Political ideologies and regionalism in South America
The case of UNASUR’s institutional design

Pablo Orellana
Student No. 4668063

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Double Degree of Master of Arts in Political Sciences and International Affairs at the Freie Universität Berlin in cooperation with the Institut d’Études Politiques de Paris

Supervisors
Prof. Dr. Tanja A. Börzel
Dr. Andrea Ribeiro Hoffmann

Berlin – 2014
“How should we think about world politics after the end of the cold war, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, after the September 11 attacks, with the onset of the War on terror? My answer is simple: ours is a world of regions”

Katzenstein 2005
## Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations ......................................................................................................................... 4

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................................. 4

2. The Background of the Research ................................................................................................. 8
   State of the art of regionalism ........................................................................................................... 8
   Standard Approaches to (Regional) Institutional Design ................................................................. 9
   Relevance ........................................................................................................................................ 10

3. Theoretical Framework ................................................................................................................ 12
   Defining Institutional Design ............................................................................................................ 14
   Defining Political Ideologies ............................................................................................................ 15
   Hypothesis ....................................................................................................................................... 17

4. Methodology ................................................................................................................................ 19
   Selection of countries ....................................................................................................................... 19
   Data collection ................................................................................................................................. 21

5. Empirical and Interpretative Analysis .......................................................................................... 22
   Disclosing Ideological Norms ......................................................................................................... 23
   Mandate .......................................................................................................................................... 29
   Assessing the Regional Ideological Context ..................................................................................... 34
   Membership ....................................................................................................................................... 38
   Formal Rules ..................................................................................................................................... 41

6. Conclusions ................................................................................................................................... 46

Appendix 1: Manifestos used for the empirical recovery of ideological norms by country .......... 49
Appendix 2: Textual sources for the contextual and interpretative analysis ................................. 50

Bibliography ........................................................................................................................................ 52
## List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAN</td>
<td>Andean Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSN</td>
<td>Community of South American Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>International Relations Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MERCOSUR</td>
<td>Southern Common Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAS</td>
<td>Organization of American States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Workers’ Party (Brazil)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RO</td>
<td>Regional Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDII</td>
<td>Rational Design of International Institutions Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCT</td>
<td>UNASUR’s Constitutive Treaty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNASUR</td>
<td>Union of South American Nations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction

Latin America has a long-standing tradition of regionalist endeavors. However, or precisely because of this, throughout the years “Inter-American, Latin American, or Spanish American international regional institutions were difficult to craft [...] and even harder to sustain” (Domínguez 2007: 86-7). Its current puzzle of overlapping region-building projects, for instance, exhibits a phenomenon that seems to emerge from this endemic practice. Moreover, Latin American regionalism, it has been argued, “has never been all-encompassing, but rather territorially segmented, therefore disintegrating the conceptual Latin American space at the same time as it has sought to integrate sub-regions” (Malamud and Gardini 2012: 117). Yet, identifying a particular region as a conceptual (and therefore constructed) space, while at the same time subsuming into it geographically demarcated subunits, underscores the challenges encountered when dealing with regionalism. Accordingly, the first insight into this work derives from this consideration and its particular focus on the South American subcontinent.

Usually, theories of regionalism have had a hard test in proving their explanatory power in South America, and in Latin America more broadly (Malamud 2012: 182-183). When it comes to the subcontinent, the bulk of literature has been primarily oriented towards its most prominent experiences, namely the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Andean Community (CAN). On the field, however, the political landscape has been experiencing remarkable developments both with traditional and new regional organizations (ROs). Indeed, with regards to the former, scholarship suggests these have been lagging behind. In this sense, to MERCOSUR’s stagnation and enduring doubts about its future (Gómez-Mera 2013: 214; Hummel and Lohaus 2012: 74), claims have been raised on its apparent “identity crisis” (Oelsner 2013). CAN, for its part, is said to have “lost momentum” as “members such as Chile, Peru and Venezuela have come and gone depending on national circumstances” (Malamud and Gardini 2012: 125). The withdrawal of Venezuela from CAN in 2006 and its full incorporation into MERCOSUR in 2012 portrays the recent major realignment with regards to these traditional institutions.1

However, while such individualist positions may suggest growing political grievances in the region, political consensus, on the contrary, seems to be gaining momentum in terms of regionalism at the South American level. A recent manifestation of this phenomenon is the

---

1 First applying for full membership in MERCOSUR in 2006, Venezuela officially joined after the trading bloc approved its admission six years later.
creation of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in 2008, comprising all South American countries in one single regionalist project. More so, if one considers that “no regional initiative was pitched on the scale of the South American subcontinent prior to the advent of UNASUR” (Espinosa 2014: 31). The facts corroborate these new political dynamics. For instance, while still a young and developing organization, UNASUR has successfully claimed for itself a primary role in conflict mediation within the South American context, thereby replacing more established institutions such as the Organization of American States (OAS) (Caballero 2014: 22; Sanahuja 2012: 14; Nolte and Wehner 2012:10).

Overall, many authors coincide on the appearance of nationalist and leftist governments in the region as one determinant factor for UNASUR’s very emergence (Bonilla and Long 2010; Carrión 2013). Certainly, in 2008, the “Latin America’s left turn,” as the left-wing wave throughout the region has come to be known (Castañeda 2006), had spread to almost all countries in South America. Accordingly, the growing scholarship on this RO suggests that UNASUR “has been modeled by governments anchored in political coalitions strongly based on popular forces, which consistently exhibit a corresponding political style defined by popular mobilization, friend-enemy politics, and presidential leadership” (Espinosa 2014: 31). Yet, such accounts point to the institution’s genesis rather to its institutional design. Hence, notwithstanding UNASUR’s premature successes, the focus of this work aims at analyzing its institutional features rather than its performance.

Traditionally, “with the exception of European institutions, regional institutions have occupied a small and insignificant part of the overall theoretical literature on international institutions” (Acharya and Johnston 2007: 2). Taking UNASUR as a case study, thus, this work is attentive to what remains a neglected theoretical question in the non-Western world: “are institutional designs affected by the dominant ideology of the key entrepreneurs?” (Acharya and Johnston 2007: 17) In the case of UNASUR, while much emphasis has been put on the “rise of the left,” the debate has avoided a theory-guided discussion on ideology more broadly. Therefore, attentive to the intrinsic characteristics of this region, the present case study aims at providing a theory-based analysis of UNASUR’s institutional design that

---

2 UNASUR’s official members include: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela.

3 The South American scale refers hereafter to all sovereign nation States, which explains the exclusion of French Guyana, one of France’s Overseas Territories and therefore part of the European Union.

4 Since its creation, UNASUR has been key in resolving democratic breakdowns in Bolivia (2008) and Ecuador (2010) as well as to decrease tensions between Colombia and Venezuela (Nolte and Wehner 2012).

5 In fact, in 2008, year of UNASUR’s creation, only Colombia and Paraguay were ruled by presidents who were outside the left spectrum in South America and rather championed right-wing positions.
pinpoints the role of ideology in a regional context. The guiding research question for this explorative case study then reads:

_What role have political ideologies played in the institutional design of UNASUR?_

After a presentation of the theoretical background of this research (Section 2), a detailed description of the theoretical framework (Section 3) will be provided as well as some inputs on methodology (Section 4). Subsequently, the elaboration of the empirical and interpretative analysis (Section 5) should allow drawing the corresponding conclusions of our case (Section 6). Institutional design refers hereafter to the formal structure of a RO established by its Constitutive Treaty.⁶

---

⁶ Terms like organizational design/set-up, structural design/set-up, or institutional set-up should be linked to this departing definition, for they will hereafter be used interchangeably.
2. The Background of the Research

State of the art of regionalism

“The concept of regionalism is as diverse as its object of study” (Börzel 2011: 5). While the “first wave” of regionalism has focused and successfully explained economic integration and the case of Europe, such approaches “are less compelling in explaining the differential outcomes we find across different regions” (Börzel 2011: 19). Challenging the prominence of established regionalism theories, claims on the emergence of a “new regionalism” have been raised on the grounds that mainstream theories are “neither designed for, nor capable of capturing the multidimensionality, pluralism and comprehensiveness of contemporary regionalization processes, nor the way in which they are socially constructed” (Schultz et al. 2001; Hettne and Söderbaum 2000). However, while such scholarship has further sharpened the differentiation from processes of regionalization and underscored the rising importance of non-state actors, “the literature on new regionalism might have underestimated the resilience of the State, or have been too quick to predict its demise” (Acharya and Johnston 2007: 10).

Furthermore, au-delà this academic divide, the study of regionalism continues to be founded on the contested notion of ‘region.’ To the materialistic and ideational approaches to define a region, Kaztenstein (2005: 11) recalls the insights of behavioral theories of geography, which, as he notes, “focus on how regions are shaped and reshaped by political practice[s].” Such scholarship inputs underpinnings both: regions’ ideational dimension and the ongoing salience of political actors, or as it has been timely pointed out: “regions are politically made” (Reuber and Wolkersdorfer 2001). Thus, beyond their geographical dimension and their gradual recognition as social constructions, regions are being charged with an inherent political element. As van Langenhove (2011: 1) points out: “they are imagined and they are created in an institutional way.” Taken altogether, these advancements have reinforced the conceptualization of regionalism as “processes and structures of region-building in terms of closer economic, political, security and socio-cultural linkages between states and societies that are geographically proximate” (Börzel 2012: 255). Throughout this study, thus, this conceptualization of regionalism will serve as the overall conceptual basis.

---

7 A differentiation further accentuated in the economic-political literature, where regionalization refers to “the growth of economic interdependence within a given geographical area” (Ravenhill 2007, 174).
Standard Approaches to (Regional) Institutional Design

A salient approach in the study of institutions has been the Rational Design of International Institutions project (RDII) (Koremenos et al. 2001). This theoretical effort puts forward different institutional features for scrutiny such as membership, scope of issues or flexibility. Nevertheless, while its proponents stress that the ultimate value of their framework “depends on its ability to explain phenomena across a wide range of substantive issues” (Koremenos et al. 2001: 796), initial criticism challenged its representativeness by pointing out their bias towards economic issues and mostly trade arrangements (Duffield 2003: 423). Not to mention, of course, the non-inclusion of any non-Western institution for their theoretical inputs. Moreover, another of its core limitations is that “it assumes that actors are mainly concerned with maximizing material gains, rather than legitimacy ”(Acharya and Jhonston 2007: 13), which complicates its applicability to our encompassing conceptualization of regionalism.

Challenges to the rational approach on institutions have mainly derived from the constructivist school of international relations (IR). Early accounts already highlighted the inescapable intersubjective quality embedded in regimes and social institutions (Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986: 754). As such, they are now considered to be fundamentally ideational phenomena involving ideas that are shared by members of a collectivity (Wendt 1999: 94-6). Furthermore, Gourevitch’s (1999: 137-64) distinction between “institutions that are created” and “institutions that are organic” has further refined the constructivist criticism against rational-choice approaches, thereby elucidating the inherent rational bias toward formal institutions. As for their own take on ROs and their institutional set ups, constructivist approaches have mainly drawn from processes of diffusion (Börzel and Risse 2009a; 2009b). The idea of a “global transcript” has been put forward to explain the growing institutional similarities found among ROs, which could eventually “trans[l]ate into institutional isomorphism through coercion, mimicry, and lesson-drawing (Börzel and Risse 2012; DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Strang and Meyer 1993). Nevertheless, the facts also show that persistent differences hinder an eventual institutional convergence (Börzel et al. 2013: 22).

Earlier insights on how domestic and region-specific factors “localize” global standards (Acharya 2009; 2004) are considered the best account for this ongoing divergence. Indeed, as it has been argued, ROs “choose from a menu of standards and instruments rather

---

8 Indeed, taking into consideration this caution, studies of ROs’ institutional features have begun treating institutional design as a combination of both, formal and informal structures (Acharya and Johnston 2007).
than simply ‘downloading’ the whole package” (Börzel et al. 2013: 22). Nevertheless, beyond IR theory, when it comes to theories of regionalism, these “are less equipped to account for the differential outcomes and (changes in) institutional designs we find across regions” (Börzel 2012: 260). Thus, aware of the different inputs of rational and constructivist approaches in the study of institutions, this study takes into account the call for “a more agency-based approach, which does not treat ROs and their members States as passive recipients of a global script but rather as political agents that adopt and adapt global standards […] to make them fit to their strategic interests and normative beliefs” (Börzel et al. 2013: 22-23). Therefore, due to scope of this work and UNASUR’s still developing character, this explorative research restricts the analysis to the formal features of this RO by treating its institutional design only as a dependent variable, thereby leaving aside any consideration regarding its impact or efficiency.

Relevance

In the absence of a clear-cut differentiation between “old” and “new” regionalism, this study is set at the crossroads of these two strands of literature. Its focus on a RO that has exclusively been studied by proponents of the “new” regionalism will provide the link towards this theoretical rapprochement. Likewise, in terms of the ongoing developments in the study of institutional design among ROs, this work is attentive to the recognition that “research on diffusion and comparative regionalism is ill-equipped to account for this double finding of increasing similarities and persistent differences” (Börzel et al. 2013: 28). Thus, reconciling the “old” rational and functionalist inputs with “new” constructivist ones regarding regionalism, this case study aims at providing a theory-guided account on the institutional set-up of this RO.

Accordingly, the case of UNASUR aims at bypassing the gap of existing regionalism theories in the study of institutions. However, due to the scope of this work, it does not start from scratch and acknowledges their valuable insights. Thus, on one hand, this work is concerned on how states’ interests and preferences evolve overtime, and is therefore attentive to inter-govermentalism theory, which sees regional integration as an outcome of bargaining among national States (Moravcsik 1998; 1993; 1991). However, while this approach to regionalism stresses that preferences over [European] integration reflect the distribution of economic gains among states or business groups (Hooghe and Marks 2008: 4), this study addresses its shortcomings, on grounds of parsimony, in treating material interests and power
considerations simply as “black boxes.” Additionally, it points to its gap in the study of institutions due to its close association with regime theory, which considers regimes to exist and operate both formally and informally, thereby rendering institutional design per se not its core priority (Acharya and Johnston 2007: 9).

On the other hand, while “the new regionalism literature challenge[s] the rationalist bias of neo-liberal institutionalism” (Acharya and Johnston 2007: 9), this work responds to its specific call for a closer attention on how regions are socially constructed. Especially since “the agreement that regions are imagined, much like the nation, underscore[s] the relevance of constructivism in analysis of regionalism” (Fawn 2009: 31). However, by mainly focusing on the term “design,” which implies an act of choice or deliberation (Acharya and Johnston 2007: 15), this study also pinpoints the limited contribution of such literature in the domain due to the downgraded role attributed to political actors. More so, if one takes into account that its emphasis “on informal sectors and non-state actors might have lessened the importance of institutional features of regionalism” (Acharya and Johnston 2007: 10).

Last but not least, this work aims at overcoming the taken-for-grantedness of ‘region’ in the study of regionalism. For this endeavor, it acknowledges its ongoing status as a “complicated category,” for it brings along together both material and ‘virtual’ elements, as well as very diverging social practices and discourses” (Paasi 2009: 131). It thus concedes to the observation that “a region exists when actors, including governmental, define and promulgate to others a specific identity” (Fawn 2009: 13). Therefore, the examination of political ideologies aims at avoiding this recurrent dismissal, and the case of UNASUR, which has purportedly declared “its determination to build a South American identity,” lends itself suitably for this explorative enterprise.
3. Theoretical Framework

In the face of the above-mentioned shortcomings of regionalism theories in the study of institutions, the aim of this work is to develop a theory-based explanation for our case in point. Notwithstanding its preliminary limitation due to the deficiency of theoretical frameworks dealing specifically with a direct link between the structural set up of ROs and ideology, this work highlights the dependence of single case studies on middle-range theories in order to overcome such drawback (George and Bennett 2005; Venesson 2008). Thus, for the purposes of this study, I draw primarily from the theoretical inputs on the influence of political ideologies over the design of foreign policy advanced by Hilary Appel (2000), as well as from recent inputs in the study of ideologies (Freeden 2013; Steger 2013; van Dijk 2013; 1998).

In general terms, Appel’s (2000: 524) framework is foremost appropriate, for it is grounded on the observation that materialist or power-based approaches pay little attention to the formation of State interests by treating them as simple givens. This provides enough room for incorporating a constructivist insight by bringing ideologies into the analysis. Especially if one notes that “the study of regions may be a particular area in IR in which to further develop synergies between realism and constructivism” (Fawn 2009: 31). In this sense, the overall focus on ideology aims at addressing the “crucial shortcoming” of materialist and power-based theories “to capture the forces (1) shaping how preferences form and (2) determining how the distribution of power is perceived,” or what Appel (2000: 523) calls “more subtle” ways of ideological influence.

For all the above, the first major adaptation of Apple’s (2000) framework involves moving the focus away from a broad notion of “foreign policy,” and rather placing it on the design of an institution.\(^9\) This reformulation is informed by the scholarship on Latin America, and hence South America, which portrays a region where regionalism is still being considered as a “(national) foreign policy” (Malamud 2012: 186; Malamud and Gardini 2012: 130). Evidence thereof is found when variables such as a strong interpresidentialist culture (Tussie 2009) or the role of certain countries as “pay masters” (Mattli 1999: 56; Hummel and Lohaus 2012) are held accountable for Latin American regionalism. Moreover, as recent lessons from

\(^9\) For our purposes, Appel’s theoretical framework will be restricted to the ways in which political ideologies affect the “design” of foreign policy. As for her inputs on implementation, these will be deliberately omitted and rather complemented with our focus on regionalism to make up for her emphasis on individual countries.
MERCOSUR suggest, when it comes to regionalism in this part of the world, “States remain safely in control of their regional cooperation alternatives” (Gómez-Mera 2013: 224).

Additionally, such refinement is foremost justified by methodological cautions concerning single case studies whereby “there can be elements of [middle-range] theories, dispersed or available in a primitive formulation, but they have to be rethought and redesigned” (Vennesson 2008: 236). Accordingly, the second key adaptation derives from the first, for the design of a regional institution necessarily requires the analysis of the regional context. This translates into the embedment of our case within the particular South American setting, which eases the exploration for both the direct and the context-dependent influence of ideology over UNASUR’s institutional set up.

On the whole, Appel’s (2000: 528-9) model identifies two primary ways in which ideologies determine the design for a specific foreign policy, which result, in turn, from the mutual reinforcing relation between policymakers’ ideologies and the ideological context in which decisions are embedded. On one hand, ideologies have a direct influence in the design of foreign policy for they “identify an approach in broad general sense” (Appel 2000: 528-9). On the other hand, and as she puts it, in a “perhaps more controversial level,” their impact can also be determinative based on normative conceptions of justice related to and reinforced by the ideological context (Appel 2000: 530). A graphical depiction of this theoretical framework adapted for our case in point is then presented as follows:

![Figure 1. Theoretical Framework](image)

The logic of the argument is straightforward, for it incorporates the ideological context in order to disentangle the indirect influence of ideologies. As it will be clarified later on,
ideologies in this work will also be defined as “shared social beliefs of (specific) social groups” (van Dijk 1998: 314), which will support the constructivist input of this work in the study of institutional design. All the more so, if one bears in mind that:

“[Rational choice] analyses, which focus on moments of institutional choice and link the actions of designers to the anticipated consequences of institutional arrangements, provide key insights into our understanding of institutional origins. Taken alone, however, these arguments are at best incomplete, at worst seriously misleading. In reducing a moving picture to a snapshot, we run the risk of missing crucial aspects of the processes through which formal institutions take shape, as well as the ways in which they either endure or change in social environments that are themselves constantly changing” (Pierson 2004: 104).

Therefore, in order to unravel the ‘controversial’ effects of ideologies in the institutional set-up, the present work analyzes the communicative developments of actors. This goes in line with the agreement between rational-choice and constructivist approaches, which admit that “ohne die Analyse von Kommunikationsprozessen lässt sich das Zustandekommen von Kooperation zwischen interessengeleiteten Akteuren nicht erklären” (Müller 1995: 371). In the case of UNASUR, the corresponding analysis of presidents’ ideologies, their discourses and joint declarations and agreements will help understand its institutional design more closely. Finally, confronted to the observation that “the effects of language and communicative processes are always related to a specific context and can only be accounted for in the framework of this specific context” (Ulbert al. 2004: 19-20), it must be emphasized that this theoretical framework is suited for providing a theory-guided account of our case in point, at the expense of a nomothetic explanation aimed at generalizing across cases.

**Defining Institutional Design**

To define institutional design, a closer look at its constitutive elements is in order. On one hand, “institutions” –in a broad sense– refer to “systems of established and embedded social rules that structure social interactions” (Hodgson 2006: 18). As for *international* institutions, they are defined as “relatively stable sets of related constitutive, regulative, and procedural norms and rules that pertain to the international system, the actors in the system (including states as well as nonstate entities), and their activities” (Duffield 2007: 7-8). The kind of institutions addressed here, however, are regional organizations. Consequently, organizations –generally speaking – “are special institutions that involve (a) criteria to establish their boundaries and to distinguish their members from nonmembers, (b) principles
of sovereignty concerning who is in charge, and (c) chains of command delineating responsibilities within the organization” (Hodgson 2006: 18). Looking back at our core conceptualization of regionalism, this work is thus interested in the structures rather than the processes of region building.

On the other hand, “design” - in a broad sense - means “the creation of an actionable form to promote valued outcomes in a particular context” (Bobrow and Dryzek 1987: 201). Nevertheless, as different theories of design have shown, there exists the recognition of different particular disciplines giving birth to different focus of analysis (Goodin 1996: 30-34). This has, in turn, led to one major caution: “the objects of design are so very different that there can be no serious thought of wholesale borrowing of the tricks of those very different trades and applying them unreflectively to the design of social institutions” (Goodin 1996: 31). Therefore, in the realm of regionalism more specifically, institutional design has come to be defined as the “formal and informal rules and relationships that constitute the [regional] institution itself” (Acharya and Johnston 2007: 21). Despite its breadth, the present study relies on this definition, thereby giving exclusive emphasis on the formal features of our case in point.

Furthermore, given the scope of this work and the persistent differences in institutional designs across ROs, the analysis focuses on ‘general’ formal dimensions adapted to our framework and our overall definition of (regional) organizations. Thus, in order to ascertain the direct influence of ideologies over the overall design of this RO, the first dimension analyzed is the institutional mandate, which refers to the overall purpose of the institution (Acharya and Johnston 2007: 22). Subsequently, deriving from our concept of organizations and its inputs on delimiting boundaries, the second dimension examined is membership, which refers “mainly to the number of actors allowed to participate” (Acharya and Johnston 2007: 21-22). Last but not least, concerning sovereignty principles and chains of command within an organization, the overall formal rules are studied, which refer to “the explicit and ‘legalized’ regulations governing how decisions are made (Acharya and Johnston 2007: 22).

Defining Political Ideologies
A review of the literature on ideology points out to an endless controversy over its conceptualization.10 Traditional approaches, deriving from the long-standing legacy usually

10 As a scholar in the field points out: “indeed, of all essentially contested and controversial concepts in the social sciences and the humanities, that of ‘ideology’ may well come out near the top of the list” (van Dijk 1998: 1)
attributed to Marx/Engels, have preserved in the everyday “commonsense uses of the notion of ‘ideology,’ taken as a system of wrong, false, distorted or otherwise misguided beliefs” (van Dijk 1998: 2). Indeed, as a vehicle to express or conceal one’s own political position, “until today, ideologies in everyday and academic discourse are typically attributed to Others, such as our ideological opponents or enemies: We have the truth, They have ideologies” (van Dijk 2013: 175). Progressively, however, the study of ideologies has surpassed traditional approaches and currently accounts for more nuanced insights regarding their ‘controversial’ nature (Freeden 2013; van Dijk 2013; Steger 2013).

Remarkably, Appel’s (2000) model relies upon Hamilton’s (1987: 38) elaborated comparison where he defines ideology as: “a system of collectively held normative and reputedly factual ideas and beliefs and attitudes advocating a particular pattern of social relationships and arrangements, and/or aimed at justifying a particular pattern of conduct, which its proponents seek to promote, realize, pursue or maintain.” Nonetheless, while containing remnants of the traditional approach, Appel’s (2000) use of this definition is mainly pragmatic. As she further discloses, ideologies are charged with a high normative character, for they “provide an interpretation of the world, both as it is perceived (that is, as a Weltanschauung) and as it should be” (Appel 2000; Geertz 1973). Thus, adhering to Appel’s pragmatism, but holding on to our focus on regionalism, the present work defines ideology for what it first and foremost is: a set of norms/ideas.

Nevertheless, a clear distinction should be made beforehand. Pointing to the altered ideological landscape shaped by globalization, where “the national is slowly losing grip on people’s minds, but the global has not yet ascended to the commanding heights once occupied by its predecessor” (Steger 2013: 228), this works incorporates the emergent distinction between two “social imaginaries” in the study of ideology: the national and the global. In doing so, it aims at bypassing the traditional dichotomy between right and left, for it is the role of ideology in a regional context this work is primarily concerned with. Thus, in terms of operationalization, our definition of ideologies explores their direct influence over the institutional design, insofar as it focuses primarily on the ideological norms stemming from national ruling parties, as well as their indirect influence stemming from collectively held ideas at the regional level (regional Weltanschauung). In this manner, such a differentiation

11 For a brief account of this distinction and the current literature on ideologies see Steger 2013 and Freed 2013.
12 In terms of definition, a norm is treated throughout this work as a “standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 891).
covers the two “social imaginaries” that today underpin the articulation of political ideologies in a globalized world (Steger 2013: 214-231).

Similarly as in Appel’s model, it goes without saying that this conceptualization is clean of any pejorative connotation, for ideologies today are seen as unquestionable ‘typical’ manifestations of political thinking (Freeden 2013: 116) that are neither individual nor idealistic constructs, but rather “social constructs shared by a group” (van Dijk 1998: 9). Therefore, emphasis is given to certain context-models stemming from cognitive and social approaches to ideology (van Dijk 2013: 175-196; 1998) when analyzing the context-dependent influence of ideologies, which mainly include:

- Identity: Who are we? Who belongs to us? Who is a member and who can join?
- Activities: What do we (have to) do? What is our role in society?
- Goals: What is the goal of our activities?
- Norms and values: What are the norms of our activities? What is good or bad for us?
- Group relations: Who are our friends and our enemies?
- Resources: What material or symbolic resources form the basis of our (lack of) power and our position in society?” (van Dijk 2013: 178).

**Hypothesis**

Based on a rationale that institutions are created to deal with some sort of collective action problem (Koremenos et al. 2001), scholars currently agree on the premise that “the institutions’ form and function will, in general, reflect the nature of the cooperation problem” (Acharya and Johnston 2004: 17). Furthermore, from a functionalist perspective, the drive to overcome collective action problems may lead member States or ROs to purposefully modify or thoroughly design new institutions (Koremenos et al. 2001: 76-77). That is, actors rationally calculate costs and benefits and select a given institutional design based on what it is more profitable to them (Kanthak 2012: 87). Applying it to our framework, where ideologies are said to influence the institutional design by identifying an approach in “a broad sense,” this rational and functionalist logic implies a direct influence rather than a contextual one by assuming bedrock interests and preferences.

Thus, given the first modification of our framework, the dimension more suited for its application is the institutional mandate, for it refers to its overall purpose: that is, the very *raison d’être* of the institution. Therefore, in order to disentangle between leaders’ mere lip service to their ideologies and their actual ideological commitment portrayed in the new RO, this work’s main hypothesis contends:
**H1: The more crosscutting the ideological norms among States on a particular area of region building, the more salience this area will receive in UNASUR’s mandate.**

Consequently, the evaluation of such hypothesis is essential for getting a first insight into the ideological context of our case in point. As Appel (2000: 530) contends, the ideological context “is not a fuzzy concept” and represents “simply a linguistic shortcut for the sum of the ideas held by members of the elite and mass groups that find expression in both the political discourse and formal institutional mechanisms.” Moreover, due to the consensual agreement reached for the organization’s very creation, our first hypothesis helps determining the ideological affinities among member States. For this reason, an overall assessment of the ideological context is subsequently carried out during the empirical section.

Additionally, an interpretivist analysis follows dealing with the dimensions of membership and formal rules founded on the current scholarship inputs on ideology (Freeden 2013; van Dijk 2013; 1998). As Appel’s (2000: 534) argues, contrary to a power-based or materialist interpretation of politics, ideas influence the structures of power and the definition of material interests rather than the reverse. Thus, in line with our framework, the goal here will consist in going beyond assumed preferences of States and concentrate on how interests and preferences form in the first place. For this reason, the interpretative analysis focuses on contrasting rational and functional expectations in the design of institutions **vis-à-vis** UNASUR’s set-up, and to see whether ideologies conceived as a set of collectively held ideas can provide with a more suitable account based on regional perceptions of power.

---

13 For the purpose of this work, I make use of the concept of “political affinities,” which has its origins in Max Weber’s concept of elective affinity (**Wahlverwandtschaft**). Thus, political affinities are defined here as “force of mutual attraction involving the structure and the contents of belief systems and the motives of their adherents” (Jost et al. 2009: 308).
4. Methodology

This work takes the form of a single-case study, which, as its name suggests, is carried out to seek the causes of a specific outcome in a single case (Gerring 2006). Due to their lack of variance in the dependent variable, one-single case studies belong to certain theoretical categories that have to accordingly be made clear (George and Bennett 2005: 77). In this sense, this work falls within the realm of the institutional design of a nascent RO. Moreover, conceding to the suggestion that “institutionalist scholarship is now open to more nuanced, subtle, and contingent formulations than those suggested by rigid standard approaches” (Solingen 2008: 290), in terms of methodology this work uses process tracing and within-case analysis based on our adapted theoretical framework, in combination with interpretative analysis when contrasting rational and functionalist premises to our case.

Generally speaking, process tracing provides a way to bridge positivist and interpretivist approaches, thereby allowing “to explore the causal what and the causal how” (Vennesson 2008: 232). On one hand, it enables to establish and evaluate the link, or the absence thereof, between factors (Héritier 2008: 61-79), which is carried out by assessing the direct ideological influence over the new institution set-up. Additionally, from an interpretivist perspective, it allows the researcher not only to focus on what happened, “but also on how it happened” (Vennesson 2008: 235). That is, it becomes possible through process tracing to examine the reasons that actors give for their actions and behavior and to investigate the relations between beliefs and behavior (Jervis 2006: 645). Accordingly, this is carried out in the analysis of the more controversial influence attributed to the ideological context and the way it has influenced the choice for UNASUR’s institutional design.

The studied time frame comprises mainly the period between December 8, 2004, date of the Cuzco Declaration, which foresaw the establishment of a South American Community of Nations (CSN), and May 23, 2008, date of the signing of UNASUR’s Constitutive Treaty (UCT), which finally crystallized its formal institutional set-up.

Selection of countries
As it is common for case studies, “the primary criterion for case selection should be the relevance to the research objective of the study, whether it includes theory development, theory testing, or heuristic purposes” (George and Bennett 2005: 83). Hence, given the goal of this work to provide a theory-guided account of our case at the expense of generalizable conclusions, the selection of observation units will be restrained to the application our
theoretical framework. As for its subsequent interpretative (heuristic) analysis, the “single-observation” (Gerring 2006: 709-712) will comprise UNASUR’s institutional design, and will rely on the study of its Constitutive Treaty, together with joint official declarations and personal statements to complement the reasons given by actors for their choice.

Overall, “what quantitative and qualitative researchers do not share are specific methodological rules about case selection, the role of process tracing, and the relative emphasis on the role of causal mechanisms as the basis for explanation” (Levy 2008: 15). Indeed, regarding case studies, there is consensus that process tracing, unlike large-N and cross-case comparative research, requires careful, theory-guided selection of nonrandom cases, because process tracing follows a different logic of inference (Levy 2008: 8; George and Bennett 2005: 22-25; Collier et al. 2004: 96). Thus, set at the crossroads of diverging approaches to regionalism, this work analyzes countries based foremost on their theoretical relevance and the availability of data.

The universe of observation units in our case comprises the twelve member States signatories of UCT. Since the underlying questioning of this work is whether institutional designs are affected by the dominant ideology of the ‘key’ entrepreneurs, material and ideational factors are taken into account. Relying on an intergovernmentalist approach to regionalism, where the preeminence of economic motivations are held accountable for national preferences (Moravcsik 1998: 473-479), this works includes at the outset the region’s leading economic powers: Brazil and Argentina. Additionally, in terms of ideational factors, the region’s more “radical” countries (Nilsson 2011: 92) in terms of its ideological positioning are considered: Venezuela and Bolivia.

At this point, however, the observation units comprise predominantly members of MERCOSUR (Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela), thereby leaving Bolivia as only representative of CAN. Moreover, notwithstanding a perceived selection bias on the dependent variable (all these countries pertain to the left-wing of the ideological spectrum), this work follows the trend in qualitative analyses to incorporate “negative cases” (Levy 2008: 8) due to its emphasis on the role of ideology at the regional level. Thus, in material and ideational terms, the inclusion of Colombia, a right-leaning State and major economic power within CAN, appears as the best option to enhance the representativeness among existing ROs in the region. More so, if one considers the theoretical foundation of this work
aimed at overcoming the traditional right-left ideological dichotomy.\textsuperscript{14} Taken altogether, thus, the countries analyzed include: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela.

\textit{Data collection}

Given the scope of this work, the analysis rests foremost on directly available data and comprises two set of text corpus. On one hand, in order to unravel ideologies’ direct influence, the application of our theoretical framework relies primarily on the analysis of ruling parties’ manifestos. Also known as ‘election programs,’ manifestos “are understood parties’ only authoritative policy statements,” and therefore “indicators of the party’s policy preferences at a given point in time” (Werner et al. 2011: 2).\textsuperscript{15} Hence, for most of our observation units, such programmatic electoral agendas prior to UNASUR’s creation have been used. The most severe problem encountered was the quality of data available. Nevertheless, drawing from our definition of ideologies as set of norms, which are in turn derived from overarching ideological principles,\textsuperscript{16} the analysis also included parties’ founding documents and/or party’s national convention rulings to make up for this shortcoming. Norms have been traced at the national and international level conceived as standards of how things should be, which is why mentions to specific programs or policies have not been considered.

On the other hand, the analysis of the ideological context is primarily based on a set of official documents jointly adopted and released in the meetings preceding UNASUR’s official creation. As for the subsequent interpretivist analysis, it relies primarily on UCT combined with joint and individual official declarations and statements within our time scope. Based on the mutual reinforcing relation between ideologies and the context, the latter statements are drawn primarily from events immediately prior to and during the UCT signature.

\textsuperscript{14} As for the remaining members of CAN at the time of UNASUR’s creation, Ecuador and, to a lesser extent, Peru were both governed by left-leaning presidents.
\textsuperscript{15} Unlike statistical work dealing with manifestos, the present theory-guided account deliberately leaves aside standardized categories for their study in order to provide a more accurate depiction of the South American political reality.
\textsuperscript{16} While mainly interested in ideological norms in terms of how things should be, ideological principles are included to the extent that those constitute the underlying foundations of normative statements for an specific electoral campaign and only when they have been explicitly alluded to by parties’ electoral programs.
5. Empirical and Interpretative Analysis

A first look at this RO raises important questions: What distinguishes it from traditional regional institutions in the region? Which issues will it be dealing with? Who is included and who is excluded from this organization? Overall, UNASUR’s main feature is embodied in its highly political character, as well as its specific focus on cooperation in non-trade areas (Sanahuja 2012: 12). However, whilst scholarship inputs on South America have contended that UNASUR embodies a post-trade (Vivares 2014; Sanahuja 2012; Serbin et al. 2012) or even a post-hegemonic approach to regionalism (Riggirozzi and Tussie 2012; Riggirozzi 2011: 421-433), a theoretical discussion on the role of ideology has been restricted to the inputs of left-wing States, which vaguely address why right-wing governments have adhered to the project. Likewise, the link between ideology and this RO’s institutional design has barely been disclosed. Thus, this section’s goal is to shed light on these questions by providing a theory-based account that includes political ideologies as a crucial intervening variable. Drawing from its foundational document, a first general illustration of UNASUR’s structure is shown here:
Disclosing Ideological Norms

With the adoption of its Constitutional Treaty, UNASUR was officially granted international legal personality according to its Art. 1. However, to what extent does its creation represents a new model of regionalism at its founders purportedly affirm? Art. 2 provides the first key insight into this RO’s mandate:

“The objective of the South American Union of Nations is to set up, in a participatory, agreed manner, a space for integration and union among its peoples in the cultural, social, economic and political fields, prioritizing political dialogue, social policies, education, energy, infrastructure, financing and the environment, among others, with a view to eliminating socio-economic inequality, in order to achieve social inclusion and citizen participation, strengthen democracy and reduce asymmetries within the framework of bolstering the sovereignty and independence of the States.”

Certainly, this general objective displays an all-encompassing approach to regionalism. Besides including most areas of region building, noteworthy is the statement prioritizing specific fields such as the political dialogue, social policies, education, energy, infrastructure, financing and the environment. Yet, is the assumption of our hypothesis valid?

In order to evaluate the salience of certain areas of region building in UNASUR’s mandate, I first turn to the evaluation of party manifestos and ideological agendas, so as to track the ideological norms that cut across among member States. Subsequently, I analyze the findings in more detail against the above-mentioned general purpose and UNASUR’s specific objectives contained in Art. 3.

Argentina

The Argentinian political landscape was severely affected by the country’s financial crisis initiated at the end of the 90s. As a result, “the 2001-2002 crisis of governance and the economy triggered a massive withdrawal of public trust from the political elite” (Levitsky and Murillo 2008: 21). Benefiting from this conjuncture and born as a fraction of the long-standing Justicialist Party, the Front for Victory party first emerged as a political alliance that brought Nestor Kirchner to power in 2003. For the 2007 presidential race, the coalition supported the candidature of the incumbent president’s wife, Cristina Fernández. The party’s electoral program for this election declares the intention for continuing the reforms hitherto introduced by Kirchner. Indeed, both at the national and international level, for instance, the

---

17 In fact, UNASUR’s Constitutive Treaty entered into force in 2011 after the ratification of the ninth member State (Uruguay), as provided for by Art. 26. As of today, all member States have ratified it.
18 Norms from the Argentina case are mainly drawn from the Front for Victory party’ Electoral Platform. See Appendix 1 for complete references.
party’s proposals were mainly concentrated in economic issues. Overall, the ideological norms therein contained derive from the party’s overarching principle: “to tackle the country’s social exclusion.”

In terms of ideological norms, a strengthened role of the State is clearly exposed for all policy preferences. An overall review of the party’s privileged domains, for instance, confirms its core conception of the State as the “mediator of social relations.” At the national level, all areas including education, health, and tax collection, for instance, are projected to have more State involvement through the implementation of social policies. The only exception explicitly invoked refers to public infrastructure, where a “neo-keynesian” model is professed in order to boost employment generation. Regarding security issues, the only allusions to the topic address legal security linked to the country’s ongoing financial instability, and a food and employment defense strategy, the latter being pursued by a norm of protectionism.

At the international level, “regional integration through MERCOSUR without prejudice of bilateralism and multilateralism” is qualified by the party to be the cornerstone of its foreign policy. Additionally, an intention for renewed negotiations with international lending agencies concerning the country’s foreign debt embodies the second pressing issue in foreign policy based on a norm of international responsibility. In sum, the ideological norms pursued by Cristina Fernández’ Front for Victory, both nationally and internationally, derive from economic concerns whereby a strengthened role for the State is given utmost priority at both levels.

Bolivia

In 2006, Evo Morales came to power as the country’s first democratically elected indigenous president. The Movement for Socialism, a party of which he had been co-founder, sponsored his candidature. The party’s election program drew primarily from its foundational ideological principles. In terms of ideological positioning, such principles hint at a certain extremism, which resides on a severe critique of the “Western Culture” and the modernity values associated with it (1-3). Explicitly grounded on its own “Andean cosmology,” the document lists 21 principles, by which the party’s future decisions must comply with (7-9). At the national level, such principles include, among others, social justice, human rights, participatory democracy, respect for cultural diversity. At the international level, the

19 For the Bolivian case, the party’s Ideological Principles document (2002), as well as its electoral manifesto (2005) have been analyzed. See Appendix 1 for full references.
construction of the “Great Latin American Homeland,” the liberation from neo-colonialism and imperialism, and the unity of the “Peoples of the Third World” towards the self-determination of “Sovereign Nations” are considered of utmost importance.

Hence, for the presidential elections, the party’s program largely concentrates on the implementation of socialist policies. With regards to ideological norms at the national level, its commitment towards a reversal of the neo-liberal economic model leads to the primacy of the State and a leading role for national private companies whereby the latter would benefit from strengthened public support. In short, in the economic sphere, protectionism is the norm. Additionally, the nationalization of natural resources represents another pressing issue, which allows for the State to emerge as key provider of public services, thereby aiming at a sustainably and “harmonious interaction with Nature.” In matters of security, international cooperation with “friend” States is seen as a priority. Internationally, the economy lies at the heart of the party’s ideological preferences, with norms including: “sovereign” economic integration, reduction of economic dependence, and multilateralism with a privileged focus on Latin America.

_Brazil_\(^{20}\)

As founder of the Workers’ Party (PT), Lula da Silva first came to power in 2003. Once reelected for a second mandate in the 2006 presidential election, his party’s congress, gathered in Sao Paulo for its Third National Convention in 2007, defined the ideological guidelines to be complied with during his second term. Similarly to the aforementioned cases, the priorities rested primarily on the “fight against social exclusion, poverty and inequalities.” Its self-proclaimed socialist features are unambiguously found throughout the document with recurrent references to the party’s origins. At the national level, therefore, its focus on tackling inequality is explicitly directed towards the strengthening of social policies in the areas of education, culture, communication and technology as means of “deepening democracy,” whereas at the international level its core priority relies on a so-called “sovereign international insertion.”

In matters of security, the PT considers public security “a national priority.” This commitment derives from the party’s observation of a high exposure to violence within the Brazilian society, as well as from its reiterated duty to tackle the issue of social oppression

\(^{20}\) In the case of Brazil, the official rulings derived from the party’s national convention in 2007, which include a recompilation of the party’s principles and priorities have been used. Additionally, a review of the party’s founding principles document has additionally complemented the analysis. See Appendix 1 for full references.
and discrimination. Indeed, ideologically speaking, the party’s norms, as the convention repeatedly recalls, go back to its founding principles declaration. Indeed, a review of the latter makes clear the party’s roots and elucidates its emphasis on “popular participation” to challenge the “political exclusion of the oppressed.”

Accordingly, at the national level, the ideological norms revolve around the implementation of a “new development model,” which mainly includes economic growth with income distribution and environmental sustainability. The role granted to the State in such a commitment is vital, as demonstrated in the fields of education, electricity and housing, where the State captures an anticipated role as main supplier. Additionally, in the face of ongoing social inequalities, the principle of equality before the law leads the party to favor equality and egalitarian norms within society. As the manifesto clearly states, the party’s ideological fight is meant “for a Brazil of free and equal men and women.”

Internationally, the PT grants a privileged attention to foreign policy issues. In this sense, norms strictly speaking, are antecedent by the party’s declaration of international principles, which briefly summarizes the party as follows:

“The Workers’ Party is an internationalist, anti-imperialist and socialist party. It fights for democracy, sovereignty, and equality. It fights for a new international order, for world peace and for continental integration. It seeks to build, at the international level, a new hegemony based on multilateralism.”

Following this axiom, the party elaborates their privileged norms at the international level, listed here by their relevance:

- Pacific resolution of conflicts
- Respect for sovereignty and self-determination of peoples
- Democratization of international institutions
- Defense for regional integration
- South-South cooperation

Thus, wrapping up for the case of Brazil, at the national level norms focus on social equality and egalitarianism, whereas at the international level, norms are founded on the principle of multilateralism.

---

21 In fact, a “loud manifestation of sympathy with “the oppressed masses of the world” vehemently closes up its principles declaration.
The case of Colombia represents an ideological particularity in the region. For the presidential election of 2006, Álvaro Uribe, the incumbent president, enjoyed high levels of acceptance that allowed for a smooth reelection supported by different right-wing coalitions. As an established figure in the Colombian political landscape, his candidature was endorsed by the political movement Colombia First, albeit its official status as a non-profit foundation. Despite no clear delineation of ideological principles, the movement publicly manifests its commitment to strengthen “the doctrines generated by Álvaro Uribe” himself. Nevertheless, for the 2006 presidential race, Uribe’s electoral program exhibits striking similarities with his personal “Democratic Manifesto,” initially launched for the 2002 presidential election. Both documents are largely concerned with issues of security due to the country’s enduring internal conflict involving left-wing guerrillas and paramilitary groups, which in turn determines the ideological norms therein contained.

Thus, at the national scale, security represents the cornerstone of Colombia’s ideological preferences. Embodied in a norm of “democratic security,” for instance, Uribe’s campaign promoted a strengthened law and order stance to guarantee democratic stability. Likewise, the predisposition of Colombia’s to international monitoring in security issues relies on a norm of international cooperation. Security, however, is not understood to represent an end in itself, but rather a means to attain civilian peace related to its internal conflict. Furthermore, in the economic realm, preferences focus on an ideological norm concerning a “communitarian State,” which, as opposed to its left-wing neighbors, tasks the State primarily with bolstering investor confidence, and grants it a secondary role by promoting its reduction and efficiency. Thus, the role of the State primarily relies on securing the country’s “social cohesion.”

As for the international scale, the hallmark of Uribe’s 2006 campaign was its enduring support for more economic cooperation and integration. Thus, based on a norm of economic interdependence, its preferences embrace the deepening of CAN in order to turn it into “a real free trade zone,” as well as strengthened commercial links with MERSOCUR and Asian

---

22 Due to the personalistic character of Colombian politics, ideological norms from his 2006 electoral program have been analyzed and contrasted to ideological principles stemming from Álvaro Uribe’s personal 2002 “Democratic Manifesto”. See Appendix 1 for full references.
23 For an account on Colombia First’s status and ideological positioning, see the declaration of its institutional mission. Available online at: http://www.pensamientocolombia.org/quienes-somos/
24 For this and subsequent ideological norms, see Uribe’s personal web site for brief descriptions. Available online at: http://www.primerocolombia.com/es/content/seguridad-democratica
25 Brief description available online at: http://www.primerocolombia.com/es/content/estado-comunitario
26 Brief description available online at: http://www.primerocolombia.com/es/content/cohesion-social
countries (China & Japan). In sum, at the national level, ideological norms promote security not through the State but with it as guarantor of social cohesion, whereas internationally, security issues and a norm of economic interdependence displace sovereignty concerns to the background.

*Venezuela*27

Venezuela under Hugo Chávez championed for long a radical left-wing ideological position. As in the case of Colombia, Chavez’s high popularity resulted in an easy victory, which secured him a third presidential term up from 2007. Once reelected, his established political influence allowed him to dissolve its own party in order to resemble all left-leaning organizations and alliances under a new nation-wide political party that he would later on command: the United Socialist Party of Venezuela.28 Right after this political move, moreover, Chávez ideological foundations were incorporated at the official level with the adoption of the *Simón Bolívar National Project: First Socialist Plan*, containing 7 ideological axioms for the upcoming presidential period including, at the national level: a new “socialist ethic,” “supreme social happiness,” “revolutionary protagonist democracy,” a socialist model of production, and new national geopolitics.

Conceived to intensify the so-called “Socialism of the 21st Century” in Venezuela, such ideological maxims give way to norms comprising social justice, social fairness, and solidarity among peoples, as well as between citizens and official institutions, which in turn point out to a preference for the collectivity over the individual. In this sense, an explicit distinction is made where “public and private spaces are considered complementing each other, and not opposing and separate as in the liberal ideology.” With regards to democracy, its purported revolutionary character is grounded on norms such as participative democracy and popular sovereignty. Furthermore, in the economic realm, the State is meant to keep control over productive activities of strategic value, aimed at responding primarily to human needs and overcoming the global economic dependence structures.

Moreover, in line with such ideological preferences, Chávez’s priorities at the international level aim at exploiting the potential of the country’s resources (oil) and energy sector in order to enhance the roles of Venezuela and the region abroad. Overtly stressing a

---

27 For the case of Venezuela, ideological norms are drawn from the First Socialist Plan adopted at the official level, for the newly created party’s ideological principles were first published in 2011. See Appendix 1 for full references.

28 While already founded prior to UNASUR’s creation, the party’s latter-published founding documents (2011) stayed true to the ideological substance of the document herein analyzed. A review of the former can be found here: http://www.psuvg.org.ve/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/LINEAS-ESTRATEGICAS-PSUV1.pdf
perceived “hegemony of the American imperialism,” its foreign policy follows three ideological goals: 1) “to strengthen national sovereignty [by] accelerating the formation of a regional geopolitical bloc and of a multipolar world”, 2) “to diversify political, economic and cultural relations in accordance with a delineation areas of geostrategic interest,” and 3) to deepen the fraternal dialogue among peoples, the respect for the freedom of thought and religion; and self-determination.” Overall, foreign policy preferences are mainly concentrated on Latin America and the Caribbean with underlying norms emphasizing a reorientation of integration models, “[transformed] multilateralism,” and regional financial autonomy.

**Mandate**

As the foregoing examination hints at, the electoral period preceding UNASUR’s creation reaffirmed South America’s ideological tendencies. In this sense, the assumption of our hypothesis argued that those areas of region building where ideological norms cut across among member States would gain salience in the new RO’s mandate. An overview of such norms at the national level shows that those indeed overlap in some areas despite their assumed opposition stemming from the traditional right-left divide. However, as it can also be seen, significant nuances still exist:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Socio-Cultural</th>
<th>Security</th>
<th>Politics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>- Strengthened role of the State - Protectionism</td>
<td>- Social inclusion (primacy of social policies)</td>
<td>- Financial Stability - Food and employment defense strategy</td>
<td>- Decentralized democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>- Primacy of the State - Reversal of neo-liberalism - Protectionism - Environmental sustainability</td>
<td>- Social justice - Human rights - Respect of cultural diversity</td>
<td>- International cooperation (neighboring countries)</td>
<td>- Participatory democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>- New economic development - Income distribution - Environmental sustainability</td>
<td>- Social equality - Poverty reduction - Social fairness</td>
<td>- Popular participation</td>
<td>- Strengthened democracy - Political inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>- Communitarian State - Promotion of investor confidence - Efficiency of the State</td>
<td>- Social cohesion</td>
<td>- International cooperation - International monitoring</td>
<td>- Democratic security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>- Primacy of the State - Socialist model of production</td>
<td>- “Supreme social happiness” - Social justice - Social fairness and solidarity</td>
<td>- Regional cooperation (Regional geopolitics)</td>
<td>- Participatory democracy - Collectivism - Popular sovereignty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1. Area-specific ideological norms per ruling party*
The first substantial priority set forth by UNASUR’s mandate focuses on the establishment of a so-called “political dialogue” (Art. 2 and 14). In the realm of politics, ideological norms at the national level show overlapping inclinations for democratic concerns, despite diverging approaches thereof. For instance, whilst the cases of Brazil and Argentina encourage more inclusive and decentralized democratic stances, the Colombian case is foremost concerned with democracy’s securitization. Furthermore, the cases of Bolivia and Venezuela are quite different, for they pursue bottom-up democratic stances based on norms of participatory democracy and popular sovereignty. All these divergences notwithstanding, such ideological commitments seem to have been included in UNASUR’s directive towards political dialogue, which, as exclusively provided for by Art. 14, “shall be based on harmony and mutual respect, bolstering regional stability and supporting the preservation of democratic values and the promotion of human rights.”

In line with such democratic norms, Art. 17 foresees the creation of a South American Parliament and Art. 18 exalts citizen participation as a cornerstone of UNASUR’s democratic commitment. However, the former is postponed until the signature of an Additional Protocol, and the latter remains a call to promote “innovative mechanisms and spaces to encourage the discussion of various issues, ensuring that the proposals submitted by civil society are given adequate consideration and response,” without setting up clear rules and procedures on how this should be done and foremost accomplished. Thus, avoiding to take such ideological democratic norms at face value, a clearer hint of what this political dialogue embodies in reality seems to be found in UNASUR’s first specific objective that sees it as a tool “to guarantee a space for agreement in order to reinforce South American integration and UNASUR’s participation in the international arena” (Art. 3a); that is, a mechanism to develop a collective voice at the international stage among the region’s leaders.

Furthermore, as shown in Table 1, economic concerns have stimulated more consideration from all our observation units. Nevertheless, norms in this area provide with the most relevant divergences with countries ranging from a far-reaching primacy of the State (Bolivia and Venezuela) to those like Brazil and Colombia where the State is conceived as promoting “a new development model” or as mainly fostering investors’ confidence respectively. The ideological norm that does overlap is that of protectionism as the Argentinian and Bolivian cases demonstrate, the latter going as far as promoting a reversal of the neo-liberal model. Such nationalist postures match with what has been contended regarding ideologies in Latin America at large, where “the backlash against neoliberalism
does not signal a rejection of markets, but a repudiation of the ideology that places markets at the center of the development model to the detriment of public institutions and their social context” (Cameron 2009: 337).

Consequently, it is precisely in the social realm, as opposed to the economy, where the most ideological resemblances are found. Be it as the direct consequence of a particular conjuncture (Argentina), as the ideological priority underling the party’s origins (Brazil), or as the perceived result of a different ideology (Bolivia), social exclusion represents the shared problem that underpins ideological norms across member States. Despite nuanced connotations such as inclusion, justice, cohesion, or fairness, all ruling parties grant social equality a paramount importance. Correspondingly, beyond UNASUR’s general objective, this observation elucidates the overall emphasis on social policies in the RO’s mandate as evidenced in its proclaimed goal to attain “social and human development with equity and inclusion to eradicate poverty and overcome inequalities in the region” (Art. 3b).

From the prioritized fields of UNASUR’s mandate, the allusion of a social component is noteworthy when digging deeper into its specific objectives. Thus, we have that energy integration, for instance, shall be fostered “in a spirit of solidarity” (Art. 3d) and the development of infrastructure in the region should follow “sustainable criteria based on social development” (Art. 3e). Not to mention the overall emphasis on universal access to education (Art. 3c) and social security (Art. 3j). Yet, despite leaving economic issues aside, such ‘social’ ideological preferences coincide with the altered role of the State that some members put forward, which see the State as a very means to balance market forces. This corroborates UNASUR’s contended approach for regionalism, which, aimed at eliminating socio-economic inequality, is charged to do so “within the framework of bolstering the sovereignty and independence of the States” (Art. 2).

Eye-catching is the fact that initial plans for an eventual merging of CAN and MERCOSUR have been omitted. More so, if one notes that Brazilian plans for a sub-continental free trade area had continuously been pursued in the region and can be dated back as early as 1993 (Sanahuja 2012: 9; Briceño-Ruiz 2010: 209). In fact, UNASUR’s mandate has replaced such intentions with mere references for economic and commercial cooperation in order to “overcome asymmetries through the complementarity of the economies of South American countries” (Art. 3l). Indeed, the only mentions about these sub-regional organizations are found in a single preambular paragraph, where the signatories acknowledge that South American integration should include all the accomplishments and progress achieved so far by the MERCOSUR and CAN processes, but should be aimed at “going
beyond the convergence among them.” Thus, the long envisaged plans for a sub-continental free trade zone could not crystalize, and UNASUR, as it has been argued, “became a maximalist project that completely overturned the original Brazilian project of building a new South American regionalism” (Briceño-Ruiz 2010: 209).

When it comes to security issues, norms concur on certain levels of international cooperation, albeit specific particularities. On one hand, Brazil and, to a lesser extent Argentina, vested with their role as regional ‘hegemons,’ barely pay attention to external security threats, and less so vis-à-vis each other. Rather, their attention revolves around domestic issues concerning persistent violence rates and domestic financial instability as major security threats respectively. On the other hand, those States prone to international cooperation either follow a self-serving position based on domestic circumstances as the Colombian case, or do so on grounds of a purported intention to deepen regional ties, such as the Venezuelan case encouraging a logic of regional geopolitics, or the Bolivian case where cooperation is restricted to neighboring-“friend” States.

In general, such inward-looking security preferences reinforce the observation of South America as a region where “ interstate security dynamics have mostly been secondary to domestic issues” (Buzan and Wæver 2003: 304). The vague inclusion of “cooperation for the strengthening of citizen security” (Art. 3t) can be then understood from such domestic concerns. Yet, based on this uneven support for a cooperation norm might provide a clue on why “the exchange of information and experiences in matters of defense” (Art. 3s) has been for the first time introduced as opposed to original plans. Nonetheless, the fact that security cooperation has not been considered a priority in the overall RO’s mandate deprives it from sharing a significant salience as the political and social realms of region building.

At this point, the analysis so far has delivered empirical inputs elucidating member States’ ideological preferences at the national level. Taken alone, however, they provide with limited insights of the regional context of our case. Therefore, following our theoretical model, the inclusion of ideological norms at the international level offers room for complementing such preliminary observations. In this regard, Table 2 presents an overview of such norms pertaining to our observation units and their ideological foreign policy preferences. Tackling the emergent global imaginary in the study of ideology (Steger 2013: 214-231), the following depiction summarizes the individual ideological preferences both at the regional and at the international level.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Regional Level</th>
<th>International Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Regional Integration (MERCOSUR)</td>
<td>Bilateralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Multilateralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>International responsibility (finance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Economic Protectionism</td>
<td>Multilateralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Sovereign” economic integration</td>
<td>Reduction of economic dependence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Pacific resolution of conflicts</td>
<td>Multilateralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Defense of regional integration</td>
<td>Respect of sovereignty and self-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South-South cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Economic integration and interdependence (CAN)</td>
<td>Economic cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>Re-orientation of integration models</td>
<td>Economic independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional financial autonomy</td>
<td>National sovereignty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Multilateralism (Multipolarity)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Ideological norms concerning foreign policy preferences per ruling party

As the above table shows, regional ideological preferences are mainly oriented towards the economy. Once again, however, they display conflictive normative inclinations. On one hand, Argentina and Colombia both promote further economic integration primarily within sub-regional organizations (MERCOSUR and CAN), while Bolivia and Venezuela promote opposing normative stances ranging from a so-called “sovereign” economic integration to an inclination for reforming integration models in the region respectively. A major exception here is Brazil, whose commitment for a “new development model” is said to be pragmatically pursued at the international level, for it is centered on the operation of markets (Burges 2007: 1355).

Nevertheless, it is at the international level where a norm favoring multilateralism is shared by most of our observation units. Such ideological preference in foreign policy might thus provide a more precise account on the salience of the so-called ‘political dialogue.’ As already discussed, UNASUR’s claimed focus on democracy promotion based on cross cutting democratic norms at the national level is significantly curtailed when clear guidelines for citizen participation within the RO have been overlooked. Thus, UNASUR’s highly political character, it could be argued, stems from this ideological inclination towards multilateralism and policy coordination rather than from democratic norms being promoted domestically.

Wrapping up so far, then, when ideological norms are disclosed and correspondingly contrasted to UNASUR’s mandate, our hypothesis is partially validated when considering the

29 Here, a norm of multilateralism is referred to as the “practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through *ad hoc* arrangements or by means of institutions” (Keohane 1990: 731).
salience of “social” issues that the RO has been charged to deal with. The same applies for its emphasis on political dialogue based primarily on a norm of multilateralism rather than on democratic concerns, for their perceived salience at the national level has been significantly truncated by UNASUR’s intergovernmentalist institutional design lacking well-defined room for concrete citizen participation. Furthermore, despite the newly inclusion of cooperation in the realm of defense, the diverging attitudes towards security issues and the imbalanced support for a norm of cooperation from mainly big regional powers also confirms the main assumption, for security concerns are not treated as a priority.

Furthermore, beyond the assumption of certain areas of region building gaining more salience than others in the RO’s mandate, the ideological norms from our case regarding the economy seem to push the argument even further. In this sense, issues concerning economic integration or the promotion of regional trade not only have been left aside, but also have been considered as mechanisms to reduce regional asymmetries whenever they have been referred to; that is not as drivers of regionalism as it is usually the case. In sum, thus, when evaluating the direct influence of ideologies over UNASUR’s mandate, it can be argued that not only have ideologies emphasized some areas of region building, but they have also done so at the expense of others.

Assessing the Regional Ideological Context
Amid opposing ideological stances at the regional level, how is the emergence of UNASUR and in particular its institutional set up to be understood? To grasp the varied manifestations of cooperation in contemporary regionalism, one needs to explore the regional dynamics and the particular context out of which they emerge (Fabbri 2005: 4; Buzan and Wæver 2003: 13). Thus, in line with our theoretical framework, where assessing empirically the ideological context is important since it “shapes the definition of interests and the structure of power” (Appel 2000: 530), I turn the focus now to the regional context before exploring the influence of ideologies over other institutional dimensions, thereby disentangling their mutual reinforcing relation.

Basically, the political idea of a South American region is not new. However, regarded as the immediate predecessor of UNASUR, it was in 2004, after a series of South American Summits convened by Brazil, that an agreement to create a South American Community of Nations (CSN) was first reached. The resulting 2004 Cuzco Declaration,\(^\text{30}\) jointly issued by

\(^{30}\) For complete references of this and other official documents mentioned hereafter, see Annex 2.
all presidents of the region, specified three general guidelines of action: 1) the coordination of foreign policies aimed at boosting the region in the international system, 2) the convergence of the CAN, MERCOSUR, Chile, Guyana and Surinam towards an eventual free trade area, and 3) the regional cooperation and integration in the fields of energy, infrastructure and communications. Born as a mere political project, however, the new “community” was not granted any legal status, nor did it contain any binding arrangement (Hummer 2009: 8). However, this meeting propelled initial discussions over its institutionalization.

In the framework of the CSN, two major meetings were convened to follow up this regionalist endeavor. During the 2005 Brasilia Summit the political understanding (entendimiento político) among States and the integration of the peoples of South American in the economic and social realm were reinforced as comprising the essence of this regionalist venture. In terms of institutionalization, the intention to better coordinate the existing institutions in the region as a means to avoid additional costs was considered a priority. Furthermore, the Brasilia Declaration introduced an informal device setting up a “pro-tempore” secretariat, which was to be occupied by all member States on a rotating basis for a period of one year. Charged with the mission to promote such a dialogue and in its capacity as host country, Brazil ‘took office’ until a new summit would convene. Furthermore, towards the end of the year, an extraordinary meeting in Montevideo would also create a Strategic Commission on the South American Integration Process, which was charged to draft proposals to strengthen the new regionalist plans.

In the meantime, nonetheless, the regional ideological landscape started to evolve. As it has been hinted at, 2006 saw the region reaffirm its ideological preferences with Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil securing presidential reelectoins and with Argentina’s choice for a continuation of Kirchner’s policies, this time with his wife at the forefront. To this trend, it should be added the earlier coming to power of left-wing presidents in ‘minor’ countries such as the election of Michelle Bachelet in Chile and Evo Morales in Bolivia, the latter implementing controversial policies in 2006 such as the nationalization of its hydrocarbon sector and the military occupation of production facilities owned by Brazilian state oil company Petrobras, causing diplomatic unease with Brazil (Burges 2007: 1354-5). Moreover, the region suffered a supplementary blow with Venezuela’s changing sides from CAN to MERCOSUR, which further changed the political South American landscape.

In the background of this polarized ideological context, the second CSN meeting indeed convened and Bolivia, in turn, formally assumed the pro-tempore secretariat. Such leading role, however, had already been assumed by Morales on an informal basis as
evidenced in the parallel organization of a regional Social Summit and in his open letter to the region’s presidents calling for, among others, flexible features for a would-be institution. The Summit resulted in the adoption of the Cochabamba Declaration, where a call for “a new model of integration for the 21st century” was signed whereby ideological norms similar to Morales’ party had been introduced and the project “began to consider issues such as cultural identity, migration, and a South American citizenship” (Briceño-Ruiz 2010: 217). Additionally, based on the Strategic Commission final report, the Cochabamba Declaration was also accompanied by initial agreements for the development of coordination agendas regarding education, energy, health, and social and inclusive human development.

Beyond its substantial content, initial modifications to UNASUR institutional design were first agreed during the South American Energy Summit (Cumbre Energética Sudamericana) held in Venezuela in 2007. The most salient changes included the renaming of the project from “Community” to “Union,” the designation of an eventual permanent Secretariat in Quito, Ecuador, as well as the agreement for a former Ecuadorian president to fulfill this role (Sanahuja 2012: 12). Back then, it seemed as though the South Americans were heading towards a EU-modeled regional structure. Nevertheless, with another left-wing president elected in Ecuador, the regional ideological context grew polarized. Important events prior to the official signing of UNASUR’s Treaty played a major role, such as the internal conflicts within MERCOSUR between Argentina and Uruguay (Hummer 2009: 11) and foremost the Colombian incursion and bombing of a FARC camp in Ecuadorian territory, which triggered great agitation in the region (Dabène 2010: 22-23).

By the Third Summit of Heads of State held in Brasilia in 2008 and amid this Cold War-like context (Dabène 2012, 392), the project itself finally crystallized and its institutional design was adopted. For all the above, what can be drawn from the above-described regional context? First, ideology-driven perceptions of power in a regional context seem to be primarily centered on the outside rather than within the group. Two examples involving the region’s ‘hegemon,’ Brazil, and one of the region’s ‘weaker’ States, Bolivia, are telling. On

---

31 During the Cochabamba Social Summit, proposals and recommendations first exchanged with foreign ministries were then submitted to the Heads of State attending the governmental summit, turning its results, arguably, more assertive than those of the official summit (Serbin 2012: 154). For details on the “Cochabamba Manifesto” see: http://www.urjc.es/ceib/espacios/observatorio/cohesion/documentos/procesos_integracion/SOC-I-25.pdf
32 I must single out this letter for its explicit call for institutional flexibility in the face of regional asymmetries and the inclusion on the agenda of issues such as health or the environment that had so far “been vaguely pushed by any influential constituency” (Dabène 2010, 7).
33 In fact, a diplomatic crisis unfolded after the Colombian attack, in which ambassadors were summoned and Ecuadorian and Venezuelan troops were respectively deployed to their borders with Colombia.
one hand, against a power-based assumption that “the bargaining agenda leading to the formation of regional groupings is largely shaped by the major power(s) in the region (Haggard 1997: 20-49), the primacy of Brazil in the region was downgraded by the defeat of its “minimalist” idea promoted since 1993 and the adoption of project closer to the proposals of Venezuela and Bolivia (Briceño-Ruiz 2010: 224). On the other hand, notwithstanding its limited material capabilities, Bolivia’s direct confrontation with Brazil’s economic interests combined with its successful leadership role imposing new issues to the regionalist agenda further downplays States’ perceptions of power within the region.

Second, from the perspective of its early emphasis on consensus-based decisions (political understanding), which has been formally incorporated as “political dialogue” into the final document, one can certainly say that UCT represents the manifestation of the region’s ideological affinities at the moment of its creation. This can be evidenced through its background of preliminary summits and agreements in which issues have been either dropped or adopted on the go, as well as with the fact that no single South American State opposed its adoption. Indeed, UNASUR has been regarded as the result of a convergence of strategic goals initially proposed by Brazil and the new demands of leftist governments “in terms of objectives to be promoted and institutions to be created” (Briceño-Ruiz 2010: 210). Reinforcing the above suggestion of lessened perceptions of power within the region and following a power-based logic, it has been even argued that Brazil has managed to pursue a “consensual hegemony” based on “the creation of consensus through the constructive inclusion of potentially competing priorities” (Burges 2009: 81).

Taken altogether, thus, such observations regarding diminished perceptions of power inside the region and the interpretation of UNASUR’s institutional design as an expression of the region’s ideological affinities point to a States’ behavior deprived from a logic of consequences, but rather driven by a “logic of appropriateness” (March and Olsen 1998). Following a more actor-centered approach, it can be even argued that UNASUR’s organizational set is grounded on an argumentative rationality. Such approach, as further advanced by the constructivist school of IR, is an alternative to pure consequentialism and appropriateness, for it “implies that the participants in a discourse are open to being persuaded by the better argument and that relationships of power and social hierarchies recede in the background (Risse 2000: 7). From this perspective, then, the salient role of ‘minor’ countries,

34 Certainly, more accurate conclusions can be made upon a detailed analysis of the (in)formal negotiations. Nevertheless, similar to any other international negotiation that takes place behind closed doors, information of such encounters is barely documented, and if existent, is hardly accessible.
the adherence to the project of right-wing countries, as well as Brazil’s incapacity to impose its will can be better grasped by pointing to socialization and normative pressures, since “by entering into a discursive process, the perception of a situation may change, and with it the interests, preferences and sometimes identities of the actors involved” (Ulbert et al. 2004: 37).

Moreover, considering UNASUR’s foundational document as an outcome of argumentative negotiations further supports its interpretation as comprising the ideological affinities for its institutionalization, for “arguing assumes a mode of interaction where preferences are no longer fixed but subject to challenges and counterchallenges and where the action orientation is no longer to attain one’s own interests but to reach a reasoned consensus” (Risse 2002: 609-10). Indeed, UNASUR’s origins and early developments are said to stem from “a ‘socialization process’ prompted by the convergence of ideology and discourse” (Sanahuja 2012: 10). Such ideological convergence fits in what the literature on ideology labels “context models,” which “represent how participants in a communicative event see, interpret and mentally represent the properties of the social situation that are now relevant for them” (van Dijk 1998: 212). Accordingly, having elucidating the mutual reinforcing relation between the regional context and leaders’ ideologies over UNASUR’s organizational set-up, I turn now to the analysis of such context models to shed light on ideologies’ indirect influence over other formal dimensions of our case.

**Membership**

Institutions, as already pointed out, are largely created to deal with some sort of collective action problem (Koremenos et al. 2001). Nevertheless, pure rationalist understandings thereof are reproached for strictly following Olson’s (1965) seminal work on group size, which contends, *grosso modo*, that “the larger the group *ceteris paribus*, the less likely that actors will choose to work together for some joint gain” (Acharya and Johnston 2007: 17). Indeed, as Olson (1965: 62) explicitly pointed out, “in general, social pressure and social incentives operate only in groups of smaller size, in the groups so small that the members can have face-to-face contact with one another.” Furthermore, as it has been added, “the most straightforward version of rational institutional design focuses on the intentional and farsighted choices of purposive, instrumental actors” (Pierson 2004, 108); that is, collective action based on an actor-centered functionalism, which “assumes that actors will choose those institutional designs that they believe will most efficiently serve their [individual] interests” (Wendt 2001, 1043).
For all the above, given that the “the notion of collective action permeates the neoliberal institutional (or contractual) approach to international institutions” (Acharya 2014: 20), the analysis of UNASUR’s membership dimension deals rather with the question of who is included and who is excluded, for the issue at stake is to go beyond assumed interests. In this regard, while the creation of a RO encompassing for the first time all the countries in the sub-continent appears to challenge rational and functionalist logics, this interpretative analysis aims at elucidating the motivations for this so being. This entails defining the outcome at the outset and pointing out what it seems to be obvious: UNASUR’s membership comprises all countries in South America. Nevertheless, as provided for by Art. 19, the RO also welcomes “associate States” that might be admitted on the basis of ‘geographic’ boundaries restricted exclusively to Latin America and the Caribbean. Furthermore, such associate States, after holding this status for at least four years, might be granted full-right membership by UNASUR’s highest body upon a decision based not on formal requirements but rather “taking into account the aim of consolidating [the] Latin American and Caribbean unity” (Art. 20).

UNASUR’s only membership criterion is thus founded on identity considerations. Though, whose identity? A review of all the agreements under the framework of CSN underscores the permanent inclusion of Latin America and the Caribbean as the ideal end-goal of regional integration. Even before 2004, the region’s presidents explicitly admitted their conviction that South American unity is key for strengthening the above-mentioned overarching unity. With no exception, such allusions are embedded in the preparatory works and official documents, for it might be safe to say that, out the outset, the South American project has been conceived as an initial step in that direction. From a regional perspective, a new framing revolving around a ‘South American identity’ has been deliberately adopted, which whenever alluded, is justified by far-reaching conceptions of ‘Latin-Americanist’ ties. The overall “determination to build a South American identity and citizenship” adopted in the final document, then, should be interpreted as the political choice for a new framing purposely restricted to the sub-continent.

Although “measuring social identities is a daunting task” (Risse 2010: 33), at the South American level, however, there are evident exceptions for an assumed shared cultural and historical background. Culturally speaking, the cases of Surinam and Guyana, for instance, account for major degrees of divergence from the region’s vast ‘Latin’ features. However, it is Brazil’s ambivalent relation with the rest of Latin America that usually yields

35 Within Art. 19, an explicit ‘geographic’ delimitation is avoided, and is rather taken for granted by merely alluding to “other Latin American and Caribbean States.”
greater attention. Consequently, whilst historical accounts overemphasize Brazil’s hesitant role in the region, a major turning point has been acknowledged since “the economic and political integration of South America has been the principal focus of Brazilian foreign policy under President Lula” (Bethell 2010: 484). Taking into account the new “South American” context model put forward by the region’s leaders, ideologies at the regional level, then, seem to have overemphasized such perceived identity bonds and rather used them to provide the new focus on South America with an assumed common justification vis-à-vis external Others. All the more so, if considering that within UNASUR “there is a new ideological space in terms of fencing-off American pre-eminence” (Riggirozzi 2011: 433).36

When it comes to scholarship on South America, such outward-looking sensitivity towards the U.S. seems to have been usually downgraded and replaced by claims such as UNASUR being the result of a Brazilian geopolitical design (Sanahuja 2012: 9) or allusions to Brazilian ‘hegemonic’ intentions (Burges 2009).37 Whether or not this is true, however, the role of ideologies is said to alter the perceptions of power and material interests. Thus, on the premise that “ideologies are in the main counter-pluralist discourses” (Freeden 2013: 117), at the regional level, such discourse convergence around a South American region indeed gained ground, whereby allusions to Latin America remain largely present. Indeed, at least purportedly, during UNASUR’s constitution, all interventions depict signs of this newly found South American brotherhood, without precluding recurrent allusions to Latin America more broadly. On the whole, then, bringing ideologies to the analysis of a regional context points once again to an approach for institutionalization based on a communicative rationality where relations of power within the region recede in the background, and those to the outside are overstressed. The observation that “most South American countries perceive the United States as a potential threat to their national interests as they suspect that the US desires their natural resources” (Weiffen et al. 2013: 382) has offered room for ideologies to further overstate such perceived threats, thereby boosting the need for regional collective action.

Indeed, in the study of institutions, unlike instrumental rationality, “communicative rationality, in contrast, positions Self and Other not as distinct objects but members of the same community, ‘team,’ or ‘We’” (Wendt 2001: 1046). Thus, in the face of the American preeminence in the whole region, a new framing based on identity considerations and

---

36 The misinterpretations of the concept become evident when such assertions are accompanied by claims on a lack of an “ideological identity” based on diverging individual positions still embedded in the traditional right/left divide and not considering the emerging global imaginary underpinning the ongoing study of ideology.

37 It is important to note, however, that such claims are drawn to account for UNASUR’s very genesis, with limited input on its institutional set up.
restricted to the sub-continent has contributed to render the institution inclusive with Latin Americans, however they might be defined, but exclusive vis-à-vis the ‘Other.’

Indeed, as empirical work points out, despite national preferences still permeating the discourse among the region’s leaders, a convergence indeed has taken place stressing a collective South American identity (Meunier and Almeida Medeiros 2013, 705). Stemming from a constructivist understanding of collective action, “the costs and benefits of multilateralism are seen not in terms of free riding or efficiency (although this may be present), but group identity, the quality of regional existence, and the appeal of a certain normative purpose” (Acharya 2014: 21). Thus, it can be argued that UNASUR’s membership has been shaped by collective action driven by an emerging regional discourse profiting from the geographical features of the South American subcontinent, the preexistence (or ideological assumption) about an overarching Latin-American identity as well as the appeal to fence off the region’s traditional ‘Other.’

**Formal Rules**

UNASUR’s strict intergovernmental character, as already hinted at, displays a hierarchical decision-making structure. As defined in Art. 11, UNASUR’s chain of command rests upon its main organs: 1) the Council of Heads of State and Government 2) the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and 3) the Council of Delegates, organs from which derive all its legal sources. The General Secretariat, despite evoked as one of its main organs (Art. 4), has been deprived from any decision power (Art 10.). Additionally, the soon-evoked idea of a pro-tempore secretariat was modified and turned into a Pro-Tempore Presidency (Art. 7), which despite holding the same rank as the Council of Heads of State, has been limited to representing the RO only under the former’s approval and charged instead with coordination activities jointly with the general secretariat (See Figure 2). Nonetheless, whilst its yearly rotating character was not changed, its capacity as “president” has been extended to all sectorial councils that, as set forth by Art. 5, would be eventually created. Yet, formal rules, strictly speaking, remain attached to its three main bodies whose rulings are respectively ranked as follows: 1) Decisions, 2) Resolutions and 3) Provisions.

---

38 One again, the issue at stake here relies on ideological affinities, for a direct confrontation with the U.S., while outspoken by some members (Venezuela and Bolivia), does not apply to all, but issues regarding Latin American identity barely, if ever, incite contestation throughout the region.

39 As it has been further argued, UNASUR has been constituted as an institutional structure mediating the common South American discourse with diverging discourses based on national interests usually pursued at the international level such as the ongoing Argentinian claim over the Malvinas/Falkland Islands and Bolivia’s restless cause for the legalization of the coca leaf (Meunier and Almeida Medeiros 2013, 705).
Thus, contrary to functionalist understandings of institutions, where “choices to pool and delegate sovereignty to international institutions are best explained as efforts by governments to constrain and control one another” (Moravcsik 1998, 9), governments, or national leaders in this case, remain the exclusive deciders within the RO. Moreover, while pure rationalist approaches to institutions have come to suggest that “uncertainty about regional actor’s behavior tends to induce a preference for legalism” (Kanthak 2012, 97), such claims do not consider that “the choice of regional institutions may be rational but it is not necessarily driven by economic and power considerations” (Börzel 2012, 260). Overall, when it comes to power-based theories of regionalism, these have little on offer to explain the differential commitment of small States (Börzel 2011, 21).

However, how does UNASUR’s set-up deal with such a commitment? The analysis here requires determining what kinds of decisions are made and how these come about in the first place. In line with the overall emphasis on political dialogue, it is not surprising that, as provided for by Art. 12, all decisions “shall be adopted by agreement;” an axiom that renders UNASUR a strictly deliberative RO. Furthermore, regarding the nature of decisions, these are restricted to the adoption and creation of policies, institutions, organizations and programmes, whose implementation can be gradual and extremely flexible, to the extent that “any Member State may fully or partially exempt itself from implementing an approved policy, for a period of time or indefinitely, without this preventing the [same] State from subsequently incorporating the policy, either fully or partially” (Art. 13). Eye-catching is the fact that, even if some States envisage non-compliance, their consent is also required, for it is upon the agreement of the Council of Heads of the State and Government that a certain policy becomes part of UNASUR (Art. 13); a particularity that renders decisions, if reached, tools for attaining a certain degree of regional political cohesion.

UNASUR’s low degree of legalization in terms of decision making can be demonstrated by relying on the legalization concept (Abbot et al. 2000: 404), which encompasses three dimensions: obligation (or the degree to which international rules are binding for member States), precision (or the degree for alternative explanations is narrowed), and enforcement (or the degree to which enforcement mechanisms are independent from member States). Given UNASUR’s main feature of flexible engagement, then, none of such dimensions applies, for it is up to the States themselves to decide to comply with formal rules in the first place, thereby disentangling its strict reliance on a multilateral approach for regionalism based foremost on policy coordination. However, which role have ideologies played for this result? So far, based on a communicative rationality, the ideology-driven
salience of exogenous ‘threats’ has been highlighted. However, while the perceptions of power within the region may have receded in the background, they have not been completely neglected in UNASUR’s institutional design.

In this regard, besides the region’s well-spread preference for a norm of multilateralism, the renewed support in the regional discourse revolving around sovereignty issues is worth highlighting, for the collectively held idea that regionalism can and should be pursued in parallel with a strict defense of national sovereignty is embedded throughout UNASUR’s preliminary meetings dating, at least explicitly, as far back as the creation of the so-called Strategic Commission. Furthermore, during UNASUR’s adoption, under banners such as “together we’ll be more sovereign,”40 ‘major’ and ‘minor’ countries alike stressed that not all Members stand on an equal footing in the face of the new project, which prompted reiterated allusions of UNASUR’s consensus-building feature as its most relevant added value. Thus, from the exclusive perspective of its institutional design, even when would-be defectors might exist, its feature of flexible engagement has ruled out questions regarding domination or coercion, and given way to normative and social pressures to deal with compliance issues instead.

Beyond UNASUR’s “sovereign” regionalist discourse, inter-state behavior in South America has been essentially guided by a norm of non-interference; a fact not at all surprising deriving from the region where the rule of uti possidetis juris41 or the doctrine of non-intervention first originated (Domínguez 2007: 83-128). In fact, “direct interference [in South America] has been relatively rare, and parallel histories are more often caused by ideational spillover” (Buzan and Wæver 2003, 310). Thus, while political ideologies in the region have a significant impact and have been incorporated into the political rules, institutions and discourses (Aguilar Rivera 2013, 601), they might have as well indirectly influenced the region’s relation with institutions per se, for “institutions are closely bound up with power” (Hurrell 2000: 3), and the analysis of power, in turn, “must include a consideration of how social structures and processes generate differential social capacities for actors to define and pursue their interests and ideals” (Barnett and Duval, 2005, 42).

Thus, with a ‘sovereign’ or nationalist stance towards regionalism deeply entrenched in Latin American countries in general, the ideological and evolutionary context prior to

40 Lula Da Silva’s closing remark during the adoption of UCT.
41 As briefly put it, the principle uti possidetis juris “provides that States emerging from decolonization shall presumptively inherit the colonial administrative borders that they held at the time of independence,” which “largely governed the determination of the size and shape of the States of former Spanish Latin America” (Ratner 1996: 590).
UNASUR’s adoption is telling, for it seems to have strengthened the region’s aversion towards hemispheric institutions, where their voice has been traditionally overpowered by the U.S. In this sense, at the South American level, with regional crises such as the Ecuadorian-Colombian one not interfering but rather accelerating UNASUR’s creation, States seem to have favored own political alternatives in one looks, for instance, at the overlap in mandate in areas like security and defense between UNASUR and OAS (Weiffen et al. 2013). Indeed, as it has been pointed out, even if neo-liberal institutionalist approaches champion the cooperative affects of institutions, “they could just as easily have emphasized how institutions shape the bargaining advantage of actors, freeze asymmetries, and establish parameters for change that benefit some at the expense of others” (Barnett and Duval 2005: 41). In this sense, “evidence concerning the evolutionary dimension, as expressed in UNASUR discourse, suggests that overlap is an intentional political act and as such it was consciously included as part of UNASUR’s program by its architects” (Weiffen et al. 2013: 384).

Therefore, UNASUR’s highly political character, then, can be interpreted as stemming from both the resilience of the State in matters of regionalism among States and the ideological convergence in the region towards the pursuit of ‘local’ responses. Drawn generally from the regional discourse, a growing ideology-driven Weltansschauung can be discerned highlighting material and symbolic resources that form the basis of the region’s power and lack thereof, which is shared among major and minor leaders alike. The reference incorporated as foundation for the so-called “political dialogue” that “member States shall reinforce the practice of agreement building over the central themes on the international agenda and shall promote initiatives that affirm the identity of the region as a dynamic factor in international relations” (Art 14.) can thus be interpreted, if not as direct result, as encouraged by the ideological call for more regional independence.

Overall, then, in terms of formal rules in particular, the assurance that even small States will be able to have an impact within the RO can thus explain why they have joined the project. Moreover, the focus on regional ideological affinities provides with more nuanced readings for the accentuated focus on individual sovereignty concerns, which seem to have been rather exported at the regional level, thereby precluding the inattention of the lessened

42 During the Colombian-Ecuadorean crisis, the role of the OAS had been previously downgraded, for instance, with Latin American countries backing the Rio Group as favored mechanism for the pacific mediation and resolution of such regional tensions. See Appendix 2 for references on the declaration.

43 In fact, the territorial conflicts between Ecuador and Colombia are said to have prompted initial interest in the region for the creation of a South American Defense Council, which indeed crystallized during the later institutional development of the RO further motivated by subsequent regional tensions (Riggirozzi 2011: 433).
perception of power inside the region. More so, if considering that for the management of social group relations, “ideologies may function as legitimation of power abuse and inequality, and as a basis for resistance, challenge, dissidence and change on the other hand” (van Dijk 1998: 316). The latter rather than the former being evidenced in the new South American context model adopted and put forward by the region’s leaders to justify its choice for an institutional design based on collective deliberation.
6. Conclusions

In the foregoing, I have presented a theory-based account of UNASUR’s institutional design drawing from the application of an adapted theoretical framework and using ideologies as a key intervening variable. In this regard, the disclosure of ideological norms from ruling parties’ manifestos and their corresponding analysis vis-à-vis the RO’s mandate meets the expectation of some areas of region building gaining more salience than others. Nevertheless, while the ideological preferences of our case might corroborate the main hypothesis, they also point to a refinement of the central assumption, since the economic dimension of region building has been deliberately relegated and economic issues in general have been placed at the disposal of other areas; namely the political and societal dimensions of regionalism. The security dimension, if read exclusively from the RO’s mandate, despite being unevenly supported by a shared norm of multilateralism, has not been considered as a priority, which further validates this work’s main assumption.

As for the indirect and more controversial influence of ideologies over UNASUR’s institutional design, the analysis of the regional context, both in terms of its membership scope and the RO’s formal rules, underscores UNASUR’s reliance on an argumentative rationality for its institutionalization. All the more so, if ideologies, as defined by this work, are conceived as a set of norms and collectively held ideas, which have lessened the perceptions of power within the region and yielded influence towards a constructivist understanding of collective action based on normative and social incentives. In this sense, while the underlying question for this study revolves around the role of ideology of ‘key’ actors, ideational rather than material capabilities seem to have played a bigger role. The successful leadership role of ‘minor’ countries (particularly Bolivia) to counterbalance the preferences of major regional power(s) in terms of determining UNASUR’s substance and the consideration of regional asymmetries in the RO’s institutional design corroborates such ideological influence at the regional level.

Moreover, without being distracted by traditional right-left typologies, looking at ideologies from this regional perspective has contributed to elucidate the region’s aversion towards institutions. In this sense, the interpretative analysis on the ideological discourse centered on the region standing towards traditional hemispheric institutions has provided with a nuanced reading regarding the strengthened emphasis on sovereignty issues. UNASUR’s extremely political character, thus, can be seen as addressing regional sovereignty concerns, for “sovereignty may be increasingly defined not by the power to insulate one’s State from
external influences but by the power to participate effectively in international institutions of all kinds” (Hurrell 2000: 4). From a regional context, then, the overall ideological appeal to evade traditional Latin American regional institutions, usually embedded in “a great power orbit,” 44 appears to have contributed to the adoption of UNASUR’s institutional design aimed at localizing own collective responses for and by South American’ leaders themselves, and foremost based on deliberation, which assures that all Members will have a say.

Looking back at our research question, I do not claim that the later ideological account is the sole explanation for the RO’s institutional design, nor that it explains most of it. Rather, in contrast to realism, which claims that material forces matter completely, I argue that ideologies provide with a better take on the context of such a result, for neither power politics nor functionalist imperatives adequately explain UNASUR’s organizational set up. In this regard, the precedent account has reinforced one of the major challenges of actor-centered functionalism, which contends that “in structuring institutional arrangements, actors may be motivated more by conceptions of what they believe to be appropriate than by conceptions of what would be effective” (Pierson 2004: 110). At the same time, by relying on a communicative rationality common to constructivist approaches, the study has not detached itself from its initial agency-centered approach to regionalism.

As for the focus on political ideologies, the analysis has provided a more nuanced treatment of the concept, which is attentive to its contingent nature. Especially considering the above-delivered interpretative analysis, for “context models are not static but dynamic,” and “represent the ongoing interpretation of language users of the social situation” (van Dijk 1998, 213). Moreover, in terms of regionalism, the inclusion of ideologies has responded to the “utility of conceptualizing the rise of regional identity discourse as part of the process of the institutionalization of a region; that is the historically contingent process through which a region emerges as part of the territorial structure and social consciousness of society” (Paasi 2009: 145), thereby addressing the often taken-for-grantedness of ‘region.’

The overall inclusion of ideologies in this work has therefore been aimed, not at reifying power or conflict considerations, but at getting off the safe traditional trail in the study of regionalism. For this reason, despite pointing to regional ideological perceptions of power based on the nascent global imaginary underpinning the evolution of ideologies, I have avoided to use pejorative connotations or designations of bad or good, for one might as well

---

44 Term originally coined by Acharya (2014: 25) for referring to initial Asian approaches to regionalism pursued and primarily commanded by the US. Drawing a parallel to our case in point, the terms easily applies here due to the preeminence of the U.S. within traditional hemispheric institutions.
say that there are “good” and “bad” regions. Thus, the focus on ideologies herein contained foremost responds to what contemporary theories of ideologies suggest: “putting the analytic spotlight [of ideologies] on the changing ideational structures not only yields a better understanding of current globalization dynamics, but also helps us make sense of the shifting conceptual and geographical boundaries that (re)shape individual and collective identities” (Steger 2013: 228).

In line with the foregoing non-nomothetic account, generalizations deriving from our case are and should be excluded. Additionally, while it is obvious that the precedent analysis is not exhaustive, the usual disclaimer for case studies is further justified here, for issues regarding path-dependence\(^{45}\) or processes of diffusion\(^{46}\) have not been considered. Nonetheless, following the premise that “in designing social institutions, we are doing so against the backdrop of a set of practices, which brings with it its own peculiar constrains and possibilities” (Goodin 1996: 30), the analysis of political ideologies in the South American context provides with supplementary inputs regarding the persistent divergence found in the structures of regional institutions and how these deal with the processes of region building. Especially if considering that “societal demand is hardly sufficient – it takes political leadership and international institutions to propel regionalism” (Börzel 2011: 17).

Last but not least, despite its focus on the RO’s institutional design, this works acknowledges that institutions are one thing, and regional integration other. Thus, further lines of research could address UNASUR’s institutional development and its real impact in terms of achieving its purported goals for integration in the sub-continent. While in the meantime UNASUR has undergone advancements in its institutionalization,\(^{47}\) its main features of exclusive identity-based membership or deliberative regionalism aimed at attaining a certain kind of regional political cohesion have remained unchanged. Therefore, while it has not been the intention here to provide a guess on what the organization may one day become, it remains to see whether this regionalist endeavor proves itself an exception to the rule, or it becomes just another piece of the puzzling and overlapping institutional landscape in this part of the world.

\(^{45}\) While not explicitly addressed, issues regarding path-dependence have been partly considered when analyzing the ideological context and the prior agreements reached for UNASUR’s institutionalization.

\(^{46}\) The focus on ideologies presented here, however, points to normative contestation phenomena that might be useful in further expanding the growing scholarship on diffusion processes.

\(^{47}\) As of today, an additional Democratic Protocol has been signed (2010), and 12 Sectorial Councils have become operative.
Appendix 1: Manifestos used for the empirical recovery of ideological norms by country

**Argentina**

**Bolivia**

**Brazil**

**Colombia**

**Venezuela**
Appendix 2: Textual sources for the contextual and interpretative analysis

Official Documents


Ad-hoc South American Summits


Community of South American Nations (CSN)


Joint Statements and Speeches


Bibliography


Briceño-Ruiz, José. 2010. From the South American Free Trade Area to the Union of South...


Caballero, Sergio. 2014. La UNASUR a través de los ojos de los Estudios Críticos de Seguridad. Documento de Trabajo No. 22. Salamanca: Instituto de Iberoamérica.


Levitsky, Steven and María Victoria Murillo. 2008. Argentina: From Kirchner to Kirchner. 
Malamud, Andrés. 2012. Sovereignty is Back, Integration Out: Latin American Travails with 
Regionalism, in The State of the Union(s): The Eurozone Crisis, Comparative 
Regional Integration and the EU Model, edited by Joaquín Roy and Alfonso Camiñas- 
Muiña, 177-190. Miami, FL: Miami-Florida European Center.
American Quagmire and its Lessons. The International Spectator: Italian 
March, James G. and Johan P. Olsen. 1998. The Institutional Dynamics of International 
Meunier, Isabel and Marcelo de Almeida Medeiros. 2013. Construindo a América do Sul: 
Identidades e Interesses na Formação Discursiva da Unasul. DADOS – Revista de 
Ciências Sociais, 56(3): 673-712.
Moravcsik, Andrew. 1998. The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from 
und der Platz der Theorie kommunikativen Handelns in der Analyse internationaler 
Nilsson, Martin. 2011. The Latin American Left in the 2000s: Have we seen this before? 
Paper prepared for the XXIII World Congress of Political Science Madrid, July, 8-12, 
2012. German Institute for Global and Area Studies.
Oelsner, Andrea. 2013. The Institutional Identity of Regional Organizations, or Mercosur’s 
Olson, Mancur. 1965. The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of 
Paasi, Anssi. 2009. The Resurgence of ‘Region’ and ‘Regional Identity’: theoretical 
perspectives and empirical observations on regional dynamics in Europe. Review of 
International Studies, (35): 121-146.
Princeton University Press.
Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Riggiorozzi, Pia. 2011. Region, Regionness and Regionalism in Latin America: Towards a 
Riggiorozzi, Pia and Diana Tussie. 2012. The Rise of Post-hegemonic regionalism in Latin 
America in The Rise if Post-hegemonic Regionalism. The Case of Latin America, 
edited by Pia Riggiorozzi and Diana Tussie, 1-16. Dordrecht: Springer.


Vivares, Ernesto. 2014. *Exploring the new South American Regionalism (NSAR)*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate

