth. Brazil did not have the same capacity to put economic pressure on Venezuela compared to Bolivia and Paraguay. Moreover, Brazil's diplomatic relations with Venezuela worsened when the Temer

government took over. The change of government in Brazil had a negative impact on Brazil's capacity to mediate in the crisis, given the lack of ideological affinity.

On the regional level, changes in political orientations of governments in the region affected Brazil's capacity to lead. In both the Bolivian and Paraguayan case, Brazil could count on a (relatively) ideologically homogenous regional environment, which eased Brazil's strategy of consensus creation through regional organizations. In Paraguay, Brazil could also count on Argentina as a valuable partner to push for Paraguay's suspension from MERCOSUR and UNASUR. In Venezuela, Brazil faced a very different regional environment. The region was divided into two camps: left wing-governments that were supporting Venezuela on one side, and right-wing governments that were very critical of Venezuela's government on the other side. The ideological divide between left-wing and right-wing member states within UNASUR posed a challenge to Brazil's strategy of consensus creation. Brazil's ability to manufacture a consensual regional response to the Venezuelan crisis was further hampered by the rejection of Brazil's interim government under Temer by left-wing governments. Hence, consensual hegemony worked best when states in the region were on the same page ideologically (as was the case during the "pink tide" when UNASUR was created, and which dominated the political environment in both the Bolivian and the Paraguayan case) and in sync with Brazil's political orientation. However, there also needs to be a balance regarding political affinity between governments and the ability to take on a more neutral role as mediator (especially in the case when Brazil needed to mediate between governments and oppositions).

Brazil's low-cost leadership approach through consensus creation worked best when it did not have to compete for leadership with international players. In Bolivia, Brazil faced some competition with the US when the OAS became involved. In the Paraguayan case Brazil did not have to compete for leadership. In Venezuela, several international actors, such as the US, Russia, China, and the Caribbean states, became involved in the crisis. While the US implemented sanctions, the Venezuelan government was supported by Russia, China, and Caribbean states economically and/or politically. This made it more difficult for Brazil to lead a democracy promotion strategy, which was based on the power of ideas rather than on economic actions.

Table 4 on the following page provides an overview of enabling and constraining factors that impacted Brazil's leadership capacity on the four levels.

Table 4 Enabling and constraining factors for Brazil's leadership capacity

		Bolivia	Paraguay	Venezuela
Domestic factors (in Brazil)	Enabling factors	Stable political environment, strong focus on South America in foreign policy, strong economy	Stable political environment, Continued focus on South America, stable economy	
	Constraining factors		Decrease in foreign policy visibility (decrease in foreign visits by Rousseff)	Political crisis (Rousseff's impeachment, corruption charges against political elite), economic crisis
Bilateral factors	Enabling	Good relations between Brazil (Lula) and Bolivia (Morales), strong economic ties to Brazil	Power imbalance and economic dependence of Paraguay towards Brazil	
	Constraining			V. as secondary power, Brazil's investments in V.; deteriorating relationship between Temer and Maduro
Regional factors (in South America)	Enabling	Homogenous political orientation (pink-tide), positive reception of Lula's leadership	Homogenous political orientation (except Chile), Good relations with Argentina	
	Constraining			Ideological divide, Rejection of Brazil's interim government by Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela
International factors	Enabling	Limited int. involvement	Limited US involvement	
	Constraining	Competition between UNASUR and the OAS		US (sanctions), China (financial support), Cuba, Russia and Caribbean nations (political support)

2.) The pre-conditions for a successful consensual hegemony

Based on the analysis of the three issue areas, the thesis concludes that a successful implementation of consensual hegemony is based on several pre-conditions. First, the "attractiveness" of the regional hegemon's leadership and regional vision, which is related to the regional hegemon's domestic economic and political success, and the extent to which the hegemon's model for regional affairs is considered worth following by its peers. Second, a regional environment that fosters consensus creation under the leadership of the regional hegemon. This relates to the political climate in the region (ideological coherence versus ideological divide) and the lack of a potential competition for leadership with another regional hegemon. And third, the absence of competition for regional leadership with international actors that follow a more coercive strategy (through pressure, threats, sanctions or military action) or a more cooperative leadership strategy (through the provision of economic incentives and public goods).

For consensual hegemony to work, there need to be at least two out of the three factors (domestic, regional, international) in favour of the regional hegemon. The regional hegemon has to have a strong national and regional power base to tackle competition from external actors. If the hegemon has a strong national power base and no international competition, it can still compete for leadership on the regional level. If the hegemon is struggling domestically (in political or economic terms), but there is an absence of regional or international competition for leadership, it can still pursue a strategy of consensual hegemony.

Regarding democracy promotion, there is a fourth pre-condition for consensual hegemony to work: the bilateral relationship between the hegemon and the target state. One the one hand, this relates to relative power structures, i.e. the extent to which the target state is in a relationship of economic or political dependence to the hegemon. Based on this power imbalance, the hegemon has the ability to put (direct or indirect) pressure on the target state. One the other hand, there is the diplomatic relationship. Since consensual hegemony rests on persuasion, the trust between state leaders is crucial. This trust can rest on personal relationships between heads of state or ideological affinities between the governing parties.

The context of democracy promotion by regional organizations in South America highlighted that regional cooperation depends heavily on ideological components. Governments tend to

cooperate in institutions that they perceive as sympathetic to their political orientation. In the domain of democracy promotion by regional organizations, which involves regional intervention into domestic affairs, cooperation is particularly volatile. Democracy promotion requires trust in the mediator or facilitator by the affected state. Regional hegemons hence chose to work through regional organizations where they have more leverage, but also whose intervention would be approved by the target state (based on the perception of the ideological identity of the regional organization).

To conclude, successful democracy promotion by consensual hegemony rests upon the following precondition: the combination of two out of the three factors (related to the domestic, regional, and international power base), plus the character of the bilateral relationship between the consensual hegemon and the target state (related to power imbalance and ideological affinity).

3.) The advantages of consensual hegemony

The limitations of the consensual hegemonic approach beg the question of why regional hegemons would choose such an approach in the first place. Therefore, the advantages of this approach need to be emphasised.

First, consensual hegemony has the advantage of being cost-effective. It allows a relatively weak regional hegemon (in terms of military and economic strength) to lead regional integration without needing to pay for all of it. The neo-Gramsican approach explains this type of low-cost regionalism, in contrast to realism and liberal institutionalism which only assume high-cost options to regional integration and regional leadership. Second, consensual hegemony allows for regional leadership in an environment where a coercive leadership strategy (as characteristic of some US interventions in South America) goes against regional norms of non-interference in domestic affairs. Brazil's strategy of consensual hegemony was drafted to fit Brazil's power capacity and the normative regional context.

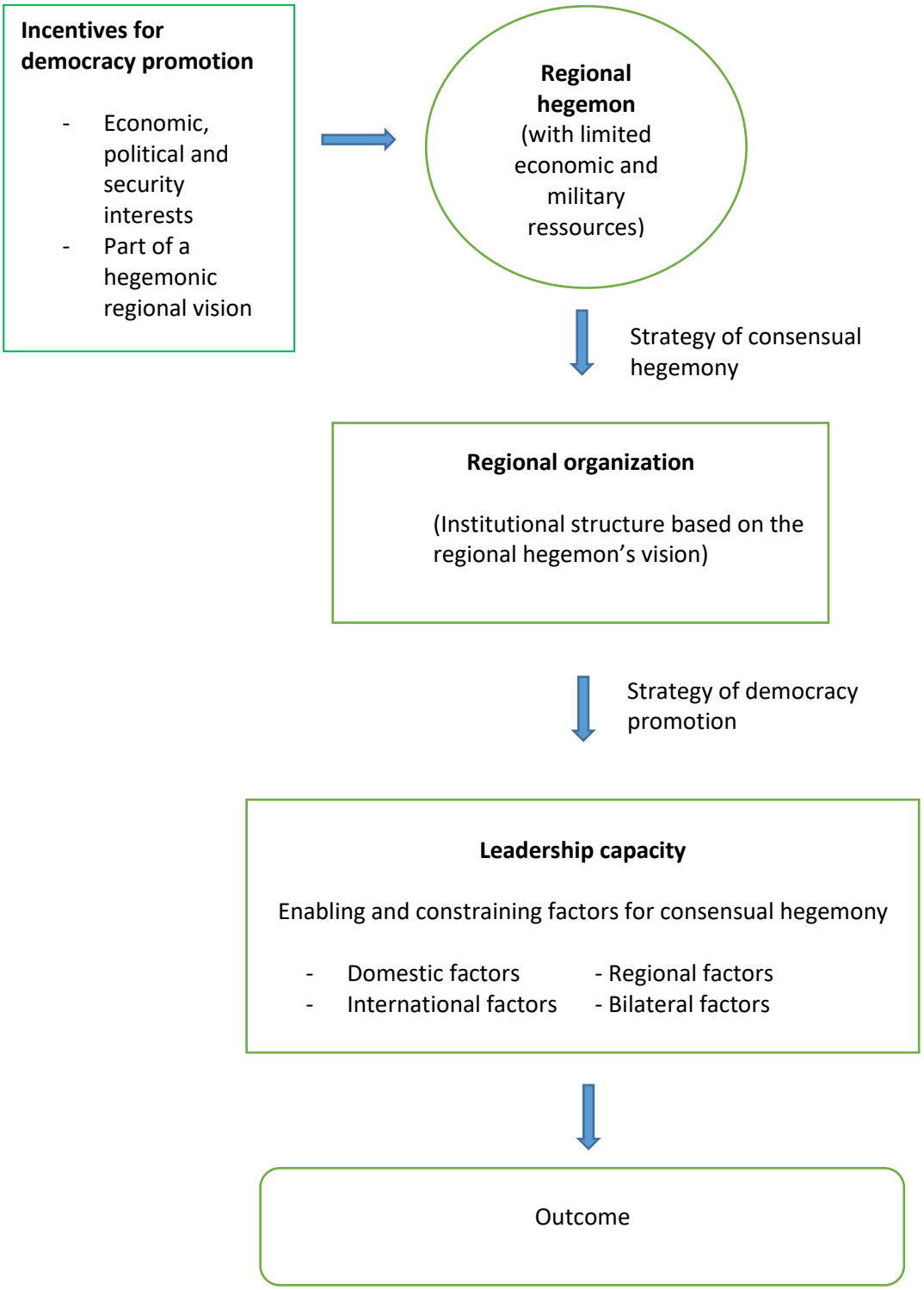
Consensual hegemony can be used as a tool of regional hegemons to promote democracy. It is an especially valuable strategy in this domain, since democracy promotion involves interference in domestic political contexts, which is normally not accepted (in the South American context). The consensual strategy hence serves the hegemon to circumvent the norm

of non-intervention in domestic affairs in a particularly sensitive policy area. If applied successfully, the strategy of democracy promotion can strengthen the hegemonic structure pursued by the regional hegemon, and thereby serves a dual purpose. First, it can be used to achieve a specific foreign policy aim. And second, it advances a regional structure that furthers the hegemon's role in the region.

The concept of consensual hegemony explains how leadership within the region can happen without the need to resort to coercion. However, it also explains why the leadership capacity of regional hegemons is fragile and therefore the outcome of a regional hegemon's leadership sometimes falls behind expectations.

To conclude, Figure 8 on the following page illustrates the role regional hegemons play in democracy promotion through regional organizations. As illustrated, regional hegemons can successfully use regional organizations to lead regional democracy promotion efforts, depending on their leadership capacity (based on the domestic, regional, international, and bilateral factors) and leadership willingness (based on interests). Regional hegemony is subject to change and reflects relational power dynamics between the hegemon, states in the region and regional or global hegemons outside the region.

Figure 8 – Regional hegemons' role in democracy promotion through regional organizations



© Source: own illustration

10.2. Regional powers' role in regional organizations in the Global South (regarding democracy promotion)

The analysis of Brazil's role within UNASUR and in regional democracy promotion furthers the understanding of regional powers' role in regional organizations and in democracy promotion. As discussed in Chapter 2, some scholars have already pointed to the relevance of regional powers in leading democracy promotion efforts within regional organizations, as in the cases of the US within the OAS (Arceneaux & Pion-Berlin, 2007) and in the case of regional powers within the EU, MERCOSUR and SADC (Van Der Vleuten & Hoffmann, 2010). The analysis of UNASUR once again demonstrated the importance of regional powers' leadership in regional democracy promotion, and in facilitating cooperation within regional organizations more generally. As highlighted in Chapter 9, UNASUR's functioning suffered under the absence of Brazil's leadership. Therefore, the study highlighted the importance of regional powers' leadership within regional organizations that are characterized by weak institutionalization, which is a common characteristic among regional organizations in the Global South.

This section discusses theoretical findings that have been drawn based on the analysis of Brazil's regional leadership within UNASUR. Starting with a discussion of regional powers' leadership in regional organizations, the section continues to discuss democracy promotion by and through regional organizations and concludes with an outlook on avenues for further research.

10.2.1. The role of regional powers in regional organizations

While regional organizations and the regional context in which they are operating differ, there can be a general understanding of which role regional powers play within the organizations related to the institutional structure of the organization. The weaker the institutionalization and the weaker the supranational power of the organization, the higher the relevance of regional powers to facilitate decision-making and joint action (for example by advocating for the invoking of democratic clauses). The relevance of regional powers' leadership is especially important in a context where decision-making is based on consensus. When there is no to

limited power transferred to the organization (as would be the case in the presence of binding resolutions and in the case of the superiority of supranational law over national law), it rests upon member states to initiate and enforce joint action. Regional powers are well suited to take on the role of initiator and facilitator, especially if they have played a central role in the founding of an organization and are the main budgetary contributor.[109] Leadership by regional powers is in this case not inscribed into the institutional structure of the organization (if member states have equal voting rights) but is nonetheless expected behaviour by smaller members, due to the existing power relations between states in a region (in which the regional power is the most dominant state).

Regional powers play an important role in building regional organizations, as discussed in Chapter 3. The analysis of Brazil's role in UNASUR demonstrated that Brazil built a regional organization based on its preferred leadership strategy of consensual hegemony (as demonstrated in Chapter 4). However, despite this role of regional powers in the founding of organizations, regional powers' leadership within the organization cannot be taken for granted. As the analysis of Brazil's leadership within UNASUR demonstrated, Brazil's willingness and capacity to lead decision-making within UNASUR depended on several factors (domestic, regional, and international factors, as argued above).

The question that arises is whether Brazil could have worked equally efficient or successful through other regional organizations. Brazil demonstrated a willingness to employ a strategy of forum shopping. Hence, Brazil adopted its strategy to an ever-changing regional political climate and its own domestic political context. The usefulness of UNASUR therefore varied. While UNASUR had the advantage of uniting South American nations under one institution, the organization was less useful in the context of an ideologically divided region and a decrease of Brazil's leadership capacity.

The South American region unravelled the centrality of the ideological component in regional cooperation. In the context of overlapping membership in multiple regional organizations,

[109] Aside from Brazil's role within UNASUR, other examples are Russia's role in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) to which it is the main contributor by providing 50 percent of the budget, or the role of the US within the OAS, to which the US provides 60 percent of the annual budget. Within the EU, Germany is the largest net contributor, followed by the UK (pre-Brexit) and France, which aligns with the respective roles that these states played within the Union. In ASEAN, all member states (including Indonesia) pay the same amount of annual contributions. As has been pointed out by Pero (2019, p. 238), Indonesia's status as the "first among equals" has led to a lack of leadership within the organization.

regional powers can deploy a strategy of forum shopping. That means that they choose to focus their (leadership) efforts on the organizations in which they have the most influence. When they work through regional organizations whose member states' governments have a similar political orientation as the regional power, leadership faces less resistance. In other words, regional powers choose the path of less resistance. The aspect of ideological affinity is especially important for leadership ambitions of consensual regional hegemons, like Brazil, whose leadership is based on persuasion rather than coercion.

Regional organizations in South America are often built based on ideological convergence of member states at the time of their inception (examples are UNASUR, ALBA, PROSUR) and shared policy orientations (examples are the liberal market ideas which are at the basis of MERCOSUR and the Pacific Alliance). Party politics and political solidarities among member states are also important aspects of cooperation within regional organizations in other regions (such as in the EU or the OAS), especially regarding the building of alliances within these institutions.[110] However, because of their larger number of member states and because of their structure (decision-making is often based on a qualified majority rule and only requires a consensus in selected policy areas) these organizations do not depend as much on ideological coherence as South American regional organizations like UNASUR.

The role of regional powers within regional organizations also depends on the power distribution between member states. While Brazil was the only regional power within UNASUR, other regional organizations (like the EU or the African Union) feature several regional powers as member states, which can lead to rivalry, but can allow for the sharing and dividing of perceived leadership obligations between regional powers.[111]

To conclude, the multilateral structure of UNASUR, and the fact that UNASUR only had one regional hegemon as a member (namely Brazil), increased the relevance of Brazil's leadership within the organization. The institutional structure and the power relations between member states are hence the key factors that explain the role of regional powers within regional organizations. Furthermore, the Brazilian example demonstrated how a regional hegemon can

[110] The EU Parliament is structured in groups based on party affiliations of its members. Heads of state within the European Council also sometimes vote based on partisan alignment (Lindberg et al., 2008, p. 1109).
[111] An example of rivalry is the relationship between South Africa and Nigeria in the founding process of the African Union (Tieku, 2004). An example of shared leadership would be the relation of Germany and France within the EU (Schild, 2010).

lead regional cooperation within regional organizations with weak institutionalization by using means of consensus creation and persuasion.

The weak institutionalization of regional organizations could be addressed if member states would agree to transfer agency from the multilateral to the supranational level.[112] However, since states in South America put non-intervention in domestic affairs and national autonomy above regional integration, a change in the way regional organizations are set up is not to be expected.

10.2.2. Democracy promotion by and through regional organizations

The analysis of Brazil's democracy promotion through UNASUR provides interesting insights that can be linked to academic debates on democracy promotion by and through regional organizations.

The Brazilian case of democracy promotion is an example of a tradition of state-centric democracy promotion in the Americas, as discussed by Legler (2012) in relation to the OAS. Hence, multilateral regional organizations that promote democracy depend on the willingness of member states to take (joint) action in the face of democratic disruption. As the literature suggests, a motivator for democracy promotion can be the perception of a threat to democracy and stability by the state concerned, or by other member states (Arceneaux & Pion-Berlin, 2007). This finding is also echoed in this thesis, as UNASUR is described as a democracy assistant and mediator at the disposal of member states, rather than a democracy enforcer. Arceneaux and Pion-Berlin (2007) also point to the importance of the leadership of the hegemon in facilitating action by the regional organization (emphasising the role of the US within the OAS). The role of the US within OAS can be compared to the role of Brazil within UNASUR.

In contrast to studies of democracy promotion by the EU, SADC and MERCOSUR, which pointed at the relevance of third-party pressure in selected cases (Van Der Vleuten & Hoffmann, 2010), democracy promotion by UNASUR was explicitly set up to allow South

[112] The supranational integration model of the EU is quite unique in comparison to regional integration in other parts of the world. For more details on why European states were compelled to build strong regional organizations read Parsons (2002).

American nations to solve their democratic and political issues without external intervention. Moreover, South American governments lacked the feeling of a moral obligation to promote human rights, in contrast to members of the EU (Biondo, 2015). This combination of factors explains why UNASUR's democracy promotion was not affected by external criticism.

While UNASUR's democratic framework could have been used in order to promote human rights (because of the open formulation of the clause and its applicability in any case of threat to democracy or democratic principles), the circumstances of the development of the clause (as a response to a domestic threat to the elected government in Ecuador) and the structure of decision-making within UNASUR, explain why member states intended the clause as a defence of regional governments against domestic threats. This confirms the observation by Santoro (2014) who argued that the intergovernmental character of UNASUR decreased the likelihood of sanctioning human rights violations by an incumbent. A limited willingness to sanction incumbents has also been documented with regard to the AU (Abatan & Spies, 2016). Especially when the target state is one of the more powerful members of the organization (as in the case of Venezuela within UNASUR), the sanctioning of perceived undemocratic behaviour is less likely.

The focus on regional stability and constitutionality, and absence of open criticism in the case of human rights violations can also be witnessed in other regions. This concerns regional organizations and regional powers alike. Brazil's reluctance to openly criticize Venezuela within UNASUR can be compared with South Africa's quiet diplomacy regarding Zimbabwe. (Prys, 2008). This behaviour also links to the tradition of regional hegemons to avoid accusations of hegemony and meddling in internal affairs. While regional organizations provide a space to address domestic issues, this space is limited, especially concerning the domain of human rights. Since the central goal of democracy promotion by states like Brazil is the defence of the constitutionality of democratic systems and regional stability, violations of human rights might be overlooked as long as they don't threaten the overall stability of the democratic system.

A democratic regional environment is only one of the factors that a regional hegemon is pursuing as part of its hegemonic strategy. While the leadership as a regional peace maker and democracy promoter through regional organizations strengthens the role of a regional hegemon within its region, it is not the only strategy it can pursue to increase its regional status. Brazil

chose to work on regional political integration and cooperation because of its limited economic and military resources. Alternatively, a regional hegemon could employ a strategy of cooperative hegemony (as mentioned in Chapter 3) and increase its regional power through economic integration (as in the case of Germany within the EU), or through military integration (as for example in the case of Russia's development of a regional security architecture in Central Asia). Democracy promotion is therefore not automatically on the list of public goods that a regional hegemon provides.

UNASUR's track record in democracy promotion needs to be evaluated not only regarding the willingness of its member states to promote democracy (and regarding the willingness of Brazil to lead regional democracy promotion), but also regarding its capacity to promote democracy. While democracy promotion's effectiveness has been linked to strategies of membership conditionality and the provision of economic incentives in the case of the EU (Dimitrova & Pridham, 2004; Ethier, 2003), UNASUR as an institution for political cooperation does not have the capacity to use economic incentives or economic pressure to promote democracy. Based on the consensual model for democracy promotion, UNASUR was set up to provide assistance for elections and mediation. The strength of UNASUR's model for democracy promotion can be found its technical and diplomatic component. It is an aspect that needs to be kept in mind when making comparisons to democracy promotion and enforcement by other regional organization, such as the AU, which can include a military component.

As pointed out before, the limited institutional structure and budget of UNASUR was by choice since Brazil did not want to limit its national sovereignty. The institutional structure limited UNASUR's ability to pursue democracy promotion and exposed the organization in the case of a leadership vacuum by the regional power and of ideological fractures between member states. Ideological divides among member states have also been mentioned as limiting factors regarding democracy promotion by the OAS (Legler, 2012). However, because of the consensus-based decision-making structure UNASUR was affected in a lasting manner. The effectiveness of UNASUR's democracy promotion was therefore more closely linked to the leadership capacity of its regional hegemon, that would be expected in other regional settings where regional organizations are more institutionalized.

A regional hegemon's capacity to promote democracy through regional organizations (by using means of consensus creation) rests on the condition that member states share an interest in regional democracy promotion and give their consent to the meddling in domestic affairs of a member state. Regional organizations in the Global South are often based on the principle of non-intervention and respect for national autonomy (such as MERCOSUR, ASEAN, and CAN). Members states within UNASUR were united in their interest in regional stability and their interest in defending their (democratically elected) governments against domestic threats, which allowed Brazil to push for the inclusion of a democracy promotion framework within UNASUR. In other regional contexts however, the strategy to incorporate democratic frameworks into regional affairs faces opposition (as in the case of ASEAN). The ability to create consensus for a joint regional structure for democracy promotion also relates to the level of democratization in a region. In a regional environment that is characterized by large numbers of autocratic states, democracy promotion through regional organizations is less likely to find footing.

The analysis of Brazil's democracy promotion through UNASUR highlighted the opportunities but also limits of the willingness and capability of a regional hegemon to promote democracy through regional organizations. It highlighted the volatility of regional cooperation under UNASUR regarding democracy promotion, and it confirmed the difficulty of the endeavour to promote democracy "from the outside-in" (Pevehouse, 2002). While we can expect democratic regional powers like Brazil (or South Africa and Indonesia) to play a leading role in spearheading the development of democratic frameworks within the context of regional organization, we need to anticipate selective and therefore inconsistent leadership in the application of these multilateral instruments.

10.2.3. Avenues for further research

This dissertation was motivated by the need for more research in the field of democracy promotion by regional powers through regional organizations in the Global South. Since this thesis is based on an in-depth analysis of Brazil as an actor in democracy promotion through one specific regional organization in three specific cases of democracy promotion, there are many avenues for further research that can be explored.

This dissertation offers an analytical framework for the analysis of regional powers and their role in regional organizations and in democracy promotion. It also offers a reference point for comparative research, that looks at democracy promotion by other regional powers, in other regional organizations and diverse regional contexts.

This thesis encourages more research on other regional powers and their contribution to democracy promotion. Especially a focus on other democratic regional hegemons in the Global South such as South Africa and India could offer interesting insights. It could be investigated whether other regional hegemons employ similar leadership strategies compared to Brazil. Furthermore, the analysis of the role of regional powers and their leadership strategies within more institutionalized regional organizations would also offer a nice avenue for comparative research. As more research is done in this field, it will enable cross-regional comparative studies on democracy promotion by regional powers through regional organizations, that will allow for more robust theory building in this research field.

Future research could explore Brazil's role in other regional organizations in which it is not the only hegemon or not the main hegemon (like in the OAS). In a similar vein, more research is encouraged regarding the role of secondary powers and smaller states in the domain of democracy promotion through regional organizations. While this thesis has mentioned the relevance of other states within the regional organization of UNASUR, it could not provide a more detailed analysis of their strategies and roles. Since regional powers do not act on their own but are part of a group of states within the context of regional organizations, a focus on secondary powers and smaller states would provide a more complete picture on inter-state dynamics within regional organizations from the perspective of smaller states.

Since this study does not cover Brazil's foreign policy post-2018, research could be conducted regarding changes in Brazil's regional and global foreign policy strategy. Such a study would provide further insights into how domestic politics impact foreign policy strategies.

To conclude, this thesis recommends further research on the role of regional powers in democracy promotion within different institutional contexts and regions, under different administrations, while taking into account the perspectives of smaller states.

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Appendix I - List of expert interviews

1. Ernesto Samper, Secretary General of UNASUR, UNASUR headquarters, Quito, Ecuador, 21.11.2016.
2. UNASUR Official A, UNASUR headquarters, Quito, Ecuador, 21.11.2016.
3. Brazilian diplomat A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, online correspondence, 10.01.2017.
4. Brazilian diplomat B, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brasilia, Brazil 25.07.2017.
5. Brazilian diplomat C, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brasilia, Brazil 25.07.2017.
6. Brazilian diplomat D, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brasilia, Brazil, 04.08.2017.
7. EU Official, Delegation of the EU Mission to Brazil, Brasilia, Brazil, 31.07.2017.
8. Dr Mauricio Santoro Rocha, Researcher at Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 09.08.2017.
9. Researcher A, Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV), Sao Paulo, Brazil, 11.07.2017.
10. Researcher B, Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV), Sao Paulo, Brazil, 12.07.2017.
11. Brazilian Official A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brasilia, Brazil, 28.07.2017.
12. Brazilian Official B, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brasilia, Brazil, 28.07.2017.
13. Dr Paulo Roberto Almeida, Brazilian diplomat and former Professor at Instituto Rio Branco, Skype interview, 02.08.2017.
14. Celso Amorim, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 18.08.2017.
15. Dr Raul Salgado, Researcher at FLACSO Quito (Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences), Skype interview, 19.02.2020.
16. David Alvarez Veloso, Director of Citizen Security and Justice at UNASUR, UNASUR headquarters, Quito, Ecuador, 22.11.2016; and e-mail follow up on 20.02.2020.
17. Ricardo Malca, Director of International Cooperation and Technical Agenda, UNASUR, UNASUR headquarters, Quito, Ecuador; 25.11.2016, and e-mail follow up on 28.02.2020.

Appendix II - Ethical script for interviews

Dear Sir, dear Madam,

Before we start the interview, I would like to give you some information about the research project and the interview process.

This interview is part of my doctoral research project at the University of Stellenbosch (South Africa). This research is about Brazilian strategies of democracy promotion through UNASUR with a focus on three cases: Bolivia, Paraguay and Venezuela. The aim of this study is to contribute to the literature on new regionalism, democracy promotion of regional organizations and Brazilian foreign policy analysis.

I would like to inform you that your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point.

The interview will take about 30 minutes and will involve a set of about 12 open questions.

Please let me know whether you would like to remain anonymous or if you feel comfortable to be identified by the institution that you work for, or by your full name.

In case any particular information is sensitive, please advise me that this information is "off record" and therefore will not be used in the study.

In case you are willing to be fully identified, I can offer to consult you and ask for your renewed approval if parts of the interview will be used in future publications.

Would you mind if I record the interview with my phone? The recording will only support the transcription process of the interview and will not be passed on to anyone. (YES/NO)

If you have any questions regarding any aspect of the study, please feel free to ask at any point during or after the interview.

Appendix III - Questionnaire (English)

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the multilateral structure of UNASUR?

- What is the impact of member states domestic politics on the functioning of UNASUR?

- How would you explain UNASUR's concept of democracy promotion?
- To what extent is it related to human rights? Is the focus only on defense of constitutional order?

- What are the limits of applicability of the democratic clause? Does the democratic clause allow for easier involvement in certain scenarios of democratic crises than others?

- How would it be possible to improve UNASUR´s capacity to promote democracy?

- National sovereignty is an important aspect for the members of UNASUR. How does it affect the capacity of UNASUR to become involved in domestic issues of members states (in the cases of disruption of democratic practices)?

- What were the problems that UNASUR encountered in the cases of Bolivia, Paraguay and Venezuela?

- How has the Pro-tempore Presidency of Venezuela impacted the capacity of UNASUR to get involved in the Venezuelan case?

- Why did UNASUR decide to invite the Catholic Church to participate in the UNASUR dialogue mission in Venezuela?

- What was the role of Brazil in the UNASUR missions in Bolivia, Paraguay and Venezuela?

- Why did Brazil drop out of the mission in Venezuela?

- How has Brazilian involvement in UNASUR and its democracy promotion changed during the presidency of Lula, Dilma and Temer?

- Why did UNASUR not become more active during the impeachment process of Dilma Rousseff?

- What was the role of UNASUR in the Bolivian constitution drafting process compared to the Organization of American States?

- Why were the sanctions in the case of the Paraguayan crisis more strict (expulsion from the organization) than in other cases of disruption of a democratic process.

Appendix IV - Questionnaire (Spanish)

- ¿Cuáles son las ventajas y desafíos de la estructura multilateral de UNASUR?

- ¿Cuál es el impacto de las políticas domésticas de los países miembros en el funcionamiento de la organización?

- ¿Como explicaría el concepto de UNASUR de promoción de la democracia?
- ¿Hasta que punto se relaciona con la cuestión de los derechos humanos? ¿Es la defensa del orden constitucional el principal objetivo?

- ¿Cuáles son los límites de la aplicabilidad de la cláusula democrática? ¿Permite esta cláusula intervenir más fácilmente en algunos escenarios que en otros?

- ¿Cómo sería posible mejorar el funcionamiento de UNASUR para que pueda actuar más eficientemente en las crisis democráticas?

- La soberanía de los países miembros es un aspecto importante para los miembros de UNASUR. ¿Cómo afecta la soberanía las acciones de involucramiento de la organización en asuntos domésticos como en el caso de la promoción de la democracia?

- ¿Cuáles son los problemas que UNASUR encontró en los casos de Bolivia, Paraguay, Venezuela?

- ¿Cómo interpreta usted el impacto que la presidencia pro-tempore de Venezuela ha tenido en la capacidad de la organización de involucrarse en el caso de Venezuela? ¿Puede afectar la imparcialidad en el conflicto?

- ¿Por qué UNASUR decidió invitar a la Iglesia Católica a participar en las negociaciones?

- ¿Cuál fue el papel de Brasil en las misiones de UNASUR en las crisis políticas en Bolivia, Paraguay y Venezuela?

- En un principio, parecía que Brasil estaba involucrado en la misión en Venezuela, pero en este momento no es parte de ella. ¿Cuál es el motivo?

- ¿De qué forma se ha transformado el rol de Brasil en UNASUR y en las acciones de promoción de la democracia durante las presidencias de Lula, Dilma y Temer?

- ¿Por qué UNASUR no tomó un rol más activo en el caso de la destitución de Dilma Rousseff?

- ¿Cuál fue el papel de UNASUR en el proceso de redacción de la Constitución Boliviana? ¿Cómo se compara el rol de UNASUR con el de la Organización de Estados Americanos?
- ¿Por qué fueron más estrictas las sanciones en el caso de la crisis Paraguay (se le expulsó de la organización) que en otros casos de ruptura del proceso democrático?

Appendix V – UNASUR's democratic clause

PROTOCOLO ADICIONAL AL TRATADO CONSTITUTIVO DE UNASUR SOBRE COMPROMISO CON LA DEMOCRACIA

La República de Argentina, el Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, la República Federativa del Brasil, la República de Chile, la República de Colombia, la República del Ecuador, la República Cooperativa de Guyana, la República del Paraguay, la República del Perú, República de Suriname, la República Oriental del Uruguay y la República Bolivariana de Venezuela.

CONSIDERANDO que el Tratado Constitutivo de la Unión de Naciones Suramericanas establece que la plena vigencia de las instituciones democráticas y el respeto irrestricto de los derechos humanos son condiciones esenciales para la construcción de un futuro común de paz y prosperidad económica y social y para el desarrollo de los procesos de integración entre los Estados Miembros.

SUBRAYANDO la importancia de la Declaración de Buenos Aires de 1 de octubre de 2010 y de los instrumentos regionales que afirman el compromiso democrático.

REITERANDO nuestro compromiso con la promoción, defensa y protección del orden democrático, del Estado de Derecho y sus instituciones, de los Derechos Humanos y las libertades fundamentales, incluyendo la libertad de opinión y de expresión, como condiciones esenciales e indispensables para el desarrollo de su proceso de integración, y requisito esencial para su participación en la UNASUR.

ACUERDAN:

ARTICULO 1

El presente Protocolo se aplicará en caso de ruptura o amenaza de ruptura del orden democrático, de una violación del orden constitucional o de cualquier situación que ponga en riesgo el legítimo ejercicio del poder y la vigencia de los valores y principios democráticos.

ARTICULO 2

Cuando se produzca una de las situaciones contempladas en el artículo anterior el Consejo de Jefas y Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno o, en su defecto, el Consejo de Ministras y Ministros de Relaciones Exteriores se reunirá –en sesión extraordinaria- convocado por la Presidencia Pro Tempore: de oficio, a solicitud del Estado afectado o a petición de otro Estado miembro de UNASUR.

ARTICULO 3

El Consejo de Jefas y Jefes de Estado o en su defecto el Consejo de Ministras y Ministros de Relaciones Exteriores, reunido en sesión extraordinaria considerará, de forma consensuada, la naturaleza y el alcance de las medidas a ser aplicadas, tomando en consideración las informaciones pertinentes recabadas sobre la base de lo establecido en el artículo 4º del presente Protocolo y respetando la soberanía e integridad territorial del Estado afectado.

ARTICULO 4

El Consejo de Jefas y Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno o, en su defecto, el Consejo de Ministras y Ministros de Relaciones Exteriores podrá establecer, en caso de ruptura o amenaza de ruptura del orden democrático, entre otras, las medidas que se detallan más adelante, destinadas a restablecer el proceso político institucional democrático. Dichas medidas, entrarán en vigencia en la fecha en que se adopte la respectiva decisión. a.- Suspensión del derecho a participar en los distintos órganos, e instancias de la UNASUR, así como del goce de los derechos y beneficios conforme al Tratado Constitutivo de UNASUR. b.- Cierre parcial o total de las fronteras terrestres, incluyendo la suspensión y/o limitación del comercio, tráfico aéreo y marítimo, comunicaciones, provisión de energía, servicios y suministros. c.-Promover la suspensión del Estado afectado en el ámbito de otras organizaciones regionales e internacionales. d.- Promover, ante terceros países y/o bloques regionales, la suspensión de los derechos y/o beneficios del Estado afectado, derivados de los acuerdos de cooperación de los que fuera parte. e. Adopción de sanciones políticas y diplomáticas adicionales.

ARTICULO 5

Conjuntamente con la adopción de las medidas señaladas en el artículo 4º el Consejo de Jefas y Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno, o en su defecto, el Consejo de Ministros de Relaciones Exteriores interpondrán sus buenos oficios y realizarán gestiones diplomáticas para promover el restablecimiento de la democracia en el país afectado. Dichas acciones se llevarán a cabo en coordinación con las que se realicen en aplicación de otros instrumentos internacionales, sobre la defensa de la democracia.

ARTICULO 6

Cuando el gobierno constitucional de un Estado miembro considere que exista una amenaza de ruptura o alteración del orden democrático que lo afecte gravemente, podrá recurrir al Consejo de Jefas y Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno o al Consejo de Ministras y Ministros de Relaciones Exteriores, a través de la Presidencia Pro Tempore y/o de la Secretaría General, a fin de dar a conocer la situación y requerir acciones concretas concertadas de cooperación y el pronunciamiento de UNASUR para la defensa y preservación de su institucionalidad democrática.

ARTICULO 7

Las medidas a que se refiere el artículo 4º aplicadas al Estado Miembro afectado, cesarán a partir de la fecha de comunicación a tal Estado del acuerdo de los Estados que adoptaron tales medidas, una vez verificado el pleno restablecimiento del orden democrático constitucional.

ARTICULO 8

El presente Protocolo forma parte integrante del Tratado Constitutivo de UNASUR. El presente Protocolo entrará en vigor treinta días después de la fecha de recepción del noveno instrumento de su ratificación. Los instrumentos de ratificación serán depositados ante el Gobierno de la República del Ecuador, que comunicará la fecha de depósito a los demás Estados Miembros, así como la fecha de entrada en vigor del presente Protocolo.

Para el Estado Miembro que ratifique el presente Protocolo luego de haber sido depositado el noveno instrumento de ratificación, el mismo entrará en vigencia treinta días después de la fecha en que tal Estado Miembro haya depositado su instrumento de ratificación.

ARTICULO 9

El presente Protocolo será registrado ante la Secretaría de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas. Suscrito en la ciudad de Georgetown, República Cooperativa de Guyana, a los veintiséis días del mes de noviembre del año dos mil diez, en originales en los idiomas español, inglés, neerlandés y portugués, siendo los cuatro igualmente auténticos.