



Universidade do Minho
Escola de Economia e Gestão

Francesca Mercurio **Brazil's global aspirations and their implications for the relationship with Argentina in the framework of MERCOSUR**

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Mestrado em Relações Internacionais

Trabalho efetuado sob a orientação da
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Brazil's global aspirations and their implications for the relationship with Argentina in the framework of MERCOSUR

Abstract

The rise of the new millennium has been accompanied by global changes and challenges, occurred as consequence of the spread of systemic-affecting features that have transformed the model through which the international order was witnessed. The negative effects of globalization and the rise of emerging countries coming from the 'periphery' of the world have played a significant role in reshaping the international balance of power and in creating new schemes of cooperation among states. Focusing on Brazil's emerging role and on the transformations that this longstanding "middle power" has been able to bring to both the international relations debate and practical field, the present contribution aims to offer a detailed analysis of the twenty-first century Brazilian foreign policy.

The official discourses show that last governments' external agenda has been characterized by an increasing interest in global issues and in a more active international participation, as never experienced before. Maintaining a strong commitment toward 'autonomy' and 'development' of the Brazilian foreign policy, Lula da Silva's first mandate has been marked by the desire and aspiration of making Brazil a global player, passing first through the creation of a stable and supportive platform and the recognition of its regional leadership role within the South-American region. The regional obstacles met by Brazil have promoted a change of attitude of the country and the search for extra-regional partners, relationships and forms of engagement, although emphasizing the differences between the international agendas of Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff.

Through a theoretical synthesis of Neorealism and Neoliberalism, this contribution analyses the obstructive role played by Argentina (the historical rival and at the same time a strategic partner in the development and the future of the regional integration project: MERCOSUR) in balancing Brazilian global aspirations and in coordinating a regional response opposing the South-American giant. In conclusion, the present research aims to offer an analysis of the visible and hidden motivations that have driven the regional actors to object Brazil.

Keywords: Brazilian Foreign Policy; Brazil-Argentina relationship; MERCOSUR; Neorealism-Neoliberalism, South-America; Emerging Power; Regional Leadership; Global actor.

As aspirações globais do Brasil e as suas implicações na relação com a Argentina no âmbito do MERCOSUL

Resumo

O novo milénio foi acompanhado por mudanças e desafios globais, que têm afetado o sistema e transformaram o modelo através do qual a ordem internacional era observada. Os efeitos negativos da globalização e a ascensão de países emergentes provenientes da "periferia" do mundo têm desempenhado um papel significativo na reformulação do equilíbrio do poder internacional e na criação de novos esquemas de cooperação entre os Estados. Enfocando sobre o papel emergente do Brasil e as transformações que esta "potência média" tem sido capaz de trazer, tanto para o debate das relações internacionais como no campo prático, a presente contribuição tem como objetivo oferecer uma análise detalhada da política externa brasileira do século XXI.

A agenda externa do Brasil dos últimos governos tem sido caracterizada por um crescente interesse por questões globais e para uma participação internacional mais activa, como nunca antes. Mantendo um forte compromisso com a "autonomia" e o "desenvolvimento" da política externa brasileira, o primeiro mandato de Lula da Silva tem sido marcado pelo desejo e a aspiração de fazer do Brasil um ator global de relevo, passando primeiro através da criação de uma plataforma de apoio estável e do reconhecimento da sua liderança regional na América do Sul. Se o primeiro mandato político de Lula da Silva tem assistido a uma consideração particular e espaço reservado para a região, durante o segundo o Brasil tem olhado mais para parceiros e relações extra-regionais.

Através de uma síntese teórica do neo-realismo e neoliberalismo, esta análise enfatiza o papel obstrutivo desempenhado pela Argentina (histórico rival regional e ao mesmo tempo parceiro estratégico no desenvolvimento do projeto de integração regional: MERCOSUL) em equilibrar as aspirações globais brasileiras e em coordenar uma resposta regional para opor o gigante sul-americano. Em conclusão, a presente pesquisa tem como objetivo oferecer uma análise das motivações visíveis e ocultas que tem movido os atores regionais para a oposição ao Brasil.

Palavras-chave: Política Externa Brasileira; Relações Brasil-Argentina; MERCOSUL; Neorealismo-Neoliberalismo; América do Sul; Potência Emergente; Ator Global, Liderança Regional.

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List of Abbreviations

AAP.ACE - partial scope agreement on economic cooperation

ALBA - Bolivarian Alternative for Latin-America

AP - Pacific Alliance

BASIC - Brazil, South-Africa, India and China

BIC - Brazil, India and China

BNDES - National Bank for Economic and Social Development

BRICS - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South- Africa

CAN - Andean Community

CET - (or TEC) Common External Tariff

CMC – Common Market Council

CMG - Common Market Group

ECLAC - (or CEPAL) Economic Commission for Latin American Countries

FDI - Foreign Direct Investments

FOCEM - Fund for the Structural Convergence of MERCOSUR

FTAA - (or ALCA) Free Trade Area of Americas

G4 – Brazil, Japan, India and Germany (looking for a permanent seat at the UNSC)

G20 – Group of 20

IBSA- India, Brazil and South-Africa

IDB- Inter-American Development Bank

IIRSA - Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South-America

IMF- International Monetary Fund

LAFTA (or ALALC) - Latin American Free Trade Association

LAIA (or ALADI) - Latin-American Integration Association

MERCOSUR- Common Market of the Southern Cone

MINUSTAH - United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

NATO - Organization of North-Atlantic Treaty

PARLASUR- Parliament of MERCOSUR

SACU- South African Custom Union

UfC- Uniting for Consensus

UN - United Nations

UNSC - United Nations Security Council

UNASUR - Union of Nations of Southern America

WB - World Bank

WTO - World Trade Organization

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The once "closed" international system, that has emerged as an "unintended consequence" of the Westphalia's order (Valaskakis, 2001:48), is nowadays challenged by the presence of a large number of political, economic and social actors (both state and non-state ones) which have become an important part of the contemporary International Relations. Contrary to the state-actors, these non-state actors are not necessarily linked and limited by the national borders and the principle of sovereignty (used to restrict and close the participation to the international system)¹; then allowing for a return to an open system that has emerged after the end of World War II, when the powerful and winner states reshaped the world through elements of both theories of Realism and Liberal-Institutionalism: war, balance of power, multilateral institutions, cooperation and anarchy.² At the same time, by the end of the twentieth century, and in the new millennium, the primary role of states in the world affairs has been maintained. Thus, the international system has witnessed a transformation of the traditional balance of power: with new players and new forms of action.

Nowadays, the reconfiguration of the international system has been marked by the structural changes occurring both at the national, and regional as well as the global levels. The phenomenon, renamed by scholars as "the rise of the rest" (Zakaria, 2000; Amsden, 2001), has challenged the world structure as the global transformation was realized by the rapid climbing up of middle powers to the

¹ The Westphalia's system (1648) was built upon the need for cooperation among sovereign states, based on the principle of the liberal and constitutional sovereignty. But what characterized the primordial years of that world order was the absence of sovereignty as a fundamental element for being part of the international system, which was considered as an "open" one, owing to the large possibilities for the rising of new states. Since the system has become multilateral and highly institutionalized, in order to manage the interaction and cooperation among its participants and the principle of state's sovereignty came into practice and included in procedures and instruments regulated by the international law, states started to indicate those territorial entities that do not allow for similar others to interfere in their domestic affairs. Then, the states assumed those basic features of political sciences: the necessity of a defined territory and a population over which imposing the authority, with no interference coming from external actors. See Krasner, S.D. 1999. *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

² The many global and regional inter-state entities, that have joined the international system, had allowed for the creation of an "institutionalized intergovernmental cooperation" (Langenhove, 2010:263): limited to be nothing more than "arrangements involving states" (Keohane, 1990:732) with the attempt to replace the systemic anarchy and deal with the increasing global problems. The absence of a global governance, in favor of multilateral decision-making structures, and the possibility for some states to choose for neither submitting themselves to the rules of the international system nor to use those structures to accomplish their own interests, keep other actors and the whole system in a more vulnerable position being affected at any time by the unpredictability derived by the systemic anarchy.

highest levels of international politics. Defined as "[states] whose leaders consider that they cannot effectively act alone, but may be able to have a systemic impact in a small group or through an international institution" (Keohane, 1969:295), these states are subverting the characteristic of the international system in the way that academics have always understood it.³ In this connection, Juan Gabriel Tokatlian has elaborated a new definition for the emerging model of reorganization of the global politics, which "mirrors a general shift in the international balance of power" (Chen and De Lombaerde, 2013:2). The contribution showed that the centre of the world politics has moved from a "Westphalian" to a "Southphalian order" referring to the emergence of powerful and influential countries coming from the world's periphery and that the old North-South model of cooperation was being gradually restructured into a South-South mechanism, thereby challenging the global governance (Tokatlian, 2014).⁴

The participation of these new actors in the international system has produced instability, to the extent that the unipolar system lost its importance and its appearance, transforming the international configuration in a multipolar (Schweller, 2010 apud. Rodriguez, 2013) or "non-polar" pattern of distribution of power (Haas, 2008 apud. Rodriguez, 2013). At the same time, the phenomenon of globalization, that has expanded all around the globe since the 1980s, has been promoter of a major interdependence among countries. The latter nowadays end up being linked together in a dense network of relationships in which their different political and economic systems, divergent social structures and opposite cultures and values coexist under the aegis of important elements of the new international reconfiguration: economic interdependence, spread of democratic values, diffusion of norm of international law and commitment to rules and institutions, mutually built and managed (if not end up converging towards each other).

The revolutionary aspect of this renovate systemic design is the following one: in an international system characterized by the prevalence of use of power from powerful countries in the North, the rising of those once subordinated actors that nowadays come to access the mechanisms of international decision-making has meant a change in the elaboration and comprehension of the foreign policy itself. The foreign policy of the states 'on the periphery' is not conceived around the submission to powerful actors or richer powers, rather it is oriented towards looking for conditions allowing the

³ The active presence and revolutionary participation of emerging countries in shaping a new global order may result in a world in which great powers – United States, which held this position in last century; or European powers, if one goes further in the past, will no longer be the hegemons and the only decision-makers; and will no longer "orchestrate geopolitics, or overwhelm cultures" (Zakaria 2000).

⁴ The full article of Juan Gabriel Tokatlian, "Westphalia to Southphalia", published in date November 5th, 2014, is available at: <https://opendemocracy.net/juan-gabriel-tokatlian/westphalia-to-southphalia>. Accessed November 25th, 2014.

respective actors to benefit from their situation (Dallanegra, 2009). This orientation is not new in the discipline of international relations; the seminal exponent of the foundations of Realism, Thucydides, was worried about searching for an equilibrium between the "determinism" established by the natural rules, and the possibility of reaching the "autonomy" in the elaboration of the foreign action in order to achieve the most beneficial outcomes (ibid. 2009).

In the present study, the analysis of the foreign policy of the South-American countries departs from the assumption of themselves as peripheral and dependent actors and advances towards a new understanding which is taking advantages from the transformation of the system, in order to redesign their political action in the international arena and then to subvert the historical equilibrium. Aiming for a guarantee of their political autonomy, as well as the national development and gains, the states of the American sub-continent have converged in projects of cooperation and integration in their neighbourhood that would have at the same time offered the opportunity to reach another important objective of augmenting their power in a system characterized by divergences as well as asymmetric relations of its constituents. The main focus here is related to the strategy adopted by an original country of the Southern continent of the Americas, with limited power of coercion and a significant diplomatic influence, both in the region and in the global institutions, namely Brazil, who recently reinforced its identity as a South-American country, rather than a broader Latin-American one.⁵

Recently, Brazil has looked for the creation of a stable platform capable of offering the necessary conditions for an autonomous policy, driving Brazil far away from the heritage of submission to ex-colonial and great powers of the twentieth century. A related integrated regional area was thought to guarantee a major bargaining capacity to the countries in the South (Danese, 2001). Moreover, the emerging powers of the international system, which came to encompass Brazil, have built alliances and partnerships with both similar actors and the 'excluded' ones. The objective of such efforts was to influence the global governance and transform the recently emerged multipolarity into a "fairer and more democratic" system (Amorim, 2010:231).

⁵ The distinction between Latin-America and its sub-continent (South-America) came to be adopted in recent years both in academics and political leaders' and policy-makers' discourses. At first, Latin-America was considered in terms of its colonial past, including the countries of Hispanic roots and languages. The differentiation was also made in economic and political terms. Furthermore, the degree of "dependence" that all the countries of the region present in relation to external influences (mainly to US and European powers) was determinant too. In fact, the countries of the Central-America are strongly US dependent in their political and economic management; while those of the South-America have attempted in last years to distance the Northern neighbour's influence, preferring their own independence or at least an European rapprochement. As Andrew Hurrell affirmed, when the discourse is about regionalism and integration processes, it will be more favorable to use the most delimited and reduced term of South-America, as it may seem more adapt to describe the unitary political and economic projects and a common and stronger international projection; introducing in this way the importance for states in converging within both regional and international models of integration- political, economic, social and so forth (Hurrell, 1995).

1.1 Thematic focus

Taking advantage of its recent economic growth and its increasing prestige and weight on the global scene, Brazil has assumed a central role in the aforementioned global challenge. The South-American country has for long been considered a "middle power" (Selcher 1981; Wood 1987; Burges 2013; Lopes, Casarões, Gama 2013, Rodriguez, 2013), due to its weak military capacities and a strong rejection of the use of coercive measures in its foreign relations and international affairs, as well as to its economic potential. Today Brazil demonstrates that it wants to occupy higher positions in international politics and diplomacy and aspires to be considered an influential global player as well as a regional leader. These objectives and recognitions constituted Brazil's "natural role" (Lima and Hirst, 2006): it was supposed to assume a position in the international politics, which would be better corresponding to its capacity as a large country with an independent stance and a considerable - and increasing- weight in global affairs. Hence, owing to the aspirations to achieve these results, the country was seed in need to start acting as a strong and influential international policy entrepreneur and a decision-maker (Benner, 2013), and enter the multilateral structure of the global governance in order to bring changes in the world politics.

While seeking to implement its 'natural role' at the international level, the emerging country was, however, strongly influenced by the idea that it was necessary to gain the regional support to further proceed towards the international projection (Almeida, 2014). As Maria R. Soares de Lima stated in this respect:

"All regional powers that aspire to become global protagonists [...] must first be legitimated at the regional level since they do not possess enough material capacity or soft power to act autonomously in international politics"
(2008 apud. Malamud, 2011).

Corresponding to the assumption of the International Relations realist theory, a power can be thus dominant in the world, only if it is able to reach a hegemonic position in the region; therefore, the regional role of primacy and prestige represents a source of power and stability in the international system (Mearsheimer, 2007 apud. Rodriguez, 2013). On the same line of reasoning, Faria and Brito referred to the particular case of Brazil by declaring that the country "aspires to gain a position of detachment in the background of the new regionalism", also known as "open regionalism" (2009:4), which became the hegemonic form of expression of globalisation and interdependence, as there was not any alternative than the acceptance of the free-market to guarantee the survival of states. Powered by these beliefs, Brazil attempted to ascent towards the international system, by committing itself to the

regional activism and the promotion of different forms of regional integration, both in political, economic and security fields, aspiring to spread a feeling of belonging to a common root, understood as South-American, among its neighbour states, as well as to forge the sense of working and cooperating as one single (regional) actor to achieve the most beneficial outcome for all the regional members.

Nevertheless, the aspirations of the country in the new millennium have not been limited to the achievement of a regional recognition of its leadership, but rather oriented to transform the country into a significant pole of the renewed global configuration (Benzi, 2015:59). The former idea of becoming a leader has been related to an authoritarian or imperialistic posture, but rather linked to the idea of the country of assuming a benevolent, positive and solidarity commitment for the development of the region as a whole and the maintaining of an area of peace, cooperation and security within the South-American borders. In doing that, Brazil ascribed to itself the role of a leader, or more precisely of a “cooperative hegemon” (Pedersen, 2002): an actor with low military power and coercive capacity aimed to establish and increase its influence over the region, looking for absolute - and not relative - gains and forcing itself to respect shared rules, by subscribing forms of cooperation and actively participating in regional institutions. At the same time, Brazilian engagement was not limited to its neighbourhood: as the aspirations of the foreign policy of the country were reaching higher levels of commitment in international matters and levels, corresponding to the new policy's fields of Brasilia and the Minister of External Relations: the Itamaraty.

The rapid process of re-democratization, which took place in all countries of Latin America in the 1980's, offered stability at the domestic political level and created the necessary platform for Brazil to look outside the region and get involved in new global challenges in a more assertive way. Subsequently, the country demonstrated its ambition in assuming and dealing with new responsibilities and strong actions and reactions both at regional level and in Third World affairs, promoting the related concerns in many and different multilateral institutions.⁶ Brazil has then entered the twenty-first century as a country positioned in the middle, between the past and the future of its own history; as well as

⁶ Outside its borders, Brazil's attention has been directed to the Southern part of the world, where the poorest regional countries are situated and where Brazilian engagement has been considered a valuable alternative to the relations of dependence from the rich states in the Northern hemisphere. The development of a South-South cooperation with the specific aim to contribute to the domestic and Southern development in economic, social, security and environment areas, once more demonstrated the aspiration of Brazil in becoming an important and influential actor with global ambitions, while not detaching itself from neither the developing world nor forgetting about the importance that development assumes in its foreign policy, as a goal and as an expression of Brazilian identity. Another level of Brazilian engagement in international politics is about its claim of being an important decision-maker in multilateral institutions. Its ambitious project of getting a seat in the United Nation Security Council and obtaining the strongest possible presence in other multilateral institutions, especially economic ones, is of critical significance and demonstrates how Brazil has been becoming conscious of its power and the support offered by other states in the world.

between the limited neighbourhood-oriented interests and the greater global aspirations. As Malamud and Rodriguez claimed in referring to the growing dualism of the Brazilian policy, Brazil was "straddling the region and the world" (Malamud and Rodriguez, 2013).

The ambiguity of the Brazilian foreign policy has resulted in acting as both "the first among the lasts" and "the last among the firsts" (Lima, 2012), by conforming its action at the regional and the international level respectively (Benzi, 2015: 59). Brazil was seen as "too big to let the region tie its hands" but still too small "to go global without caring about the potential damage to the neighbourhood"; that is why the country has moved toward a practice of making an instrumental use of this dual attitude in order to reach its objective of international politics (Malamud and Rodriguez, 2013:167). What results from the analysis of respective political and international developments is, however, that the conquer of regional leadership is an objective which is not easy to reach, because neighbour countries do not seem to favour a submission to Brazil as a hegemon, neither do they feel content about being represented by Brazil. In the last decades, the rest of the South-American countries have attempted to act towards resizing the global aspirations of Brazil by using any opportunity to oppose them. These efforts included forms of balancing in the international system, limiting further development and growth of the regional projects in which they were engaged, eventually undermining the interests of the respective opposing states. This reaction of the neighbourhood had historical, geographic and economic roots. As the diplomat Paulo Roberto Almeida declared:

"Being the largest economy in the region, Brazil exerts a natural attraction on neighbouring countries but that has not been enough to overcome old suspicions about its quasi-imperialistic behaviour in South-America [...] replicating, albeit in a less arrogant manner, American imperial tutelage"
(Almeida, 2010:171).

Mathias Spektor claimed that the dominant perception of Brazil in the region is that its rising up has not been seen as friendly and positive; on the contrary, the rest of the region has had some difficulties in perceiving Brazilian regional action as aimed to reduce the existing asymmetries among the region and to work, throughout the application of its "soft power", for the achievement of absolute gains for all (Spektor, 2010:29). Consequently, the commitment of the region itself to work for Brazil and its regional and international interests has appeared to be minimum over the years, in many cases it has even gone against the same regional and relative gains of each country. As relative and absolute gains have been seminal concepts of the International Relations' theories, mainly for Realism and Neoliberal-Institutionalism theories that will be the theoretical background of the analysis, many authors have converged in the idea that the foreign action of Brasilia should start looking for playing the role of

leader together with the regional partners, by a cooperative, interdependent and coordinated policy, owing to create more proximity among the South-American states, which were threatening it (Ayres Pinto, 2009).⁷ Unfortunately, during the last two governments, this possibility has been overcome, mainly because of the reactions of the neighbours to Brazilian proposals and actions, both regionally and internationally, that have negatively affected the country aspirations and have resulted in non-useful efforts and costs that Brazil was paying without receiving any benefit in change. First of all the opposing reaction came from one of its main regional partner, Argentina, who was once considered an important political and economic partner of Brazil and a strategic ally for the regional project of integration that both had created together, based on careful consideration of the parity of conditions, capabilities and resources (Ferreira-Pereira, 2015).

This current complex context produces difficulties and hindrances in matching the ambitious Brazilian program with tangible results, at the regional and above all, international level. South-American friendly relations created during the previous years have seen a significant deterioration from the moment when Brazil initiated to look, act and plan its further activities farther and wider, and principally outside the region. Argentina, the other bigger country of the area and at times a historical rival, and at times an ally of Brazil, has never accepted to be submitted to Brasilia. The result was Argentina's ambiguous foreign policy towards Brazil, both on the bilateral bases and within the regional institutions such as the Mercosur.

In the last governments of Luis Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff, the Brazilian foreign policy, although presenting itself as globally oriented, has been especially concerned with avoiding controversy or conflict towards Argentina. The Southern giant has always been very careful to make Argentina feel comfortable and powerful, while at the same time avoid scaring other regional actors, through its increasing ambitions. Nevertheless, such balanced behaviour has attracted the critics and the reactions of Argentina that has done all the possible to create impediments to Brazil's rise and obtain as many benefits and gains from the *status quo* as it could.

Brazil is therefore running a danger of becoming what was called a "leader without followers", as results from Malamud's (2011) application of the reoriented analysis of Barry Buzan. The regional countries have not aligned themselves with the principal objectives of the Brazilian foreign policy (Malamud, 2009: 145) and have not showed any significant support to the giant's cause, contrary other actors. It is therefore important to emphasize, here, the different attitude of the other international

⁷ The cooperation would have then been considered as a way to facilitate the achievement of relative gains for each country itself, as consequence of process of political coordination (Keohane, 1984 apud, Vedovato and Ayres Pinto, 2015).

actors in relation to Brazilian international projection aspirations. Brazil's role as leader has been recognized and well accepted by other regional blocks and countries outside the region (such as the European Union and United States) that consider Brazil as the only country able to act as “the voice” of Latin America, representative of regional needs in multilateral fora.

Due to the importance that emerging countries and integration processes assumed in last decades and their implications for the transformation of the international system, the present project aims to introduce an empirical case-study that will explain a part of these challenges. In the last decades of twentieth century many forms of integration were developed around the globe, following the example (but not always the success) of the European integration. The crisis and paralysis of regional institutions gave regional powers the chance to act independently and individually with others partners. This is exactly what happened in South America, where Brazil chose to take Mercosur's members outside its political, economic and international projects; thereby generating a stalemate of the institutional dynamic and evolution. The main objective of the present research is, therefore, to understand the political consequences of Brazilian aspirations towards augmenting the international prestige in the strategic partnership and friendship with Argentina, looking in particular at the implications which these phenomena and events take within their relationship into the framework of Mercosur.

1.2 State of the art

The intellectual appeal that South-American region and in particular the Brazilian foreign policy are able to exert over scholars of all around the world is based on the interesting complexity of its ground of analysis and on the differences that this fields of study presents, if compared to others, in representing an ambiguous, uncommon and fascinating example of application of the International Relations' theories. "Presently available theories of International politics do not explain the South-American case" (Hostli, 1996:161) that has therefore been seen as an "anomaly" in terms of application of the common concepts of the discipline, as well as of the most detailed paradigms (Hostli, 1996; Buzan and Waever, 2003). Any possible explanation is thus underpinned by a synthesis of different theoretical approaches, grounded in similar foundation's elements of the studies on international politics.

The South-American continent is assumed to be a peaceful place where a variegated number of states with different features live in good relationships, avoiding any possible cause of conflict and

misunderstandings among them that should then be solved through the use of the coercive force. Eventual disputes among South-American borders are most of the time solved through the direct intervention and mediation of the major actors of the region and through institutionalized mechanisms for the resolution of controversies. At the same time, that the region is described as a pacific area, the real current situation and the many attempts of the regional actors to mine and balance the rising of some neighbours in the international system, reminds to diverging and conflictual interests, as well as to a competition for the achievement of more relative gains than other actors.

Thus, the theoretical approach that is going to support all the research is based on the interpretation of the Brazilian foreign policy as characterized by a synthesis of both elements of the theory of Realism and Neoliberal-Institutionalism. While the search for autonomy and development are representatives of a realist policy of increasing the national power over the regional and international arena, and resulting in the paradigm of the "Logistic State" (Cervo, 2008), the engagement and the participation of Brazil, and the other countries, in the bilateral and multilateral institutions and cooperation platforms in order to reach its global goals, reminds of a liberal-institutionalist approach.⁸

The former concept of searching for an autonomous strategy and action has always covered a central position in the elaboration of the Brazilian Foreign policy, since the transformation of the country from a dependent empire of the Portuguese Crown into a Independent Republic (Lima, 2012), and has been object of analysis of many scholars within the discipline. The autonomy comes to describe a foreign policy free from impositions coming from powerful and hegemonic states (Vigevani and Ramanzini Jr., 2014). Through the different strategies of autonomy adopted over the years, Brazil has been able to guarantee its own interests and at the same time to allow for its development and the insertion in the global governance.

If firstly the country has opted for a strategy of "autonomy through distance" ⁹ from the recognized international great powers and the international regimes created in the twentieth century in order to avoid submitting the country and the decision-making process to the choices of more influential actors (Amado, 1982 apud. Vigevani and Cepaluni, 2007:285): a strategy which prevailed until the government of President Sarney (Fonseca Jr. 1998; Vigevani and Oliveira, 2004). In the 1990s, the then-elected president Fernando Henrique Cardoso, fascinated by the neoliberal policies and influenced

⁸ Even if it may be targeted as a typical strategy of "middle powers" as, by reminding to the citation of Lima, they do not possess enough military power to impose themselves over the others.

⁹ The "autonomy through distance" was used to describe the refuse of an automatically acceptance of international regimes and the policy and believes of a autarchic development oriented toward the growth and the stabilization of the domestic market in order to preserve the sovereignty of the nation-state (Vigevani and Cepaluni, 2007)

by the presence of the United Nations' agencies and their measures of development and political action, imposed on the South-American countries in form of the Washington Consensus, opted for a strategy of "autonomy through participation". The latter strategy leads to Brazil's rapprochement with the international power centres and a more active participation in the world politics.¹⁰ The subsequent left-wing governments had made an attempt to fuse the two previous strategies in order to guarantee the autonomous action of the country in the development of its foreign policy, without being subjected to any influence or obligation, while autonomously accepting to be limited in its action through a more active participation in almost all the international multilateral institutions. Eventually, Brazil was moving towards what has been considered a "mundialization" of its foreign policy (Villa and Viana, 2010).

In spite of the central role of the concept of autonomy, which appears to be linked to an exclusive realist approach, the country has over the years also recognized the importance of joining multilateral and bilateral institutions and advance in forms of cooperation and regional integration, in order to allow for a major access to development than what it might be able to reach by acting alone in the globalized and interdependent world of nowadays. The spread of a new wave of regionalism in the world politics, occurred at the end of the twentieth century, represents a reaction of the states to adapt themselves to the challenges posed by the new international configuration.¹¹ This contribution agrees with the idea that regionalism consists in a reproduction in small scale of the identical systemic structure of the global governance (Fawcett, 2005), while at the same time providing states the possibility to create structures of balancing or bandwagoning, on the basis of both their material capacities and national interests (Bhagwati, 1993), which have international consequences and implications.

At the same time, while that globalisation has changed our perspective on the international system, as well as international actors and the idea of power, this latter concept, so significant for Realism, has not lost its 'hard' (military) essence, which has been complemented by economic, cultural and also political dimension of power. Contrarily to what may be thought, engagement of a country in

¹⁰ Brazil came to insert the international regimes, and mainly those of neoliberal print, in order to follow the trend of the period that was characterized by the "complex interdependence" (Keohane and Nye, 1989) in which questions about economics, trade, environment, society, Human Rights and security have gained much more interests and recognition. The participation of the country was moved to the desire and aspiration of the political class to "influence the international agenda with the values that describes the Brazilian diplomatic tradition" as if taking into consideration the dimensions of countries most of the questions before reported are affecting the domestic sector and its development (Fonseca Jr, 1998:368).

¹¹ The echoes of globalisation were perceived everywhere and the bound phenomenon of regionalisation was welcomed with strong enthusiasm, generating what has been named a "Domino Effect" (Baldwin, 1993) of region-building processes based in particular on the European design of integration among countries, aimed to integrate their economies and productive systems first, to affirm themselves in a competitive global market, and later to create joint macroeconomic policies to allow their economic sectors to grow and gain more prestige in the international system, on the theoretical basis of the doctrine of Neo-functionalism (Haas, 1958) and through the evolution on the "spill-over" mechanism (Haas and Schmitter, 1964).

international and regional institutions and mechanisms of integration and cooperation does not lead to a loss of its autonomous decisional capacity. In fact, even within the realist scholars of International Relations, some have accepted the idea this paradigm could not be reduced to a single and unified explanation. Rather, the paradigm was seen to be in need to be adapted to different periods and circumstances of the world politics, since the international system has maintained the basic features constantly highlighted by this theoretical approach, even though other approaches opted for justifying and theorizing the changing international circumstances on the basis of other concepts.

The main theoretical approach of the present contribution will represent a synthesis of both Realism and Neoliberal-Institutionalism. It departs from the common assumption of both the disciplines that analysis of the International Relations is necessarily determined by an anarchical context, in which rational actors (states) attempt to maximize their gains and to pursue their national interests; those actors are able to exert their sovereignty (a juridical authority) and the monopoly of the legitimate use of coercive power over a territory (Weber apud. Dunne, 1997a: 114). The concept of power is not anymore equivalent to exclusively military aspect related states' capabilities (Waltz 1979:131), and their accumulation guaranteeing the survival in the context of uncertainty, unpredictability and the Hobbesian fight of 'all (states) against all'. To guarantee their survival in a structure that does not present any central power, states are supposed to rely on self-help, as "no other state can be relied upon to guarantee your survival" (Dunne, 1997a: 119). The coexistence among the international actors may not be built upon trust and friendship, but through mechanisms of maintaining the systemic balance of power and overcome the "security dilemma" that anarchy creates.

The guarantee of the equilibrium in the international system "reflects the distribution of power in the international system... [and] the differential growth in the power of states leads to another attempt to change the system" (Viotti and Kauppi, 1993:59). Any redistribution of the international equilibrium results in form of alliances among states, uniting themselves against a common threat (balancing) or by acting in an opportunist way and jumping on the wagon of the strongest actor, searching for its own part of relative gains (bandwagoning). Between these two opposite strategies, however, the International Relations theoretical approaches indicate other procedures that may be adopted by states in specific circumstances. At the final scope of the present research, we will circumscribe them in a reduced group composed by those strategies of forming alliances that offer the better explanatory power for the purposes of our work's topic.

Taking as the point of departure the division of strategies presented by Rodriguez (2013), the strategies of forming alliances, leading states to cooperate in the anarchy can be grouped in procedures

of "opposition" versus "accommodation" to more powerful states that attempt to impose themselves over the others in the international system. In the first group are those practices aimed to counterbalance the rising power, which may be represented by the balancing in its original and soft version. The latter would refer to coordinated diplomatic practices aimed at obtaining gains distinct from the gains stemming from the original balancing (Walt, 2009:104 apud. Rodriguez, 2013). In the second group, among the strategies aimed at accommodation we can insert a more detailed option of jumping upon the bandwagon with powerful states that has been embodied by the "Bandwagoning for Profit" (Schweller, 1994 apud Rodriguez, 2013). The latter strategy represents an opportunist practice, usually adopted by minor states (and with less capabilities) to reach a positive outcome in terms of relative gains. In a middle position between these strategies of forming alliances there is an additional strategy: the hedging. This latter represents a deliberate opting for neither engaging in cooperation with a major power, nor opposing it in its aspirations, leaving the costs of the balancing to other major states while at the same time reducing the risk of smaller states to be dominated. In conclusion, Realism does allow for limited forms of cooperation and interaction among states, especially when these entail obtaining relative gains (i.e., gaining more than the other states from the cooperation).

On the other hand, the theory of Neoliberal-Institutionalism starts from the assumption that, in an international system characterized by those same features described above, cooperation among states always assumes a positive understanding and implications. This paradigm does not conceive the predominance of conflicts as natural in the international system. This theoretical approach sees in the international institutions the capacity of "[carrying] out a number of functions that states could not perform" (Dunne, 1997b:154). This theory attempted to represent a significant challenger for realism, by focusing on other kind of actors, rather than only states. It also indicated new forms of interaction among states which have been not exclusively focused on the consequences of the systemic anarchy and therefore related to conflicts. Most of these integration forms and regional organizations were exclusively oriented towards an economic interdependence and resulted in low institutionalised processes of integration and cooperation.

Furthermore the international institutions were created by states and formed by same actors too. Fritz Scharpf (1997) coined the definition of institutions as "state-centred actors" that shape the perception and the valuation of events, subjects and results, while representing mechanisms that can be intentionally created and subjected to modification by single actors (i.e., the states).

"Institutional rules will affect policy responses not only by restricting options, constituting actor constellations, and regulating their modes of interaction but also by structuring the incentives of the participating actors. In rational-choice institutionalism, these incentives are defined by reference to the self-interest of the corporate and collective actors involved in the policy process"
(Scharpf, 2000:776).

Nevertheless the choices of actors reflect actions that are not always objective and rational, but in some cases may result to be subjective and intentional. Interested in achieving specific outcomes, the strategies may vary from an actor to another, as well as in the time. The variation is also a result of how events, opportunities and preferences are perceived both by the singular states *per se* and within the institutional framework in which they interact with others. Seen from this perspective the evolution of institutions may be seen as path-dependent: where institutions end up is strongly influenced by where they started from (Scharpf, 1997:41). In other words, international institutions, as well as regions, are what actors make of them. To this contribution, these considerations are important to the extent that we will focus on the creation of institutions and forms of cooperation within a clearly limited geographical area: the South-American region.

"Latin-American states continue to establish regional organizations because their leaders know that sovereignty is not relinquished by signing papers. Rather, regionalism is a foreign policy resource used to achieve other ends such as international visibility, regional stability and regime legitimacy"
(Malamud and Gardini, 2012).

It is necessary to point out that a satisfactory commonly accepted definition of what a region is and what regionalism means, is still a contested issue among scholars. Against the background of the analysis of several attempts to reach a theoretical consensus, the argument shared by this contribution is the one presented by Hurrell (1995: 333-334), who advances the understanding of the region as a group of "territorial units" presenting geographical proximity and contiguity, that allows for a more manageable and accessible explanation of the idea of mutual political, social and/or economic interdependence (Nye, 1968). Regionalism, therefore, comes to be considered as a "macro process" (Briceño Ruiz, 2014b) including "[...] structures of region-building in regard to closer relations" (Börzel, 2012) which both represents a result and also led to a reciprocal cause-effect relationship between regionalism and globalization, as defended by many scholars including Soares and Coutinho (2005). The theories of International Relations have attempted to give an explanation to the phenomenon of regionalism that has significantly increased in its importance since the 1990s, acknowledged by both representatives of the neoliberal and neorealist schools alike. If scholars of neoliberalism have highlighted the importance of the economic interdependence as the main cause of cooperation among

states, the neorealists have focused on security concerns that might stimulate regional cooperation or confrontation (Börzel et al. 2012). In addition, realists have also highlighted the possibility for a state of joining a regional integration aimed at achieving some gains (absolute or relative) that without the participation in a regional project would have been more difficult to achieve. This rationale appears to be validated the statement of Barry Buzan, with the author affirming that "interdependence has changed, not in a substitute, but in a new structure of the politics of power (Buzan, 1996 apud. Pinheiro, 2000:327).

The continuous search for autonomy and development (that was supposed to be achieved without any established dependency with developed countries and hegemonic actors) and the cooperation established with other "non-hegemonic" and extra regional powers are expression of what academics have been named the "Brazilian pragmatism". As the country occupies an intermediary position (Rodriguez, 2013) in the allocation of power and capacities among the actors of the international system, its foreign policy has to be oriented toward the achievement of the highest relative gains as possible. In doing that the country has opted for a strategy that corresponds to elements of the theories referred above. After the idea of Brazilian pragmatism has been delineated by Leticia Pinheiro in 2000, it was subsequently developed by Maria R. Soares de Lima, in 2005, and there seems to be a widespread acceptable of this approach in terms of analysing and describing the Brazilian foreign policy of the new millennium.

The "Pragmatic Institutionalism" of Pinheiro (2000) indicates a combined version of two different visions of the realism in the implementation and actuation of the Brazilian foreign policy: the Hobbesian and the Grotian one. If the Hobbesian realism stems from the latter version of the theory affirming that "[the] international anarchy can be cushioned by states who have the capability to deter other states from aggression, and who are able to construct rules for their coexistence" (Dunne, 1997a: 113); the Grotian realism presents a major proximity to the thinking of Hedley Bull and especially the idea of the international society, in which states interact among themselves on the basis of common rules and the recognized perception that each of them has some responsibilities both towards the others and the society that they have formed (Bull, 1995 apud. Pinheiro, 2000:307). Like Hobbes saw in the social contract a mean to overcome the anarchy and the security dilemma, Grotius and Bull converged in the idea that "customary practices and rules agreed on by governments would be binding on states" (Viotti and Kauppi, 1993:41). Thus, the international institutions were built upon and linked to the juridical principle of "*pacta sunt servanda*", meaning that they were obligating states to respect them even if a central authority capable of enforcing the agreed principles was missing. Grotius order

was therefore involving both power and values (ibid. 1993:42) in order to regulate the anarchy toward a normative commitment and promote the search for absolute gains for states (Pinheiro, 2000:309).

The "Pragmatic Institutionalism" of Pinheiro defends that those realist principles of the Brazilian foreign policy will help the country to preserve a necessary degree of autonomy of political action, both within the logic of the neoliberal project of regional integration and *vis-à-vis* all the other institutions in which the country became engaged (Pinheiro, 2000:312). A major and more active participation and presence of Brazil in the international system, realized through the participation in diverse mechanisms and procedures of international cooperation and integration are at the same time beneficial for the country's development. Hence, the liberal vision of realism developed by Dunne represents a synthesis of both the values previously referred to above. The Brazilian foreign policy thus uses different strategies, corresponding to qualities of the international relations as highlighted by different IR theories: the search for an increasing politics of power (Realism); the existence of and participation in the international society (English school) and the institution of arrangements of cooperation to overcome and reduce the effects of anarchy, in the absence of a Leviathan (Neoliberal-Institutionalism).

A current observation of Brazil's foreign policy agenda validates, once again, the theoretical propositions of Leticia Pinheiro. The recent "mundialization" of the Brazilian international politics consist in a political action toward the international scene oriented toward the predominance of the Grotian version of realism, while the last years' change of attitude toward the region has showed how the former "autonomy through diversification" of the first mandate of Lula has been challenged by a more Hobbesian version of looking for the autonomy and the achievement of gains among the neighbourhood. In particular, the previous regional strategy of "autonomy through integration" may be seen as a cover strategy for the application of the leadership within the region and, later gain more power to invest in a strategy of "autonomy through affirmation" both at regional and international level. The absolute gains, once salient in the regional logic of the Brazilian policy have become a part of the past.

The regional institutions in which Brazil participates have assisted to a reduced level of commitment and cooperation among its states. In the next pages it will be analysed how the attempts to relaunch the regional integration projects have in reality contributed to maintain a low institutionalized structure resistant to change mechanisms of protection of the interests of the governments of each member-states. The ensuing avoidance of further supra-nationalisation of the regional institutions reminds of the underlying aspirations of Brazil and other countries to guarantee the

necessary autonomy and possibility to alter its position regarding any matter, at any time as it is deemed convenient.

1.3 Research Design

The present contribution has as its main objective an attempt to offer an explanation on how the global aspiration of Brazil, developed since the last decade of the twentieth century but strengthened mainly under the presidency of Lula da Silva, have affected the relationship with the major neighbour country (Argentina) and with the region. The latter is considered a broader expression of MERCOSUR, which resulted by the enlargement of the integration project to other regional states and by its implementation as the economic mechanism of another regional project (UNASUR). Such view which prioritizes MERCOSUR but does not restrict the analysis to it, is considered as the most beneficial option for the analysis of the bilateral relationship with Argentina, the significant 'other' of Brazil within South-America.

The emphasis on MERCOSUR as a particular institution of the region is informed by two principal reasons. First, the MERCOSUR is nowadays representing the majority of the South-American countries, who joined the regional integration project in different ways.¹² Second, the regional integration process has been particularly affected, both positively and negatively, by the new orientation of Brazilian foreign policy. The institution has taken advantages from the rapid growth and the international insertion of what was supposed to occupy the position of regional leader; on the other hand, the difficulties felt by the rest of the countries in competing in a global liberal market have reduced the benefits and the weakest economies opted for a return to protectionist measures to save their own interests. This has affected the international position of Brazil and the one within the region.

The present contribution covers a time limit of almost twelve years of Brazilian foreign policy (2003-2015) which were characterized by a particular engagement of the country in the international politics, aimed to achieve the position of global player. In order to facilitate the understanding of why our main focus of analyses refers to the reactions of the region to this international rise of the country, and in particular to the responses offered by the Brazil's significant 'other' (Argentina), the analysis will consider facts occurred decades before. Since the former rapprochement between the two major

¹² The former member-states (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) have been joined by Venezuela in 2012 and Bolivia in 2015, after a formal period of candidacy in which it was collocated within the group of states in a process of adhesion; while some others are part of the Associated Members' group, as in the case of Chile (since 1996), Peru (2003), Colombia and Ecuador (2004) and Suriname and Guiana (2013).

countries, in a general explanation of the Brazilian foreign policy both in the bilateral relationship with the austral neighbour and in the multilateral regional one, which will discuss the evolution of the South-American integration process as a phenomenon derived by globalization and the other transformations occurred in the international system at the end of the previous century and that came to affect the way how states perceived the other actors playing in the international system and the mechanisms of the global governance itself. The main objective is to carry on an analysis of the almost last decade of Brazilian foreign policy (2003-2015), by introducing the challenges and the changes that the new governments elected in Brazil at the rise of the new millennium has been able to promote, by taking advantages of a casual but beneficial political convergence resulted in the entire region.

The main focus will be on the change of the Brazil's policy resulting in a more active and deeper engagement in the regional integration matters and at the same time a more dynamic and broader presence and participation in the international multilateral institutions. With the election of Lula da Silva in 2002, and the assuming presidential mandate in the following year, Brazil has assumed a sincere compromise with its international rise and the acceptance of its role in South-America borders that resulted in the promotion of its leadership among the neighbourhood and in a significant activism in the reconfiguration of the global governance itself (Benzi, 2015:59). An important shift in the conduct of the international politics of the country occurred in 2008 when, during the second mandate of President Lula da Silva, Brasilia resized its interest toward the region while also increasing its commitment on the global (mainly global-South) scene. If the region was first considered the main priority on the foreign policy's agenda, this emphasis was changed with time. The alteration had to do with the neighbour states' reactions of the new Brazilian projects, substantiated in opposing them and balancing Brasilia. Such a stance represented a strategy that, in a long term of political, economic and diplomatic action, ended up by reducing and substituting the tolerance and the silent acceptance of the regional leadership that had characterized the first mandate of Lula's government.

The subsequent president, Dilma Rouseff, has maintained the same political, diplomatic and economic orientation of the predecessor, both within the region and toward the international politics, even if her articulation has been marked by a less active approach, leading sometimes to stalemate of Brazilian international engagement in the region and in a less ambitious participation in the international institutions and engagement with the instruments of global governance.

The main objective of this research is to offer an explanation of how the global aspirations of Brazil, of the leftist governments of Lula da Silva and Dilma Rouseff, have contributed to change the terms of the relationship with the region, once considered the main priority and the necessary platform

of support for the international projection of the Southern giant. As mentioned above, the particular focus will, therefore, be posed on the bilateral relationship between Brazil and the other major country of the area, Argentina.

The convergence of the political left-wing presidents in both countries (since 2003) has, however, not contributed to a more peaceful and cooperative relationship. The international economic and financial crisis occurred on the verge of the new millennium have negatively affected the previous positive cooperation results, including the capital of efforts in the fields of bilateral and regional integration. As Argentina suffered more from the economic and financial instability and loss of international credibility, the initial parity with Brazil came to decrease, and the divergences in terms of political and economic became inevitable.

As we are aware of the importance of the domestic conditions, mainly the economic ones, as well as the respective perception of the changing regional structure within the Argentina's public opinion and specific group of interests, the main attention will be directed at the strategic diplomatic reaction of Buenos Aires to the recent growing activism of Brazilian foreign policy, as well as to the effective capacity of the austral country to lead the rest of the region in opposing and limiting the aspirations and projects of Brasilia. The following work is divided in three main chapters of analysis, through which we aim to present the theoretical and empirical conditions that may support our initial hypothesis of research: the growing global prestige of Brazil and the international aspirations of the country, have been seminal in producing a negative reaction and response in its neighbourhood and mainly within the bilateral Brasilia-Buenos Aires relationship. At the same time, with the regional partners not favourably viewing the new Brazilian aspirations, the Southern giant would be inclined to change its priorities in the foreign agenda, thereby reestablishing its typical pragmatic and responsible behaviour: looking out for its own interests, but without inducing any feeling of jealousy or threat among the others.

The three main chapters are following a chronological order, starting from the re-democratization of South-American region and the relaunch of regional integration projects. The second chapter, after this introductory one, is going over the historical evolution of the Argentina-Brazil rapprochement to show how the bilateral cooperation and the accepted parity between states has been positive for the implementation of a regional institutions aimed to integrate the economics of the regional participants and stimulate the maintaining of peace, democratic values and stability in the southern continent of America. Moreover, in the third chapter, the growing power capacities and a more active participation of Brazil on the international scene are going to be explored in its potential implications as uncomfortable and even threatening elements of the existing regional arrangements and

achievements. Along with the growth of disparities and the divergences among the regional project's members, the integration stops being so productive and positive for Brazil as it was before. As a result, the major state in the region starts to look further, at the global scene, for the establishment of new partnerships that may offer more support. The continuous engagement in the regional scene, was characterized by steps forwards on a highly unstable surface: the evolution from a primarily economic project of integration to a political and social one, as well as the creation of a broader regional project of integration under the Brazilian leadership (UNASUR), have been claimed to represent attempts to cover the failures of MERCOSUR and reduce the exclusive bounds of Brazil to problematic and negatively affecting partners. Thus, while acknowledging the advantages of its positive results in economics, Lula da Silva opted to project the country in other arenas of diplomatic action and political and economic decision-making processes, in order to avoid being subjected to the whims of minor and protectionist countries, and to pay the costs of an inefficient project that is mainly consuming energies and resources, rather than offering benefits and advantages for the major country. The analysis of Dilma Rousseff's first mandate shows the difficulties to match a complicate region with a difficult situation, both domestically than globally.

In the third and last chapter of the dissertation, the focus is on the reaction of both Argentina and the region (which Buenos Aires has been able to lead on many different occasions) to the resized regional engagement of Brazil. Through a smart action of choosing between balancing or bandwagoning, Argentina and the other states have continuously cooperate with Brazil and advanced MERCOSUR, even though the (often uncertain) progress was often linked to the (attempts of) achievement of benefits and domestic gains. Furthermore, the refusal of Brazil's regional leadership appears to have been already accepted everywhere, even within Brazilian public opinion and political sectors. The last part of this chapter is presenting the current scenario of both the Brazilian foreign policy and the reorganization of priorities of the MERCOSUR as a composite actor and its member-states.

In the final part of the analysis, the dissertation will look back at all the main concepts expresses along the analysis, while discussing the implications of the theory-informed analysis against the background of the analytical aspirations delineated in this introductory chapter.

1.4 Methodology

The present research consists in the observance and analysis of a specific case study within the field of International Relations, aimed to offer a satisfactory explanation and a complete framework of the main topic. The work moves from an empirical approach, represented by the growing international aspiration of Brazil that needs to be matched with a theoretical background.

By assuming the Brazilian Foreign policy of the leftist governments (2003-2015), and the change of foreign policy action that occurred over the years from a regional to a broader global commitment, as our independent variable of analysis, the concepts of "autonomy", development, politics of power and global aspirations have represented the interfering values which multiplied or factorized for constant values would have shown the way how Brazilian international agenda has been developed and has resulted. On the other hand, the dependent variables are represented by the reaction of both the neighbour partner and the region as a whole.

The function of the variable referring to Argentina is therefore formed by elements that indicates how the reduced economic and political prestige of the country at the international level (our constant in this function, as we have previously assumed that the economic and financial crises will not be topic and factor of the present analysis), that has contributed to reduce the initial parity between the major regional countries, is reacting to the growing values of the independent variable. In the same way, the responses of the former dependent variable is directly proportional to the values and levels of responses reproduced by the entire region, showing a converging line of action between the dependent variables (Argentina and MERCOSUR, this latter as representative of the region) in being analysed in the terms of the Brazilian global aspirations of foreign policy.

The present work is proceeding toward the choosing for a rationalistic approach for the conduction of the analysis. The investigation had resulted to be mainly documental, through which we attempted to find an existing theoretical variable in the analysis of previously written sources, to be able to explain the empirical evidence of the case-study. Thus, the methodological approach adopted is the process-tracing one, and in particular its 'theory-testing' variant. This method is based on a specific case-study, which through the analysis of some selected causal facts and observations is looking for a possible explanation of the case on theoretical bases.

"Process-tracing is an indispensable tool for theory testing and theory development not only because it generates numerous observations within a case, but because these observations must be linked in particular ways to constitute an explanation of the case. It is the very lack of independence among these observations that makes them a powerful tool for inference."

(George and Bennet, 2005:169)

The process-tracing method is therefore moving from empirical and historical facts to an "analytical explanation" which mainly converges in general theories. It represents an inductive process of developing a theory starting from a specific case-study. Therefore, the reader should remind, all along the pages of the present work, that our objective did not own any ambitious project of developing new analytical explanations. On the contrary, we attempted to use the previously introduced method to testify the application and the validity of already existing theories, combining different approaches and knowledge of the discipline of the International Relations, in order to offer a theoretical support to the historical events and the different causal inferences (our variables).

The option for a qualitative method of collecting and elaborating information has then appeared to be most suitable if considering that we are dealing with a topic that insert in disciplines of social studies. Then, the project has been built upon the review of the existing specific literature among the secondary sources, owing to provides the necessary definitions and explanations about the research topic and offer a general and broader panoramic view of the theories developed that could be applied to our main object of study. The theoretical outcome has therefore been offered by a synthesis between two of the main background in the International Relations theory and by the recurring evidence of this phenomenon of matching together different concepts, realized by many scholars of the discipline, which has in some cases validating and offered more credibility and legitimacy to the approach we had opted for.

The analysis of primary sources, represented in our case by official and semi-official documents, is deemed critical: political discourses of presidents, politicians, diplomatic bodies and the speeches pronounced by international agencies and organizations, serve to improve the objectivity of our work and enrich the present real case-studies to evaluate our theoretical assumptions. Throughout this second kind of analysed sources we have attempted to achieve a better understanding of the Brazilian foreign policy and the reactions resulting by the careful declarations as reflected by the statements of the representatives of Argentina and the rest of the regional actors.

This research has been also aware of the importance on relying on the collecting of other forms of data that have included interviews with scholars and academic experts of different areas, implemented during the field-work conducted in Sao Paulo, Brazil, as part of research exchange of the University of Minho with the Institute for International Relations of the USP. The field work has been useful and of critical importance for the development of the present research as it has provided a more specific, appropriate and intimate view and understanding of the Latin-American political, economic and

international dynamics, both at the regional and international level. At the same time it has provided a significant personal and academic experience, by increasing the amount of contacts and human relationships, as well as the personal interest and passion for some specific subjects of analysis, mainly based on the compared regional integration theories and mechanisms, as well as Brazilian foreign policy and security studies.

Furthermore, the informal conversations taken with representatives of the Argentina and Brazil's diplomatic body has resulted in an interesting experience and acquisition of official information and personal perceptions of both the personalities about how the variables of our analysis react among them when one is touching and affecting the other. The reading of newspapers and online documents has been mainly reinforced the personal aspiration of being in close contact with the last facts and developments which were involving the South-American region.¹³

¹³ Aware of the fact that such a research would have required a more extensive and detailed investigation in some theoretical and empirical elements, as well as a more variegated forms of data collection that would have provided more material of analysis and confrontation and a broader and more satisfactory development and elaboration of conclusions, we are also aware that every analysis has to be limited within a well delineated framework and that everything must come to a conclusion, sooner or later. The positive attitude is to see in what has remained apart in a previous moment, the opportunity and the positive features for a further engagement.

Chapter 2

Brazil towards Argentina and its region

The relationship of Brazil with the neighbour countries has always been source of conflicts and misunderstandings even though there were moments when both countries got involved in forms of cooperation and partnership. The development of Brazil as political, economic, social and military actor, unmatched by any other country in the region, contributed to increase the 'uniqueness' of the country within its neighbourhood (Lafer, 2014). The image of Brazil started to be associated with a threat, due to position as the major actor among the rest. Eventually, over the years the positive acceptance of Brazil within the South-American area was jeopardized (Danese, 2001). The difficulties in matching this controversial image with the reality of the neighbourhood contributed to the characterization of the subcontinent as an alternating between phases of friendship/cooperation and tension/conflict.

One of the most significant and conflictual relationship for Brazil was the one with Argentina: both countries experienced a historical rivalry that had affected the regional structure and the balance of power. Over the years and mainly due to the cooperation-oriented engagement of important and charismatic national leaders, the bilateral rapprochement became viable, often leading to successful outcomes in different fields. Conversely, when the domestic opposition was stronger than the presidential power and the national interests were seen as necessary and inalienable matters, the cooperation and the friendship declined and experienced a setback (Bueno and Schenoni, 2014). Furthermore, the bilateral rapprochement among the major countries was influencing the response of the region to the presence and the growing prestige of the Brazil. The cordiality and the moments of understandings and trust between the South-American dyad have contributed to strength the regional stability and advance in moments of cooperation, while on the other hand the difficulties experienced during the process have negatively affected and threatened its further development (Ibid. 2014).

This chapter aims at introducing the evolution of Brazil's relations with Argentina as the country's engagement within its regional area. More specifically, it will analyse the initial rapprochement between the two major countries of South-America during the twentieth century, which cannot be characterized by a complete absence of rivalry and confrontation. Yet despite all moments of difficulties, one cannot overlook the fact that all the last century was marked by a general tendency to prevent regional conflicts. The reduction of clashes and hostilities between Argentina and Brazil and the general automatic mechanisms of forming alliances among the re-established democracies in South-America

has led to the redistribution of power and to the prevalence of the existing balance within the region. Eventually, all these dynamics had positively affected the prospect to create a cooperation forum, thereby allowing moving towards regional integration (Spektor, 2002b; Ferreira Simões, 2011).

The environment of confidence and cooperation between the Argentina and Brazil, which was fostered by their respective presidents, Raúl Alfonsín and José Sarney, is explored in this chapter by looking into the advance to a further stage of integration undertaken by both diplomacies and charismatic presidents. Eventually, an economic project was created aimed to bring together the South-American economies and the international strength and influence of its member-states. In achieving this great result the Brazil's role has been significant, while also implying the creation of a benevolent acceptance of its differential in terms of power and sharing of both cost and benefits of the regional process, with the other big regional power, Argentina.

The chapter will be divided into three main sections. It starts by exploring the historical legacy of Brazil and Argentina which constitutes the basis for the regional stability and cooperation and which played a basis of the rapprochement driving forward the regional integration process. The evolution from bilateral to a multilateral integration process in South-America will be analysed in the second section, while paying a particular attention to the issue of recognition of the political parity between Argentina and Brazil in the construction of the regional institutions. It demonstrates how both countries have contributed to implement in their geographical space a global phenomenon that came to occur as consequence of the spread of globalization and the end of the bipolar world calling for interdependence among the international actors and a revised structure and distribution of power within the international system. The last part of the chapter discusses the importance of the regional integration project for its member-states and more specifically for the Brazilian foreign policy. It shows how that latter conceived the construction of a common regional institution as a way to project itself and South-America on the international level, while fostering the capacity of both of them to deal with the current systemic changes.

The main objective of the chapter is to present the evolution of the South-American integration process and the importance of the established cooperation between Brazil and Argentina in acting as the driving forces of the regional structure. If on the one hand the two countries have acted as promoters of regionalism in the Southern hemisphere, on the other hand they have thickened the integration by competing with each other, while searching for more regional and global prominence, as well as contesting the regional leadership (Mathias, Guzzi and Giannini, 2008; Vidigal, 2012).

2.1 The Place of Argentina in Brazil's Foreign Policy

2.1.1 Brazil-Argentina relationship: a retrospective look

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, almost all South-American countries were fighting for the independence from the Spanish colonial power, with the exception of Brazil that opted for a different approach *vis-à-vis* Portugal.

The struggles in the Spanish America against a weak motherland had led to sudden, violent and universal clashes and tensions (Lynch, 1986), as a response to the discontent of the colony with the reforms implemented by the Crown, which attempted to maintain the control over the primary sectors of Latin-American society (Bennassar, 1987). In the nineteenth century, while the Spanish Crown was attempting to organize a “[...] second conquer of America” (Bushnell, 1994), the reaction of the colonies to a potential submission led to their eventual independence, declared between 1814 and 1825. As for the Portuguese presence in Latin America, it was less intrusive. In 1822, Brazil declared its independence with Pedro I, resulting in a Conservative Revolution in which the monarchic system and the precedent economic, political and administrative structure were maintained. As the country was giving continuity to the Portuguese dynastic system, it was perceived by the neighbourhood as the hereditary of the European hegemonic and interventionist pretensions over the region, therefore establishing a strong contrast with the new born Republican hemisphere (Candeas, 2005; Granato, 2012).

After the independence, the South-American scenario was characterized by many new born nation-states fighting for the territorial delimitations and the access to natural resources. Those conflicts contributed to the regional instability and insecurity, while at the same time resulting in the promotion of forms of both alliances and rivalries, rooted in the domestic interests and strategic objectives. The most significant and problematic relationship was the one composed by the Argentina-Brazil dyad composed by the major countries with most resources. Although Argentina could be seen as more capable than Brazil to impose its influence among the neighbours, due to common characteristics (language, history, social and cultural proximity), Brazil opted for a 'soft power strategy' to deal with the neighbour countries and from the suspect and intimacy that its large dimension and the autonomous development were able to exert over the others.

The strategies adopted by Argentina and Brazil were often designed as reactions to the other's behaviour. In particular, Argentina's promotion of its role as protector of the weaker states from the territorial pretensions of the bigger ones resulted in the implementation of a good relationship between

Buenos Aires and the other capitals of South-America. At the same time, this attitude was affecting the international relations of the Brazilian Empire (accused of expansionist ambitions) toward the neighbourhood (Spektor, 2002b: 13-14). The only option for Brazil to defend its position in the region was not to react aggressively to Argentina, in order to avoid an increasing of hostilities towards the other states.

If before the alternate behaviour between the two main countries of South-America was linked to the use of the war as an instrument to defend the national interests and establish territorial delimitations, the new strategy adopted by the recent proclaimed Federal Republic of Brazil and supported by the diplomatic skills of the Minister of External Relations (1902-1912) José Maria da Silva Paranhos, better known as “Baron of Rio Branco”, finally allowed to reach a pacific consensus among all Brazilian neighbours (Danese, 2001). With Rio Branco, the new reconfiguration of the Brazilian foreign policy proposed a “moderate, benevolent and solidary” (Spektor, 2002b:14) attitude toward the region, in order to avoid an increasing level of mistrust and hostilities, induced by the political and cultural differences, Brazil's policy of prevention of conflicts and negative reactions in its bilateral approach with Argentina helped both the actors to keep cooperative ties between them (Ibid.). Thus, the 'Policy of Cordiality', as it was entitled, was benefiting all, reflected by stronger trade, financial and diplomatic interactions. It was supposed to end the clashes with Buenos Aires and lay the foundations for the further stability and peaceful relationship with the neighbourhood, which were representing a key element of the Brazilian foreign policy pragmatism.¹⁴

Thus, any moment of instability or predatory competition was seen as threatening Brazilian plans and requiring a responsible attitude, based on understanding and generosity toward Buenos Aires, in order to avoid a worsening of the dyad's relationship.¹⁵ Furthermore, Brazil had also oriented its interests toward a broader geographic space which was including another important player of the American continent, in terms of political, economic, military, cultural growing and international prestige,

¹⁴ All long the twentieth century the Brazilian foreign policy was led by the necessity of avoiding the scenario of Argentina, the only South-American power with the capacity to overshadow Brazil in terms of regional and international responsibilities and opportunities, posing obstacles to the diplomatic action of Rio de Janeiro in the sub-continent. The respective Brazil's policy of prevention was based on the promotion of initiatives that would not cause any reaction in the Argentine political and diplomatic circles. In addition, Brazil engaged in the implementation of a cordial discourse and forms of cooperation that were supposed to reduce the uncertainty and the mistrust, and try to include the neighbour into Brazil's international projects, in order to increase the pragmatic proximity with the United States and at the same time avoiding the isolation of Argentina within the American continent.

¹⁵ The “Cordiality Policy” was strengthened during certain episodes that were subverting the regional balance of power, an in particular in 1915, when Argentina, Brazil and Chile- the major and more influential powers in the region- signed a Pact for non- Aggression, Consulting and Arbitrary (ABC Pact) to avoid critical and conflictual situations among them and pose a limit to the United States' influence and interference on their countries. Another example occurred during the War of Chaco (1932- 1935) between Bolivia and Paraguay, in which Brazil and Argentina came to the high level of understanding and trust between them; or later during the signature of the Treaty of non- aggression (Pact Saavedra- Lama, 1933).

the United States. The relationship of the US with the Southern backyard was developed within the framework of the Monroe Doctrine that represented “[a] moral obligation of United States in being interested and intervening in the continental affairs and not looking indifferently at other states' interests” (Carvalho, apud. Coronato 2013:30).¹⁶

During the diplomatic management of Rio Branco, the relationship between the Itamaraty and Washington was characterised by an alternation of intensive and more distanced engagement. In spite of the different phases of the relations, it still led to “[...] a strategic alliance by wrapping his country mantle of the Monroe Doctrine; [which] actively informed the world that Brazil accepted the Americas as exclusive preserve of US influence” (Burgess, 2009:19). The two paradigms varied over the years between what has been called 'americanism' and 'globalism'. If the latter was claiming for the necessity of a diversification of the Brazilian partners in order to achieve a better and more influential bargaining position, the paradigm conceiving the United States as actor of prime importance for Brazil's interests, helped to increase the power resources and improving the capacities of international negotiation of the Southern giant (Lima, 1994 apud. Pinheiro 2000:308).

Although the preferential consideration for the Northern partner was maintained for almost all the century, the 'americanist' strategy of the Brazilian foreign policy was careful to combine the thesis of the US as preferential ally (Villa, 2005), with the policy of avoiding to inducing any feeling of jealousy from Argentina. Brazil was acting as a mediator between the two opposite states, aiming to guarantee the participation of the neighbour in the continental affairs and to strengthen the Argentina-US relation, as claimed in the official policy of Rio Branco. Thus, in the second half the twentieth century, Buenos Aires finally managed to exit its isolation and neutrality through the implementation of its own 'globalist' paradigm for the Argentina's foreign policy (Russell and Tokatlian, 2003). The *Casa Rosada* established bilateral cooperation agreements with the neighbours and extra-regional partners and joined the Organization of the United Nations, aimed to offer a renovated international reconsideration to the country (Spektor, 2002b: 32). Argentina's attitude toward Brazil changed in favour of more proximity: after the economic and political decline of Buenos Aires, Brazil was not seen as irrelevant any more, but as the most important trade partner and the principal competitor. Since the 1950s, as the Argentina's rates of growth came to slow down in comparison with Brazil's increasing economic performances (Hage, 2013:167), the complex bilateral Argentina-US relationship was improving, supported by the

¹⁶ The Monroe doctrine was implemented in the nineteenth century as a form to protect the American continent's interests from the interference of external countries, especially the European ones (Bueno and Cervo, apud. Coronato 2013:29). In the opinion of the most critical area of southern scholars, the doctrine was considered a worrying example of imperialism covered under the resemblances of principles of international law (Coronato, 2013:30).

international financial system, that unfortunately was linking the South-American countries to a strong dependence from northern donors (Spektor, 2002b: 28).¹⁷

All along the second half of the 20th century, the 'Policy of Cordiality' experienced both progresses and setbacks, which included moments of successful cooperation as the one marked by agreement on the primary draft on further economic integration in Uruguaiiana (1961), and moments of major opposition and confrontation that followed the collapse of the constitutional government (Saraiva, 2012).¹⁸ The Argentine military government of José Maria Guido was leading to a new impasse in the relationship with Brazil, that came to be negatively seen, due to the perception of its growing hegemonic position in the region (Candeas, 2005:197). At the same time, the Brazilian military regime was continuing to act cautiously toward the neighbour: any steps backwards had to be avoided, for the sake of the welfare and the peace of the region as a whole, while its foreign policy came to assume a "multilateral" and more global approach (Vizentini, 1998 apud. Spektor, 2002b: 31).

2.1.2 The Legacy of Brazil and Argentina: beyond nuclear, energy and trade (1990-2000)

Although the implementation of military regimes was considered a main reason for the setbacks and failure of the Brazil-Argentina integration and bilateral political action, it was during the respective undemocratic period of violence and *coup d'état* that the first signs of a new rapprochement were

¹⁷ Since 1950 the Brazilian participation in the total amount of global production has increased from a 1,2% to 2,4% and the trend seemed to continue, reaching the 4% mark in just few decades. In the same period, its participation in the regional power has been characterized by an increment of the rate from 36% to 50%, and according to the trend, Brazil will represent at least 2/3 of the regional power in the future, improving the Brazilian predominance and potential hegemony over the South- America (Schenoni, 2014b:138-139). On the contrary, since the 1950s, Argentina's power- once superior to the one of its neighbour, has slightly decreased (Hage, 2013:167). This change in economic projections resulted from the acceptance of the policy of Import- Substitution that since 1946, came to be considered a fundamental economic doctrine within Argentina. Brazil, differently from its neighbour, conceived the ISI model as a device to promote the development and the economic "Brazilian miracle", that have empowered the difference and the change in terms of productivity and political leadership in South- America. What once was the role of Argentina, since 1950s, has become the role of Brazil (Fausto and Devoto, 2004).

¹⁸ The "spirit of Uruguaiiana" (1961) indicates series of agreements signed by the Argentine President Arturo Frondizi and the Brazilian counterpart Jânio da Silva Quadros, aimed at establishing systematic bilateral visits and political consultations, as well as coordination of positions in the international multilateral fora (Granato,2012). By analysing the Argentina-Brazil relationship in the period between the beginning of the nineteenth century and the Uruguaiiana (1961), the number of bilateral Joint Declarations and of official presidential visits realized during this period characterized by the "Cordiality Policy" appears to be limited: over about sixty years of cordial relationship and apparent cooperation, only three Joint Declarations were signed (in 1910, 1950 and 1960), while there were only five presidential visits to the other country. No visits took place between 1935, when Getulio Vargas visited Buenos Aires, until 1961 (Uruguaiiana- Meeting). The visit of Vargas in 1935 would be the last one of a Brazilian president to the neighbour country until at least 1980's when General Figueiredo went to Buenos Aires once again. The exchange of visits involving the military government was followed by an increase of bilateral meetings and Joint Declarations, reaching the highest level of bilateral engagement with the rise of leftist government in the new millennium and in particular between 2007 and 2014, with the president Cristina Kirchner and her Brazilian counterparts, Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff, leading their countries. See: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil. Available at: http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4785:republica-argentina&catid=155&lang=pt-BR&Itemid=478 and <http://dai-mre.serpro.gov.br/atos-internacionais/bilaterais>. Accessed January 16th, 2015.

implemented.¹⁹ While at the beginning of the undemocratic transition the rivalry came to be once again the dominant feeling in the bilateral status quo, (accompanied by the economic growth of Brazil, which was observed with a sense of mistrust in an unstable Argentina), in the academic field, many scholars started to analyse the convergence of conditions of the periphery dependence, which would lead both countries to the development of the integration project (Candeas, 2005: 195).

The consolidation of military presidencies of Ernesto Beckmann Geisel (1974-1979) in Brazil, and Jorge Rafael Videla (1976-1981) in Argentina came to be accompanied by a gradual proximity between the two countries (Cervo, 2007), which was result of a mutual knowledge of their respective military capabilities and the decision of collaborating in the view to achieve mutual trust in nuclear, trade and energy areas (Sarney, 2005). Close to the end of the undemocratic regimes both countries attempted to solve the difficult issue of the hydroelectric resources of the Itaipú Dam. This was done by means of the signing of a Tripartite Agreement of Technical-Operative Cooperation (1979) with Paraguay, for the repartition and management of the water of the River Paraná. The document was a clear reflection of the necessity to build up confidence and change the nature of the relationship between Buenos Aires and Brasilia, in favour of a cooperation that would make the conflict as an obsolete option for the whole region (Candeas, 2005:200).

The question of Itaipú had opened the way to a deeper and broader cooperation between Argentina and Brazil. A common nuclear understanding was reached and the trade relations came to be once again positively considered for both countries at the point to encourage even further cooperation. During an official visit to Buenos Aires in 1980, the newly elected president of Brazil, João Figueiredo (1979-1985), signed the Cooperation Agreement for the Development and Application of the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, in which both countries committed themselves to exchange information on their nuclear possessions, in a more confident atmosphere of transparency and trust for the continuation of a peaceful cooperation over the decades (Wheeler, 2009). Contrary to this assumption is the claim of Federico Merke, who has described the current nuclear cooperation between Brazil and Argentina as characterized by a lack of mutual confidence. In particular nowadays, the attitude of Argentina toward the neighbour's nuclear program is based on the "*trust, but verify*" principle, because Brasilia has become reluctant to allow the partner for a full inspection of its nuclear possessions. This

¹⁹ During the Presidency of João Figueiredo (1979-1985), the relationship between Brazil and the United States worsened because the northern power was attempting to pose some obstacles to the autonomous development of Brazil. Many disputes and divergences occurred in relation to the Brazilian intellectual property rights that Brazil was accused to not respect and to the resolution of Itaipú; to the implementation of a security system in the South Atlantic that would have counted with the presence and the primary influence of US power, and because of the strong relationship that the United States were implementing with Argentina (Vizentini, 1998 apud. Spektor, 2002b).

situation has in some cases promoted some doubts about the future plans of Brazil, while at the same time the Argentine nuclear lobbies have been avoiding any new signature of further bilateral protocols on the matter, which would condition the national development of nuclear resources, one of the most important ones for Buenos Aires' energy sector (Merke, 2013).²⁰

In 1983, through democratic elections, Raúl Alfonsín (1983-1989) became president of Argentina driving the country toward the transition to democracy, which was overshadowed by the challenging economic situation. Almost in the same period, Brazil's military regime was subverted and in 1985 José Sarney was elected president. The ideological proximity between the newly elected representatives and their strong and influential personalities were fundamental for the implementation of a "culture of friendship and integration" (Candeas, 2005: 203). This is for instance reflected by the term coined by André Malamud, who argues that the South-American politics has been characterized by a strong "*Inter-Presidentialism*" (2011) in which the prime role played by political leaders in binding interpersonal aspects and necessary projects appears to be the key feature. Since the presidents are conceived as the major actors in fostering the domestic politics, their capacity to concentrate power in their hands *vis-à-vis* domestic interest groups comes "[to] explain institutional creation and the survival [of states] in this bilateral relation" (Bueno and Schenoni, 2014).²¹

During the mandate of Alfonsín and Sarney significant steps forward in deepening the bilateral cooperation and a further regional integration were made. In 1985 the two heads of state signed the Declaration of Iguazú and the Joint Declaration on Nuclear Policy to reaffirm the terms and the commitments on the peaceful use of nuclear energy and jointly develop high technology to benefit both countries. The first problems in terms of cooperation came to the surface when the talks for cooperation and bilateral integration moved to the economic field.

The Brazil-Argentina rapprochement came to be designed upon a structural parity between both countries, both in terms of conditions, resources, shared costs and benefits. Since the origins, the *status quo* within the region was built upon "[...] the Brazilian recognition of Argentina's relevance and the mitigation of Argentinian fears of having to coexist with a much-too-strong Brazil in the region"

²⁰ While Wheeler (2009) refuses the deterrent force of nuclear weapons in states' possession and describes the nuclear cooperation between Brazil and Argentina as based essentially on trust, what we can witness nowadays is a not full confidence and sincerity between both countries in terms of their nuclear possessions (Merke, 2013). An interesting description of the evolution of the nuclear cooperation between the once rival neighbours and then partners (Argentina and Brazil) has been presented by Matias Spektor, Rodrigo Mallea and Nicholas J. Wheeler (2012) in "Origins da Cooperação Nuclear. Uma história oral crítica entre Argentina e Brasil", a FGV, ICCs and Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Joint Conference. Rio de Janeiro, March 21- 23rd. Available online at: http://media.wix.com/ugd/7317d9_e4c50be00ecf4ce8a112305baa833288.pdf.

²¹ Bueno and Schenoni (2014) present an interesting analysis of the role of charismatic leaders *vis-à-vis* the public opinion, regarding the in advancement of the regional integration process, starting from the early years of the Brazil- Argentina rapprochement.

(Ferreira-Pereira, 2015:652). The implementation of a symmetric cooperation to integrate their productions and increase their economies resulted in a deepening and broadening of the fields of common action, and in a general regional stability and significant development, even if in many cases conditioned to the influences of the global markets and the most developed countries, which were exerting a strong pressure on the political and economic decisional process of Buenos Aires.

The weakness of Argentina increased the divergences with Brazil, above all when both governments opted for adopting harmful economic and financial measures to solve the continued loss of income and the slowing down of the development and growth (Spektor, 2002a.b), which was affected by the structural underdevelopment of the region (Cardoso, 2010: 95). In 1986, Argentina and Brazil introduced the Austral Plan and the Cruzado Plan, respectively, with the aim to reverse the worsening of the economic situation and to allow for the next step towards an integrated economic interaction (the ABEIP- Argentine-Brazilian Economic Integration Program) as well as the creation of a bilateral common market to increase the commercial exchanges and the volume of trade (Act for Argentine-Brazilian Integration). In the same year, the signature of the Argentine-Brazilian Friendship Act (*Acta de Amistad, 1986*) meant the most significant advancement of the bilateral cooperation, but the deep economic crises occurred at the end of the 1980s demonstrated the failure of the national macroeconomic policies and the constraints posed by the external debts of both actors (Manzetti, 1994 apud. Bueno and Schenoni, 2014). The slowing down of the economic integration, in 1988, did not seem to prevent both presidents to take again the initiative and issue about the elimination of trade barriers in a time of ten years. Nevertheless, both the difficult economic situation and the complexity of domestic politics, and especially the growing opposition within the parties and the public opinion, made it difficult the guarantee of the achieved successes and advance the integration process.

At the end of the 1980s integration was finally established itself as the key feature of the bilateral relationship. Some academics, among them Sergio Danese (2001) and Matias Spektor (2002b), have claimed that this relationship was far from presenting any altruistic, voluntary nor benevolent nature, neither a feeling of community: the implementation of a common project occurred essentially when all the engaged parties were sure that it served their own interests, therefore displaying pragmatic and realist motivations. As Darnton argued, in contrast to claims of scholars eager to highlight the democratic values and similarity stemming from the neoliberal economics, and arguing for the 'miracle' instruments for the Brazil-Argentina pacific rapprochement, the latter "occurred much earlier, under the military regimes[...], and economic integration proceeded under democratic governments[...] well before neoliberalism arrived" (Darnton, 2012: 120).

If the 1980s ended in an atmosphere of optimism regarding the achieved successes, the following decades saw the implementation of those outcomes in the form of common institutions. In 1990, Argentina and Brazil signed a former Treaty of Integration (Act of Buenos Aires) in which the new elected presidents, Carlos Menem and Fernando Collor de Mello respectively, convened the necessity of modernization and development of their economic and social sectors, as well as in challenging the international system by consolidating an economic regional bloc that would allow for the of both countries in the global economic system. What the Treaty had established may be resumed in the attempt of creating a bilateral Common Market (before December 1994) which would have required the macroeconomic policies' coordination, the reduction of tariffs and the establishment of agreements in strategic productive areas.

A year later, Uruguay and Paraguay joined the project by signing the Treaty of Asuncion (1991) and posing the first stone of the foundation of the regional integration process based on economic and trade aspects: MERCOSUR. As Argentina and Brazil were representing the largest territories and the highest economics and demographic rates, their engagement into the regional integration process has resulted in a more active engagement and participation. Moreover, their rapprochement has functioned as thrust for increasing trust and cooperation, but when Argentina and Brazil could not overcome divergences in their interests and points of view, the result was a freezing in their relationship and a consequent paralysis and halt of the whole regional project.

The decade of 1990s characterized regional project in terms of the application of neoliberal policies through which the South-America's destiny came to be linked to the implementation of those measures proposed by the Washington Consensus (Santoro, 2008). The Argentine President, Carlos Menem, had presented the neoliberal option as the only one able to save the country and incentivize the economic development, by supporting the US influence in the region and within its domestic structures (Gonzales, Moreira and Lerina, 2012). On the contrary, the Brazilian president Collor de Mello opted for a less radical economic strategy, in order to avoid economic losses and to continue attracting foreign direct investments (FDI). Despite all, the implementation of the neoliberal economic agenda became possible at the regional level due to the convergence of interests and ideology of both presidents, and gave birth to a free trade area- MERCOSUR- which came to feature as the top priority of its member-states' foreign policy (ibid. 2012).

The years of Menem's government have been characterized by a recognition of Argentine inferiority *vis-à-vis* its neighbour and the northern partners. At the same time, the country's leadership was searching for a broader field of autonomy in the development of its foreign policy, which eventually

resulted in a political approach resonating with the theory of the “Periphery Realism” proposed by Escudé.²² When it comes to a state of the periphery, autonomy does not mean freedom of action; on the contrary, it has been described in terms of the relative costs to use this autonomy to face a problem with major actors (Escudé, 1992). Thus, a country like Argentina, which presents a scarcity of material resources and power, should avoid striving towards autonomy, and maintain a low profile in those fields where the most powerful countries demonstrate interest, never contesting the hegemonic power and its projects. The Escudé's theory represents a renunciation of the possibility of a weak and periphery state producing its own initiatives and politics, reserving for it the inferior position in the international scenario (Creus, 2013).²³

With the end of the military regimes and the return to a democratic government, Argentina has attempted a revision of its foreign policy and international recognition through a change of the foreign policy attitude. The country has got engaged into the transformation of the international context and its structure, attempting to find a response to the internal crisis that had been afflicting the population for decades. Within this complex scenario, the presence of a competitive actor fighting for the strategic leadership of the regional space and sphere of influence became a significant matter in the Argentine presidents' agenda (Tokatlian, 2004). Argentina's foreign policy was oriented toward the reconstruction of its international role and prestige and the achievement of higher development levels. In doing that, the relationship with Brazil was not totally satisfactory neither convenient as it was promoting the achievement of mutual gains rather than strengthening the Argentina's relative power. Kenneth Waltz theorized that when states ask about how the gains from the potential cooperating would be divided, they are mainly worried about who will gain more, and not if both of them will get mutual gains. The growing power of Brazil since the 1950s was a vivid illustration of this theoretical proposition: Brasilia's policy was scaring Buenos Aires away. The latter was expecting a Brazilian inevitable, disproportionate use of its differential in terms of power capabilities aimed to damage or destroy the austral neighbour (Waltz, 1979:105). Therefore, it was deemed necessary for Argentina to look for a stronger and more powerful partner.

²² The autonomy of a state is strictly linked to the multidimensional character of power and it has to be defined in terms of real condition and possibility of the actors. The owning of power is necessary for those states that want to act in the international scene in which they should compete with other existing powers, not just in terms of military capacities, but also in economic and bland capacities (Creus, 2013). The concept of “bland power” has been created by Joseph Nye (1990) to refer to the capacity of a state to influence other's behaviour through the “co-optation” and the “attraction”, rather than recur to the use of hard power and then coercion (violence, payments and compensations). It makes a large use of non-material resources, as for example: culture, values, domestic policy, attitude and so forth; in order to form other's preferences.

²³ For further readings on the “Periphery Realism”, see also: Escudé, C. 2012. *Principios de realismo periférico: vigencia de una teoría argentina ante el ascenso de China*, Buenos Aires: Lumière 2012.

To reallocate the country in a position of international prestige, Menem made of the United States as its “strategic partner”, by establishing what the Chancellor Guido di Tella has defined “carnal relations” with the northern power (apud. Candeas, 2005).²⁴ Thus, all along the 1990s this Argentina's policy of “automatic alignment with the United States seemed to distance the two South-American friends” (Oelsner, 2003:202). Furthermore, the achievement of the status of 'Extra-NATO ally' was viewed with suspicion by Brazil, which, in 1994, saw its position opposed by Argentina in one of Brazil's most important projects of international projection: the achievement of a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).²⁵ Although the continued cooperation-oriented presidential rhetoric and visits based on the concept of *strategic partnership*, the bilateral relationship entered a moment of confrontation, which could not but affect the young regional integration project.²⁶

2.2 The regional integration in South America: following a global trend

The evolution from cooperation to an integration process in Brazil-Argentina relationship, which underwent a change from the bilateral to a multilateral regional structure was also a consequence of structural change of the global governance and its mechanisms. The end of the Cold War gave renewed vigour to the process of regionalism, which came to be considered as an irreversible and inevitable phenomenon spreading in response to the broader level of interactions among international actors and the deeper interdependence favoured by the worldwide movement toward integration.

The end of the bipolar structure of the international system and the rise of globalisation contributed to revitalizing the regional trends adopted in the 1960s, which were now reproduced in a new form, while being reflected in a revival of regionalism theories based on critical approaches. The rapid transition from a unipolar international system dominated by the U.S. hegemonic power to a

²⁴ The strengthen of the Argentina-US relations was renamed by the Minister of External Relation of Argentina, Guido de Tella, as “*relaciones carnales*”. This definition was describing the new link of the austral country with the United States, during the decade of 1990 and the government of Carlos Menem, in which Argentina moved from its Latin-American tradition to submit its foreign policy to the necessities of Washington. For more details: <http://argentina.ar/2013/12/05/pais-24129-relaciones-carnales-el-vinculo-con-estados-unidos-en-la-decada-del-90.php>. Accessed October 20th, 2015.

²⁵ In the case of an institutional reform of the Organization of United Nations and its institutions, including the Security Council, Brasilia presented its candidacy for the allocation of a permanent seat within it. The country met the opposition of the neighbour countries who agreed with the arguments presented by Argentina, to consider an alternative reform draft for the organization based on the revisited logic of the “rotation mechanism”, underpinning the rationale of allocating the non-permanent seats to individual countries (Amorim, 2003).

²⁶ The “strategic partnership” between Argentina and Brazil was established in 1997, when both countries converged in their external interests through the signature of the Declaration of Rio de Janeiro. The “strategic alliance” will be reaffirmed later in 2003, with the implementation of the *Buenos Aires Consensus* between the presidents Nestor Kirchner and Luis I. Lula da Silva. Once more, the leaders' charismatic personality has been recognized as fundamental in the process of rapprochement between Brasilia and Buenos Aires and in the “building of trusting interstate relations” (Hoffman, 2006:26).

multipolar configuration characterized by many poles acting as centrifugal forces in the global system has strengthened a trend toward a “more regionalized international order” (Buzan, 2011; Acharya, 2014). Those centrifugal forces have in many cases been considered emerging economic countries, which aware of their economic and political resources were able to distance themselves from the centre in order to become the poles of the regionally restructured international system.

The return to a multipolar system came to be characterized by a non-concentration of power resources and therefore by increasing conflictual relations among the members of the international system: multipolarity reduces the efficacy of the mechanisms of international consensus while augmenting the importance of a major local integration in order to reduce systemic uncertainty. The structural changes of the international system were therefore forcing states to join others in order to be able to compete and survive in the interdependent global world, presenting integration as the most viable among all strategies: by acting in a bloc, the countries could benefit of a major international projection and an increase in their weight in multilateral negotiations, through the strength of both common positions and mutual economic development (Kunrath 2010:29).

The creation of a regional integration process in the South-America seemed to succeed only in the last decade of the twentieth century, although in this direction had been made before. The dream of a united Hispanic-American region, destined to a pacific and successful life was not new in the history of the Southern continent: Bolivar's dream about the creation of a "Great Colombia" arose during the time of the Latin-American independence movements promoting the patriotic ideal of reunification and pacification of South-American countries based on the values of democracy, economic and political independence and freedom from the European imperial powers as well as any eventual threat posed by the United States' imperialism. The history of the American subcontinent has showed that reaching consensus among states about any political, economic and social question was a difficult task: all the efforts of "*libertadores*" and all those engaged personalities to proceed to the unification and the creation of a regional integration project were rather characterized by divisions and divergences than cohesion, leading eventually to a long period of political, social and economic instability as never experienced during the European colonization.²⁷

²⁷ Notwithstanding the engagement and the charismatic action of Simón Bolívar in the attempt to realize his integration dream, many influential personalities - José de San Martín, Francisco de Miranda and José María Samper among others- had followed the same ambitious project of creating a "*Grande Patria*", without however, this initiative leading to any successful outcome (Santarén, 2012). The political, economic and social instability of the Latin-American countries, following their independence, was not allowing for a coordinated effort against the one that was recognized as the common enemy and threat: the United States. Neither the following attempts of integration (both the ALALC and the following version, ALADI), that were based on the neoliberal policies and the economic integration of markets derived by the spread of globalization, were able to overcome the structural differences among each South-American state and reduce the conflict, by creating a common identity of Latin-America and South-America.

Despite the mistakes and many unsuccessful attempts, South-American states have not lost their integration motivation. In the 1960s, the global trade increased due to the spread of the liberal ideas and the desire of imitating those states that had already inserted themselves in the international economic scenario. In those years, South-American countries were not experiencing the same economic growth of the rest of the world (Vacchino, 1987)²⁸, because of the domestic difficulties of the countries in exporting goods among themselves and with extra-regional markets, derived by the strong dependency of their economics to the Import-Substituting Industrialization (ISI- model).²⁹

Promoted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean - ECLAC or CEPAL- the ISI model was an alternative for correcting the unfairness of the globalization and the South-American structuralism, placing the emphasis on orienting the production to the internal markets and industrializing the region (Cardoso, 2010:97).³⁰ Unfortunately, the proposed and rapidly implemented model did fit a strong and interlinked trade among the neighbours, as it was aimed at reducing the imports while developing a national “protected industrialization” (Lima and Hirst, 2006:23). The result was an unsustainable and highly expensive production among isolated states, that had been considered as detrimental for the integration process and the single domestic development as well.³¹

²⁸ In the post- World War II the economic and the development of Latin-American countries suffered of a slower growth if compared to those of the other regions of the globe. As analysed by Vacchino (1987), the Latin-American exports increased of 50% in the period between 1950 and 1962, while the ones of other regional integration processes were more than six times higher than those of the subcontinent: by citing the examples offered by the author, the CEE exportation increased about 300% and the Japan ones of 560%, in the same period.

²⁹ The Import-Substitution Industrialization (ISI) Model was an economic policy developed in Latin America after the Great Depression of 1930s which became significant in the years that had followed the World War II when the exports of primary products from Southern countries was reduced. Its aim was to promote the domestic industrial production, in order to reduce the dependency of the country from foreign markets and from negative external trade influences. It was set to promote economic development through policies and mechanisms of subsidization, nationalization, increasing taxation and application of protectionist measures. Theoretically grounded in the “Latin-American Structuralism” developed in 1949, by the Prebisch-Singer dependency thesis, the ISI model was supposed to substitute the commonly accepted Export-Oriented Industrialization system, and establish some “vertical linkages”, fostering the development, in poorest economies, as well allow the industrial sector to use the primary goods produced domestically.

³⁰ This economic model of development was strictly linked to the perception of the region's under-development as caused by structural inefficacy of its participation in the global trade and was oriented to subvert the North-South or Centre-periphery reallocation, which were characterizing the relations of poorest states with the richest ones. The related Dependency theory has been developed from the dichotomy between centre and periphery, North and South, developed and underdeveloped countries; and how the relationships between these two opposing elements converged in creating a vicious cycle that forces the states of the periphery into a continuous underdevelopment and indebtedness as they enter the open world system. Eventually, this prevents them to become self-sufficient and makes them detached from the centre. The role of the Southern continent was the one of producing primary goods (also known as *commodities*) which were sold to the countries of the centre in change of manufactures, and contributed to a continuum of gains/losses in the face of the international trade dynamics and limited development of their economies (Furtado, 1967; Cardoso, 2010:95).

³¹ Although this economic model could be positive for large scale economies, its benefits were not available in the long run, when the countries were not experiencing those advantages and gains derived by the specialization of production and the trade in an open economy. On the other hand, it would have a negative impact on the smaller economies that were already suffering for implementing a national industrial sector.

In 1960, Latin-American states promoted the creation of a free trade area, originated by the Treaty of Montevideo: the LAFTA (Latin-American Free Trade Association, or ALALC in its Spanish and Portuguese acronym).³² Despite the many efforts implemented, the association did not result in a successful project because of the political and economic instability suffered by many countries. The difficult and violent management of domestic politics, that in that period used very often to recur to military coups, and the augmenting of their deficits and international debts, did not allow for the growth, the development and the making the most of the benefits of the free market (Almeida, 2009). All these occurrences pushed Latin-American countries into a period of profound crises during the 1980's, subsequently known as the "*Lost Decade*", or the years of the "*Aprendizagem Dolorosa*" -(Sorrowful Learning) (Hage, 2013:157).

Even if the LAFTA had contributed in the previous years to increase the free trade, it had showed its rigidity in deepening the integration process within the borders of the region itself, due to the strong commitment to multilateral mechanisms and instruments that the former treaty required. With the implementation of LAIA (or ALADI, Spanish acronym for Association of Latin-America Integration) in 1980, the Latin-American integration was on the way to find more functional solutions to the many difficulties that the intraregional trade was facing. The promotion of this more flexible integration would have offered to states the possibility of attempting and joining parallel experiments of sub-regional integration simultaneously to the regional one (Almeida, 2007b:61). The current sub-regional schemes existing in Latin America were all converging within the LAIA legal framework, which allowed to its participants to proceed to the signature of "limited scope" (partial) agreements of economic complementation. This opened the way to the creation of preferential areas of trade and tariffs, first bilaterally or among a reduced group of states, to later expand to the rest (Pereyra, 2001), proceeding to the multilateralization of the agreement.

In the 1980s, a resurgence of Regionalism took place on the global scale and the phenomenon was not passed unnoticed in South-American countries. The prime explanations for this revival have been linked to the spread of globalization and the strong pressures it was posing upon states and their economies in order to adapt themselves to the rules of the free and global market; and to the diffused belief that cooperation and liberalization could be effective in fostering South-American countries' integration into the global system. In particular, the restoration of Regionalism in the sub-continent may

³² The Treaty of Montevideo (1960) led to the creation of a free trade area among Latin-American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela), who committed themselves to implement a common market based on a process of gradual integration of domestic economics and therefore the dependency of their national developments, in a time period of 20 years.

be related to the idea that a greater and wider integration among neighbours could strength and offer protection to the fragile and new born democracies, restored in that decade within the region.³³

It was in this moment of the history that, within the normative framework of the partial agreements established under the umbrella of LAIA, Brazil and Argentina started their rapprochement by signing an economic agreement (AAP.ACE.n°14).³⁴ The latter aimed at first to create a bilateral common market and later to expand it to the neighbours, with the signature of a new “limited scope” agreement: the AAP.ACE.n°18 (in 1991) brought MERCOSUR under the aegis of LAIA, which was transformed into a bureaucratic agency of registration of intra-regional agreements. At the same time that a process of regional integration was attempting to be implemented, new schemes of sub-regional integration were presented: some broader, as in the case of MERCOSUR; and some less so, as within the Andean Community of Nations (CAN)- as well as projects with a more extensive capacity of inclusion and trade exchanges, like the United States' proposal for the creation of a Free Trade Area of Americas – FTAA (Almeida, 2009).³⁵ On the same line of reasoning, Andrew Hurrell presented the regionalism in the Americas as divided into two different and broadening areas of interest: on one hand the regional cooperation and projects of economic integration within the Latin-American states, and on the other hand the regionalisation of the Western Hemisphere as a whole, through US-led Inter-American and Pan-American initiatives (Hurrell, 1995).

The sub-regional integration processes established in those years were characterised by divergent answers and competitive attitude toward those fundamental issues of regionalism. The differences concerned the position related to the international great powers, the role of the regional paymaster, and the economic and developmental model adopted by them were not converging in reaching a 'minimum common denominator' that could give cohesion to the regional process itself (Gardini, 2010; Briceño Ruiz, 2014b). These divergences have resulted in a weak structured South-American region, which consists of various integration processes developed in different fields: economic, political and security. As few of them have been created at the end of last century (as in the

³³ Argentina (in 1983), was the first country to return to a democratic system; Brazil and Uruguay in 1985; and Paraguay only in 1989; just to cite the former member-states of our subject of analysis.

³⁴ The Agreement of Economic Complementation n°14 is a "limited scope" agreement, signed by Argentina and Brazil in 1990, with the ambitious program of facilitating the creation of a common market and promote the economic complementation in the industrial and technological sector in order to maximize the costs and the mobilization of the factors of production, reach a large-scale efficiency and attract and stimulate investments.

³⁵ The FTAA (Free Trade Area of the Americas) was a process of regional integration, launched in 1994 with the main objective to join together 34 states of the American continent, from North to South. The purpose of United States was to integrate these countries which were experiencing serious economic and financial difficulties, during 1980s, in a process of regional integration which was going to establish the U.S. hegemony over the Southern and Caribbean countries through the implementation of the Washington Consensus. The latter was based on the neoliberal economic model to help the Latin-American economies to be competitive in the global market.

case of MERCOSUR and CAN) and have gone through an exchange of member states and phases of both successes and defaults. Most of the currently more active regional processes - UNASUR, ALBA and Pacific Alliance (AP)- were founded at the rise of the new millennium, when the changes in the international system came to impose new challenges to the regions and were mainly developed around specific ideological issues, which in many cases consisted in the attempt to maintain a minimum of political and economic autonomy and to resist the pressures coming from the northern actor (Mattli, 1999; Bouzas and Soltz, 2001).

The continuing attempt of the United States to exercise its influence and hegemony over its 'backyard' has resulted in a strenuous defence and promotion of the Free Trade Area of Americas that, despite all the US efforts, has met the opposition of many South-American countries, above all Brazil and Venezuela, for geopolitical and ideological reasons, respectively. The refusal of the rest of South-America countries to sign the United States' proposal in 2005 resulted in a strategic concert between Brasilia and Buenos Aires, although Argentina's government was much more linked to the northern power than the other state. The opposition of both the major countries of the South to an asymmetrical integration of the continent, which would have been dangerous and inefficient for the southern part if the FTAA was not going to be conceived as a flexible institution, led the United States to abandon the regional project, and to proceed with the bilateral free trade agreements toward its continental objectives (Sombra Saraiva, 2004). Although the centuries have passed with the attempts and efforts repeating themselves over the years, the South-American integration still represents a 'work in progress'.

2.2.1 The emergence of MERCOSUR

In the preamble of the Treaty that institutionalised the integration process in South-America, it has been stated that external events have played a key role in shaping the evolution of regional cooperation that resulted in an appropriate response to the international trends in order to secure to member states a proper place in the international economy. The origins of MERCOSUR can be traced back to the 1980's, when the debt crises of Mexico (started in 1982) had provoked some changes in the international and regional context, reflecting significantly the political and economic fields of the Southern hemisphere and the implementation of the "Open Regionalism" (Onuki, 2006).

The collapse of intra-regional trade flows had contributed to the erosion and the stagnation of the previous integration processes and created vertical subdivisions of the Latin-American regionalism, which came since that moment to be structured around minor spatial areas: Central America,

Caribbean and South-America, each of them presenting its own regional leadership. Abraham Lowenthal considered this three-parties configuration as more viable for the regional integration, taking into account the geopolitical role played by the most influential countries in the region (Mexico, Venezuela and Brazil) and its geopolitical and strategic interest as well as weight in the subcontinent and in each area (2006).³⁶

Joseph Tulchin (1996) affirmed that the South-American countries have understood that the convergence of their interests and the cooperation among them was the most successful way to protect themselves from the Northern influence and U.S. hegemony, and it was from this point that their regional policy has been changed and redesigned. The diplomatic rapprochement between the two main powers in South America, Brazil and Argentina, contributed to finally propose a project that would have represented a qualitative step forward for the future of the regional integration. With the signature of the Act of Buenos Aires (in 1990), both countries engaged in the creation of a common market based on the gradual and flexible integration of the different sectors of their economies first, to reach later an harmonization and a consensus both in the political and social field. This bilateral project was soon transformed in a multilateral and regional one through the extension to other countries, while at the same time Argentina's and Brazil's common concern. The rationale of the attempt was not to repeat the same mistakes of the previous regional integration processes- LAFTA and LAIA (Lafer, 2014).

An organized regional structure would have guaranteed the development of the South-American economies and, at the same time, strengthened the influence and the autonomous presence of those countries in the international system. The isolated action in a *bloc-to-bloc* global competition would have made the achievement of the domestic development goals difficult (Candeas, 2010:145). Thus, the cooperation among the countries of the sub-continent and their joining in a common project represented a way for the international participation of those actors, both individually and grouped together as a region.

Signed in 1991, the Treaty of Asuncion have declared the birth of a neoliberal economic integration- the Common Market of the South-America (MERCOSUR) among Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay

* Raul Bernal-Meza adopted the same line of reasoning by describing the changed concepts of regionalism and integration in Latin America based nowadays on the 'spheres of influence': Mexico would therefore start acting as the leader of the Central region, but would be subjected to the hegemony of United States in a broader area including the Northern hemisphere too; while the Caribbean would be attempting to establish a new area which would be claiming its own integration process perhaps under Venezuela's leadership, owing to the double personality and geography of Caracas that consider itself as both a South-American and a Caribbean country. South-America, in its turn, forms an autonomous area of regional cooperation under the necessary, but difficult implementation of Brazilian leadership (Bernal-Meza, 2013:645).

and Uruguay- while also establishing its objectives, the instruments and the timing for its evolution.³⁷ The scope of MERCOSUR was determined by the aspiration to eliminate trade barriers among the member-states, to favour the gradual process towards the free trade area, while respecting the asymmetries and the necessary time of all member-states to achieve the harmonization of their policies. Candeas declared that, in order to guarantee a successful implementation of a regional project, not only political convergence among countries was necessary, but also a greater effort to build a structural stability in the relationship between the member-states (2010:145).

The relationship between Brazil and Argentina, initiated in the previous century, continued to be developed over the years, presenting particular characteristics if considered in comparison with those adopted by both countries with the smaller member-states, and showing, by the way, that the bilateral dimension and the integration process could live together within the MERCOSUR framework, in spite of the enormous day-by-day challenges. Moreover, MERCOSUR has experienced many difficulties, particularly those related to the harmonisation of the regional and integration mechanisms and outcomes. The almost common decision of the four founding countries to create and maintain the integration project as an intergovernmental structure in a state of low institutionalization has been considered a weakness and a threat to the project itself, which met many obstacles in overcoming the national political boundaries (Malamud and Schmitter, 2007).

After the initial period of gradual adaptation of the economics and policies of each states, with the adoption of the CET and then the creation of a free market area, MERCOSUR became a Customs Union (1995), although still incomplete (Barbosa, 2007). The economic features of the integration were still in discussion, as well as the institutional dimension: the integration process turned out to be a challenging process among its member-states in proceeding with a full liberalization of the national economics and in reaching a consensus over a common institutional reform that should transform the intergovernmental structure into a supranational one. The project of economic integration has been over the years accompanied by horizontal and vertical expansion: the former means the enlargement of the project and the adhesion of new member-states, while the vertical evolution of MERCOSUR describes

³⁷ The article 1 of the Treaty depicted the sub-regional bloc as a common market based on four main objectives: free movement of goods and services and factors of production, establishment of a common external tariff (CET), coordination of relevant policies and harmonization of legislation. The timing for implementing the integration was of four years, for Argentina and Brazil; while for both the smaller countries- Uruguay and Paraguay- a limit of five years was established, taken into consideration the structural characteristics and deficits that they presented (Treaty of Assuncion, 1991).

the change from an exclusive economic project of neoliberal policies' implementation to a form of integration which has included a social and political area of intervention.³⁸

A lot of positive development took place in the first two decades of integration process, but the continuous swift from the economic to the political, or social, or institutional sector, without reaching any significant objective or definitive application, have increased the complexity of the process and undermined its future development.

2.2.2 The evolution of MERCOSUR: progresses and stagnation during the 1990s

The years that have followed the institutional birth of MERCOSUR have been characterized by a long and slow process which passed through phases of enlargement, deepening, crises and stagnation, moment of relaunching and a "silent mode". In the initial period of four years, that could be marked by the signature of the Treaty of Asuncion (1991) and the Protocol of Ouro Preto (1994), MERCOSUR's development was marked by the consolidation of its structures and working mechanisms. This period of institutionalization was oriented toward the preparation of a functional ground for the future of the project and presented a significant development of the integration from an economic point of view, whereas the end of the twentieth century, and especially the first decade of the new millennium were oriented toward the creation of a more political and social profile.

In the period of transition and adaptation of the national governments to the programme of tariff reduction and trade policies' coordination, MERCOSUR was able to transform itself from a simple project dominated by its two major countries to a complex integration initiative, until it started to move to the phase of the Customs Union, even if imperfect yet, supporting the aspirations to later become a fully fledged Common Market. The automatic programme of trade liberalization reported in the 'Timetable of Las Leñas' (1992)³⁹ proceeded, semester by semester, by covering all the sectors and the products, with the exception of those listed as sensitive for the domestic economies of member-states (as for example some products of the food and chemistry industry, tobacco, plastic, textiles, metals, electronic and transport material)⁴⁰ and resulted in a significant increase of trade exchanges, as well as

³⁸ Venezuela joined MERCOSUR in 2012 and Bolivia finally obtained the full membership during the Brasilia Summit of 17th July 2015 where the presidents of the five states signed a protocol of accession. Bolivia was one of the first states, jointly with Chile, to get the status of associated members to the organization, in 1996, followed by Peru (2003), Colombia and Ecuador (2004). Mexico also received the observer status in 2004.

³⁹ The "Timetable of Las Leñas" (1992) represents a systematic reallocation of duties that the states had to accomplish to respect the objectives of MERCOSUR. This roadmap was covering the most different sectors of economics and represented the member-states trust in the integration project.

⁴⁰ For the nomenclature of the number code of the products presented in the lists of exceptions of MERCOSUR member-states see: http://tecnus.cnt.br/biblioteca/tabela_de_tarifa_externa_comum.pdf. Argentina's exceptions list is available at

in the GDP growth, in the period between 1991 and 1995, later reduced drastically by the end of the century in the context of the economic and financial crises in the region (Baumann and Mussi, 2007).⁴¹

Proceeding to the implementation of the legal and functional foundations of the process, the Protocol of Brasilia (1991) established a mechanism of dispute settlement which was activated when necessary, to find a solution to economic and trade divergences among countries, implementing the liberalization of trade and the objectives of the Treaty of Asuncion or pursuing tariff reduction on national products. After the first trials, however, material failures were noted in the Protocol, illustrating the need for a better structured system in order to ensure the correct interpretation, application and enforcement of the fundamental instruments for the MERCOSUR (Octaviano Martins, 2006 apud. Chain et al. 2014:136). In 1994, the Protocol of Ouro Preto⁴² defined the institutional structure of MERCOSUR as previously decided in the chapter two of the foundation's treaty, and gave a juridical personality to the institution (art. 34).⁴³

From the adoption of this first set of primary law document, the Common Market of the Southern Cone had fostered the creation of regional institutions without, however, attributing them any functional procedures and defining scope to improve their efficacy. One of the main problems was the intergovernmental integration structure, which reduced all the decision-making process to the national choice of member-states, rather than attributing any function or duty to the created entities. This has

<http://www.aladi.org/nsfaladi/textacdos.nsf/5e800d33de11b31203256a65006bccd4/d709946d955485d503257742004a98230OpenDocument>; while for the Brazilian one see: <http://www.aladi.org/nsfaladi/textacdos.nsf/5e800d33de11b31203256a65006bccd4/358f439c706dca9403257742004a9eab?OpenDocument> . Accessed March 20th, 2015.

⁴¹ Comparing the average levels of 1990-1992 with those of 2002-2004, trade relations increased about 173% for Argentina and 146% for Brazil. For Uruguay and Paraguay the results are lower but still significant, certifying the achievement of respectively a 44% and 91% of increasing variation of intra-regional trade. According to CEPAL of 2005, the annual growth of Argentina (+ 5,8%) and Brazil (+3,1%) was significant if compared with that of the previous period when it was negative for Argentina (-0,7%) and Brazil (1,6%). The following years would not be marked by success; both countries would reach the 2,4 % and the 2,2% of growth in the period between 1996 and 2005 (apud Baumann and Mussi 2007: 29- 51).

⁴² The Protocol of Ouro Preto (1994) refers to the institutional structure of MERCOSUR which is composed by the following organisms: the Common Market Council (CMC); the Common Market Group (GMC); the Commission of Trade (CCM); the Joint Parliamentary Committee (CPC); the Economic and Social Consultative Forum (FCES) and the Administrative Secretary of MERCOSUR (SAM). The first three organisms have a intergovernmental nature, possess decisional power (art.2) and issue binding decisions, resolutions and directives. The CMC is the superior organism of MERCOSUR and displays of the strategic-decisional power. It leads the political process of integration and secures the respect of the treaties and the achievement of the fixed objectives for the creation of the Common Market (art.3). The GMC is the executive organism of MERCOSUR, it fixes the programmes of work and achievement of objectives; supervising the activities of the SAM and approving the Internal Regulation of CCM and FCES (art.14). The CCM is the organism engaged to assist the GMC in applying the instruments of the common trade policies accorded by member-states for the functioning of the customer union, and in revising the subjects related to the intra and extra-zone trade (art.16). The rest of the organisms works in giving support and technical assistance to the GMC and CMC.

⁴³ By acquiring the juridical personality "[MERCOSUR] may, in the exercise of its powers, perform all acts necessary for the realization of its objectives, in particular contract, acquire or dispose of movable and immovable property, appear in court, hold funds and make transfers" (art.35- Protocol of Ouro Preto, 1994).

frequently occurred because the decision-making process of the institution operates through consensus, which implied a “missing of opposition” (Barbosa, 2007), that has bound the implementation of common policies and actions into the national jurisdiction, as in many cases the direct application and effect of the Community secondary law (decisions, resolutions and directives) results to be in contradiction with the domestic juridical systems that stipulates the ratification of external norms (as the regional one could be considered) in their own legislation. Thus, is it impossible to establish any supremacy or direct effect of MERCOSUR law, as the only obligation that states have is to transpose the institution's decision into the domestic set of rules. This allowed some scholars to argue that in any case “the effectiveness of the jurisdiction depends on domestic mechanisms and interests” (Motta Veiga, 2004:13-14), and all states have the choice and the opportunity to frequently defect.

A primordial example of this states' behaviour was the incapacity of states to respect and follow the determined schedule for the reduction of tariffs defined with high precision in the Treaty of Asuncion. The treaty allowed for the possibility for states to define exceptions to the liberalization process above all in those sectors that were most vulnerable. In sum, the South-America Common Market was, without any doubt, moving in a circle as it presented a very low institutionalization, as well as delegation and obligation procedure while at the same time being strictly submitted to the interests and decisions of its member-states, whose governments had the possibility to constitute a second veto to let national interests and priorities to come up- above all in the incorporation of common law.

In 1998, the member-states (joined by the Republic of Chile and the Republic of Bolivia) signed the Protocol of Ushuaia to reaffirm their commitment to the democratic cause, considered indispensable to maintain the peace in the region as well as the existence and development of MERCOSUR.⁴⁴ In case of rupture of the democratic clause from one of the member-states, the article 5 of the Protocol allowed for the suspension of the participation in the integration bodies and the abolition of rights and obligations arising from these processes. The impeachment of the President of Paraguay, Fernando Lugo, occurred in 2012 and lasted until the democratic system was fully restored in the country, could have shown the right application of this rule within MERCOSUR, if only the other member-states would have respected the established procedure and time to proceed with the expulsion

⁴⁴ In 2011, a second Protocol on the commitment to democracy and the respect of democratic values and institutions was adopted by MERCOSUR member-states and the rest of South American countries: Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. All of these countries, together with Suriname and Guyana, joined the Brazilian project of a broader regional integration of South America: UNASUR, in 2008.

of the partner. In that case, the political power demonstrated its superiority over the juridical one, as the Uruguayan president, José Mujica, declared (Mujica apud. Carta Capital, 2012).⁴⁵

To complete the institutional structure of the integration in the Southern Cone, the new millennium introduced some mechanisms, notwithstanding the complex financial regional circumstances. The year 2002 was characterized by the Protocol of Olivos, aimed to reform the dispute settlement procedures of the previous document of Brasília (1991) and establish the Permanent Review Court as the ultimate level of jurisdiction, allowing claims from private or commercial member states' actors, represented by their respective national branch of the CMG. Disputes within the scope of this Protocol may also be subject to the dispute settlement system of the WTO or other preferential trade agreements. However, once the dispute settlement procedure is initiated, none of the parties any more has mechanisms established by the other forums regarding the same subject at their disposal (art.1 par.2 Protocol of Olivos, 2011), in contrast to previously.⁴⁶ The double submission (to both the WTO and the Permanent Review Court) of dispute settlement fora was *de facto* weakening the integration process of MERCOSUR and demonstrating a loss of credibility of the institution within the region and the international system, apart from instilling the political fatigue and increasing the cost of a dispute resolution process (Chain et al. 2014:148).

The evolution of MERCOSUR has been marked by successes, especially in its initial period and above all in trade area. Of course, both the major economies have extracted most benefits from the increased trade and economic exchanges. Unlikely, the abrupt interruption of this stream of optimism was influenced by the macroeconomic crises experienced first by Brazil (1999) and later by Argentina (2002) (Dantas and Lemos, 2013:479-481).

The primary integration draft did not just refer to the construction of a simple free trade area, but it stipulated a rapid evolution into a deeper project of political, economic and cultural integration: aspects that were already included in the Treaty of Buenos Aires (1990): "[T]he dream was almost becoming true, but something went wrong during next years" (Sarney, 2005). The Brazilian President continued affirming that the original conception of integration was based on a gradual integration of individual sectors, in a functional way, in order to eliminate and level out the asymmetries among

⁴⁵ Available at: <http://www.cartacapital.com.br/internacional/entrada-da-venezuela-no-mercosul-e-resposta-a-queda-de-lugo-diz-mujica/>. Accessed May 25th, 2015.

⁴⁶ Chain et al. (2014) study on the regional integration divergences between Brazil and Argentina and the trade dispute cases presented at both the WTO and the MERCOSUR, demonstrates the weakness and the difficulties of the bloc in terms of the jurisdictional authority. The three case studies analysed in the contribution, namely the DS190- textile sector case, the DS241-Chicken case, and the DS355- case of PET resins, showed that when MERCOSUR resolution was not satisfactory for one of the parties, the dispute settlement moved to the WTO. Most of the time, the decision of the latter was accepted in case of divergent rulings.

partners. In fact, the initial agreement between the presidents Sarney and Alfonsín sought to establish a commission of integration, far more global and deeper than the one accomplished immediately after, in 1990-91, during the governments of Collor de Mello in Brazil and Carlos Menem in Argentina. The change of purpose and vision that the two presidents adopted, led to the inevitable political and economic change in the spirit of the neoliberal policies and the Washington Consensus: MERCOSUR was evolving towards a trade area, nothing more than this (Caetano, 2007).⁴⁷

Some features of this liberal model can also be found in the form of the institution conceived between the lines of its own founding treaty: the institutional structures clearly intergovernmental, which one could also call “inter-presidential” (Malamud, 2005), and an exclusively commercial integration. It followed that these low institutional mechanisms were structured to be necessary and essential to an integration project which goal was mainly to give priority to economic and trade matters (Bouzas and Soltz, 2001; Caetano, 2007). The following governments appeared to limit the integration to a mere free trade area, thereby circumventing its original main objective. The central key-word “Common Market” in the integration discourse was substituted with “zero tariff” (Malamud, 2005).

The major steps toward the regional integration occurred between 1991-1994 in a context of macroeconomic crises and domestic bargaining processes between private sector and the government in both Brazil and Argentina (Perales, 2003). The same events and causes re-emerged few years later at the beginning of the twenty-first century when MERCOSUR started its resurgence after the worst period experienced by the common market and its major components: Brazil (1999) and Argentina (2001). The alternation between progresses and moments of paralysis and stagnation continued to accompany the first decade of the regional integration process. Achieving the initial objectives and meeting of the established integration deadlines failed more than just once. For instance, the creation of a Customs Union as a prime step to later transform the integration in a Common Market was delayed in the years. The gradual reduction of the number of products excluded from trade liberalization- because

⁴⁷ With the rise of neoliberal government in 1990's- a central period for globalization and economic interdependency- all the forms of integration created in Latin America were oriented toward the economic liberalization, implementation of economies of scale, the increasing exchanges of goods and investments based mainly on the neoliberal logic of the Washington Consensus, that let the most recent presidents to abandon the gradual and structural integration thought and started by presidents Raul Alfonsín and José Sarney in 1985. Notwithstanding, MERCOSUR differed from other regional experiences of those years because of the limits posed to the neoliberal instruments by those forms of public intervention that national governments, in particular the Brazilian one, adopted. With President Collor de Mello, Brazil did not fully accept the idea of submit itself to foreign economic suggestions, preferring to respond to its own regional strategic interests (Briceño,2007) and demonstrating that the idea of a new national project of development was still alive within both Brazil's society and institutions (Hirst, 1994 apud. Ibid , 2007:192). Avoiding a complete submission of MERCOSUR to the rules dictated by the Washington Consensus, Brazil had opted for choosing personally the most adequate methods and ways to implement in its territory and in the region an industrial model that will allow national industries and entrepreneurs to participate to the new and open international economic context (Vasquez, 1998 apud ibid. 2007). Contrary to the interventionist measures of Brazil, Menem decided to opt for the privatization of Argentina's economic sectors.

considered sensible goods- was supposed to be completed before the end of the transitory period (so at the end of 1995), but it still remained in force and before the end of each new term, came to be postponed again. The 2014 of the 'definitive' full trade liberalization and the application of the Common External Tariff for all the MERCOSUR imports, to be completed by the end of 2015 (December 31st), orchestrated by Argentina and Brazil, and later other member-states (CMC/DEC. N° 58/10), is illustrative in this respect.⁴⁸

2.3 The difficult construction of the regional leadership: misunderstandings as hindrances to the consensus.

" We inherited a fight from the Iberian Peninsula [...] We had the idea that those who dominate the region of Prata dominate the heart of America. This was the origin of a rivalry nourished by the history but which did not own concrete basis in reality"
(José Sarney, 2005)

The Brazil-Argentina rapprochement allowed for the creation of a pacific inter-state relations in the region and was supposed to foster the international activity of both the major countries of South-America, reinforcing their bargaining capacity *vis-à-vis* great powers (Vigevani and Ramanzini Jr, 2014). The creation of regional institutions was also sought to allow those weaker states to better cope with the competitive international environment (Fawcett, 2005). Based on the development logic that foresaw the stimulation of the state's modernization and the competitive participation of countries into the international system (Peña, 1991 apud. Vigevani and Ramanzini Jr. 2014), the progress of MERCOSUR assumed the character of a common imperative, not only for Brazil and Argentina, but for the other member-states and the region as a whole (Lafer, 2009: 60). The regional integration project was considered not only as an economic, but mainly as a political project of the Brazilian international strategy and an important instrument in the pursuit of national autonomy (Vigevani and Cepaluni, 2007), eventually helping the participants to avoid the relation of dependency from the influential external countries.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ While for Argentina and Brazil, the list of exception could include no more than 100 items and the temporary limit is considered the end of 2015; for Uruguay the list could refer to 225 codes to be liberalized before December 31st, 2017; and Paraguay, 649 items by 31 December, 2019. The full text of the MERCOSUR decision is available online at: http://www.mercosur.int/innovaportal/file/2810/1/DEC_58-10_PT_lista%20de%20excecoes.pdf . Accessed April 2nd, 2015.

⁴⁹ Despite the strong link of the region to the northern great power (the United States), a major political autonomy has continued to be preserved all along the years, in particular within the Brazil's diplomatic action, as it came to be considered a specific mark in accessing the multilateralism and the international system.

The creation of a regional project in South-America was structured around the parity of conditions between the two major countries of the geographical space. The bilateral and later regional integration was initially designed as an approach typical of the defensive realism: Brazil, aware of its limited capacities and the relative scarcity of resources and coercive power, when compared to the Northern hegemon, attempted to find a position in the international system by acting in a bloc, together with similar actors. Due to the absence of 'hard power' and a strong capacity of impose its plans over the others and due to its position of a middle power country, Brazil has promoted integration as a way to guarantee a minimum of equilibrium in the achievement of gains. Many scholars, among them Karl Deutsch, claimed that, by adhering to an institution, states accept a limitation of their freedoms and start to respect of common established rules, in order to gain more than that they were supposed to gain by acting autonomously (Deutsch, 1978 apud. Hage,2013:151).⁵⁰

Nevertheless, during the first decade of MERCOSUR's life, Brazil was no more a fragile economy, "defensive positioned" to face the international context (Gonçalves, 2009:7). With the growth of the domestic economic and financial sector Brazil was increasing the asymmetries in the region while displaying a different rate of growth as compared to its neighbouring countries (Hage, 2013). As Gonçalves stated, the modernization and economic stabilization of Brazil was not followed by the other countries of the bloc: Uruguay and Paraguay had maintained strong divergences in terms of power resources over the regional giant, even if both countries attempted to strengthen of their industries; Argentina, on the other side, was negatively and brutally affected by the regional and international crises occurred in the first decade of the integration project, which worsened over time, forcing Buenos Aires to a definitive collapse (Gonçalves, 2009; Schenoni, 2014.b). At the face of its financial and economic situation, Argentina reacted by unilaterally increasing the defence policies and therefore politicizing the future of the regional project of integration itself (Onuki, 2006).

It was through this attitude of positively distancing itself from the development and growth rate of the neighbourhood that Brazil started its transformation from a "country of the past" to a prosperous and promising "country of the future", to cite Stefan Zweig. Taking advantages from its geography and the highly recognized diplomatic capacities, it was almost a general understanding and desire among the Brazilian population and governing class that the country would get actively engaged in the international matters and able to exert its leadership, both regionally and globally, through a multilateral

⁵⁰ Those gains are reached in four main fields: economic (industrial and agricultural equilibrium, growth and shared technology and progress); military (acceptance of rule to avoid aggressive behaviours); social (guarantee the people's welfare) and institutional (establishment of ways of disputes' resolution).

approach and those collective actions realized under the aegis of UN and other international organizations (Lima, 2012:7). Brazil came to represent the major country in South-America and the largest population, diversified economic resources, constant GDP growth and a notable cultural and linguistic uniformity (Almeida, 2014). Eventually, this led to a position of prevalence within the region that contributed to the perception of Brazil as a leader in the region (Lima, 2012:8) and beyond (Almeida, 2014:71).⁵¹

As the Brazilian economy was growing faster than the others, the country owned more resources that could be used to assist the neighbourhood and their development. The initial idea of Brazil toward the region was that of introducing itself as a benevolent partner that could look like a hegemonic power, but that would operate within the region in cooperation with the rest of the states without assuming any superior position. The concept of “cooperative hegemony” (Pedersen, 2001) reflects the initial Brazilian regional-oriented policy, in which the country attempted to promote within the region a feeling of acceptance of its “natural role” of leading the integration process (Almeida, 2005; Saraiva, 2010). The regional leadership was thus tailored to the project that was underpinned by the cooperation with Argentina and the other countries. The regional policy of Brazil was therefore avoiding any form of possible imperialism, mainly because the country was aware of its still low and limited operational and political capacities (Faria and Brito, 2009). Brazil did not consider itself a strong presence in the region; despite representing the major country of the region, its influence and predominance over the others was not absolute (Fonseca, Jr. 2015).

MERCOSUR came to represent the dominant strategy for states that wanted to react and respond to the pressures and the negative influences generated by the globalization and the following systemic transformations occurred at the end of the bipolar international era. But in the case of South-America, the strategic reason for the integration was to be searched in the efforts to solve the continuum of divergences, rivalries and mistrust (Antunes da Silva, 2015), even if covered by the hypothesis of a rapprochement, between the two major countries: Brazil and Argentina. The asymmetries in international competitiveness and attraction of investments as well as in terms of growth and prestige have posed some obstacles to the consolidation and advances of MERCOSUR both

⁵¹ The evolution of the regional consensus around the dominant role of Brasilia is a significant topic of our research that will be introduced in the next chapters. In particular, it will be remarked how complicated has resulted for the country to lead the other regional states in an international joint action. All along the years the moments of cooperation and apparent acceptance have been few and mainly oriented toward the achievement of some gains for each single states, more than for the entire region. This situation has contributed to validate those assumptions that have seen the Brazilian proposal of assuming the leadership as being more a unilateral decision than a common recognition among the neighbours, which has contributed to weak the project of regionalism and to reduce the same Brasilia's resources (Malamud, 2011; Schenoni, 2014.b).

in the integration's evolution and its international participation (Almeida apud. Barbosa, 2007:62). Moreover, the incapacity of MERCOSUR member-states to find a homogeneous position about who was supposed to assume the leadership was cause of many disputes and resentments; in particular, because of the invasive attempts made by Brazil.

The idea of Brazil as a regional leader stemmed from the past, in particular from the implementation of a special relationship of Rio Branco with the US power which increased the asymmetries with the rest of the regional and minor countries. At the same time, the implementation of forms of integration inspired by the open regionalism (ALALC and ALADI) promoted different economic developments that affected once more the minor economies. In fact:

"[...] the countries had different objectives: the major ones were satisfied with the expansion of their exportations, while the smaller ones were wishing to adopt non-commercial measures in order to develop their industrial sectors"
(Dathein, 2007:59 apud. Kunrath, 2010:26).

It was all along the second half of the twentieth century that Brazil came to assume an intermediate position between the South-America and the Northern powers and within the International Organizations, which contributed to classify the Brazilian foreign policy as not regional neither global, but exclusively oriented toward the North-Western hemisphere (the US and the Western Europe) (Fonseca Jr., 2015). Those preferential ties may appear as a form of sub-imperialism of the country in the region (Seibel Lucer, 2007 apud. Antunes da Silva, 2015), by referring to the accusations coming from Buenos Aires, which rapidly claimed that Brazil was having an imperialist and hegemonic behaviour over the rest of the sub-continent (Hage, 2013:168).

In order to avoid further distancing of the neighbourhood from its ambitious project because of this inter-American cooperation and the experienced economic miracle, Brasilia changed its external strategy, in favour of a policy of Responsible Pragmatism, which would characterize the Brazilian foreign policy until the return of democracy in the 1980s.⁵² Although it was aimed to maintain a high degree of inter-state's discretion and avoiding discontent among the regional actors, this "responsible" strategy of Brazil was seen with even more suspicion in the major neighbour country, Argentina, and consequently in all the others. The cooperation within the region was only viable when oriented toward counter-acting

⁵² The Responsible Pragmatism was the main political strategy during the government of the President Geisel (1974-1978) and its Chancellor Azeredo da Silveira. This strategy was looking for the external participation of the country through the achievement of autonomy in specific sectors: technological, military and energy. It was at this purpose that the country started a rapprochement with the neighbours (with Bolivia and Paraguay it was oriented toward the exploitation of natural gas and the construction of hydro-electric centrals). The search for more autonomy contributed to a major distance from the US and to a limited influence of the same in the region. The Responsible Pragmatism came to represent a policy of Brazil aimed at maintain good relationships with almost all countries and at the same time proceeding to the realization of its goals and the guarantee of its interests.

the US influence in the Southern hemisphere, while it was always impossible when the Northern hegemon was working along with Brazil's interest of increasing its prestige, be it internationally or domestically.

Neither the many attempts of integration nor the efforts realized to proceed to the rapprochement with the historical rival, undertaken in the second half of the century in order to reach a minimum of consensus for its role of protagonist in the region, have worked to increase the acceptance of Brazilian influence over the other states. As Monica Hirst affirmed in an informal conversation with the author, what makes a country a regional leader is not the individual desire to lead, but mainly the acceptance and the recognition of the other countries that share a similar reality and feel as members of the same community, even if the latter is partly imagined (Faria and Brito, 2009). Slocum and Langenhove stated that the process of regional integration and the one of identity construction may exert a mutual influence over the other(s) that will favour the formation of a common interest, which however do not compromise individual identities, allowed to assume "multiple identities which will be complementary and subjected to the discursive space that they are creating" instead (2008 apud. Faria and Brito, 2009). Therefore, to the national identity of each state of the subcontinent, a regional one (*Mercosuliana*) would have been added in order to distinguish the Southern part of the continent from the more general identity of Latin-American countries, or American one in a more general terms (Onuki, 2014).

The Brazilian ambition of leadership was supposed to direct all the countries of the Southern continent, while reducing the threat and the competition coming from other regional major countries. During the 1990s, the concept of region came to be resized to the austral continent and to exclude the central and Caribbean area, strongly influenced by Mexico and the US presence. The fundamental idea was to adopt a geopolitical division of the continent based on the recognition of a geographical unity and common identity roots among countries that equally were trying to find their own spaces of political autonomy and at the same time insert themselves in the international system (Kunrath 2010:29).

During the presidential mandate of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the state's foreign policy was oriented not exclusively to the neighbourhood, but a common approximation and engagement of the country both in the intra and extra-regional area. This foreign policy's strategy of the Cardoso's era has been characterized by a strong research of the state's "autonomy through participation": with the coming soon of the new century, the achievement of development and autonomy was possible only by actively participating in the mechanisms and institutions of the international system (Lafer, 2009). Under the administration of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-1999), Brazil came to assume a more

internationally-oriented attitude, while the quest for the regional leadership to be slightly silenced, or at least covered by the assumption of an assertive and constructive position of simple representation in the regional space (Oliveira and Onuki, 2000). The main purpose of Cardoso's foreign policy was oriented toward offering much more credibility to the country at the international level rather than imposing its superiority and influence over the neighbour states (Lima, 2012). But it was with the implementation of socialist governments, arising between 2002 and 2003, that the Brazilian strategy of foreign policy started to be oriented towards "recognition" of the role of the country and the discourse about the regional leadership assumed a more important meaning.⁵³

The evolution from a political paradigm to another one, on the bases of a continuum of autonomy's search and of the construction of an ambitious regional and international identity of Brazil as leader of South-American countries, reflected different conceptions of power interests (Fonseca Jr. 1998 apud. Vigevani and Ramanzini, 2014). They were supposed to increase the power and influence of the country in the international scene (Villa and Viana, 2010). Unfortunately, since the political leadership of the integration process has been openly assumed by Brazil, it has meant a reduction of the integration of MERCOSUR and a major engagement of the possible regional leader in other projects that have been developed over the following governments (Onuki, 2015). The reactions of the other countries to the Brazilian pretensions of leadership have been different, but in all cases have been oriented to create a prejudice to the Southern giant.

2.4 Conclusion

"[...] Whatever the aspiration of Brazil might be, its articulation with Argentina was considered as mandatory for both countries and the Latin-American system in general. An offensive and defensive Brazil-Argentina alliance, supported in the best way in the economics of the two countries, would immediately lead to the inversion of the rules of power in Latin America, or at least in South America"
(Jaguaribe, 1958: 280).

The end of the European colonization in the South-American hemisphere was conceived as an opportunity for the recent born nation-states to act autonomously in their own political, socio-economic and bureaucratic system. Even if the presence of the Old Empires was thrown out (in ex-Spanish colonies) or significantly resized (as in the case of the Brazilian Empire), the new influence of the United States was rapidly increasing and threatening the national independence, by submitting South-America to a new imperial dominance. Therefore, aimed to maintain a minimum level of political autonomy and

⁵³ See: http://anphlac.ffich.usp.br/sites/anphlac.ffich.usp.br/files/rodrigo_cerqueira.pdf.

national coordination of their own affairs, the most successful option for Southern countries was to neutralize the US hegemonic power over the backyard and proceed to the unification of the Latin-American countries in a common bloc, that would guarantee the regional interests and increased its powers in the multilateral and extra-bloc bargaining process. It is important to note that the major reason moving the countries of the region towards each other was based on a realist assumption. States mainly cooperated when it came to security matters and above all when they felt threatened in their own survival and their relative state power capabilities were considered at risk. Furthermore, the threat represented by the United States, was seen as prompting the regional cooperation in order to increase the power, as well as political coordination that was looking for establishing a common plan in order to guarantee the national autonomy of their countries and avoiding external influence.

It was with the arrival of the Baron of Rio Branco at the Itamaraty that the engagement of Brazil in the regional matters assumed a new configuration. In particular, the relationship with the other major country of the hemisphere was reconsidered and came to be highly valued, owing to the important role that Argentina could play for the ambitious projects of Brazil. However, the different political options and features of Brazil's evolution had, over the time, worsened the others' acceptance of the Southern giant as a possible regional leader. Brazil has smartly responded to this challenge, through policies inspired by juridical principles and the Brazilian pragmatic realism. In the conduct of its external affairs, Rio de Janeiro, and later Brasilia, was able to adapt, over the time and the circumstances, the Cordiality Policy, in order to keep viable its presence in the region and to benefit and guarantee its own interests (Cervo, 1994 apud. Spektor, 2002b). The "Latin-Americanization" of its foreign policy was supposed to guarantee the acceptance of the prime role of Brazil among the other South-American countries, to reduce the threat and the influence of the US expansionism (Barros, 1986 apud. Spektor, 2002b), and to create a stable platform to support Brazilian global aspirations.

All along the twentieth century Brazil worked to guarantee a rapid and solid development and an international position. Differently from Argentina and the other minor states that, owed to the adhesion to policies of external dependence, suffered from economic losses and international prestige decline (Wiarda, 1999), Brazil positively worked towards the consolidation of its autonomous decision-making process. The smart regional policy was based on its ability to introduce itself as a benevolent leader and a cooperative hegemon (Pedersen, 2002) as well as promoter of regional development and a symmetric cooperation against the influence of extra-regionally located forces.

The reestablishment of a peaceful relationship between the historical rivals has contributed to the creation of a regional area of peace and to the deepening and broadening of cooperation. The

engagement of Brazil in the evolution of the regional economic integration (MERCOSUR) has been significant and aimed to maintain the parity of conditions with Argentina, in deepening the regional project. The integration has experienced many difficulties all along its life as it was not supported with the necessary instruments to overcome the moments of stagnations and crises, both local and international: the intergovernmental structure designed for MERCOSUR has weakened and threatened the integration process and the further regional development. The absence of strong supranational mechanisms and institutions reduced the regional commitment of states which came back to prioritize their national interests, thereby displaying a realist inspired attitude with the emphasis on relative power at the cost of the policies promoting collective goods. The choice for an intergovernmental model, offered all members the opportunity of acting individually and thus slowing down the integration process. MERCOSUR thus attends the requirements of the "logic of minimum common denominator" that is typical of those multilateral organisms built on the rule of unanimity (Sanahuja, 2013; Briceño Ruiz, 2014b).

The initial parity between Argentina and Brazil came soon to be abandoned and the acceptance of smaller regional states to join the integration project has increased the inequalities among the member-states, worsening the cooperation among them (Lampreia, 1999:135) (see Annex 1).

The growing power of Brazil has decreased the engagement of the Southern giant in the regional development: the excessive costs of assuming the leadership, not just in terms of material costs, would not be compensated by the desired gains. In conclusion, it was within this framework that MERCOSUR came to be considered as a limitation for the autonomous action of the region in the international system and for the strategic global aspirations of Brasilia, in particular.

If at first the importance and renovate consideration given to the regional project, which has resulted in both an enlargement of participants and a moving from an economic-trade emphasis to include social and institutional matters, was seen under a positive light of opportunities and absolute gains; the political changes occurred in the region came to be considered more as an obstacle to the international insertion of Brazil and the development of the other regional states. At the same time the impossibility for member-states to establish partnerships with third actors was limiting the autonomous political action and the growing Brazilian prestige and regional presence was seen as a form of sub-imperialism over the region and the country's international and regional aspirations were considered a new threat to the national sovereignty of the other regional states (Vigevani and Ramanzini Jr., 2014). Nowadays the region is still an important field of action for the Brazilian ambitions in foreign policy. However, its behaviour has changed from a proactive and in some cases "offensive" strategy to a more

defensive one, mainly aimed to "limit the damages that could spill over its borders or stain its international image" (Malamud, 2011:19). Brazil's new paradigm of foreign policy may be: 'go alone to go global'.

Chapter 3

Brazil's global aspirations

Since the rise of the new millennium, South-America has experienced significant political, economic and social changes. The rapid victory of the leftist governments has spread as a domino effect in almost all the countries of the Southern continent, eventually producing a shift from the compulsory acceptance of the neoliberal policies of the previous governments fostered by the United States' influence underpinned by the Washington Consensus to policies oriented toward the progressive socialism and the autonomous development (Gardini, 2009). The 2002 elections in Brazil were therefore seminal in transforming the Brazilian foreign and domestic policies as well as the perception of the country both within the international system and inside the country.

When the candidate of the Worker's Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores- PT), Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva finally won over the predecessor, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the regional and international contexts entered the transformation phase. The latter was characterized by the following features: the global governance came to be affected by new threats perpetuated by transnational actors who do not know any borders, neither in its physical nor moral sense. The new threats were modifying the political priorities of the great power (i.e., the United States) and reducing its influence over the Southern backyard,⁵⁴ As a result, the traditional balance of power and systemic structure was once again in transformation, this time from the unipolarism of the United States to a multipolar reallocation of powers.

As a consequence of this radically weakened the deterioration of the regional dynamics with no more certain acceptance and dependence on the old policies and mechanisms imposed by the Northern countries, South-America has entered in a moment of change. The financial crises occurred first in Mexico (1994), then in Brazil with the devaluation of the Real (1999) and culminated in Argentina's default (2001), showing incapacity of the neoliberal governments in dealing with the development and the growth of the countries in an interdependent and global world. As the Argentine growth rates started to decrease, the initial parity established with Brazil in order to proceed to the regional integration project of MERCOSUR came to disappear and the already existing asymmetries

⁵⁴ As few scholars have reminded, the beginning of the 'War on Terror' of Bush was moving the US attention over the national security and the events occurring in the Middle East area (Barbosa, 2002 apud. Lopes et al, 2013; Ricupero, 2010:39).

worsened, leading to a more complex context to achieve common positions (Saraiva and Briceño Ruiz, 2009; Schenoni, 2014.b; Ferreira-Pereira, 2015).

Lula da Silva's mandate was aimed to maintain higher rates of economic growth derived from the optimistic context and the successful mechanisms and procedures implemented by the Cardoso government, which was able to offer a domestic economic stability and an international credibility to Brazil (Ricupero, 2010; Lafer, 2009). The successes of the 1990s were smartly used by the new elected president in order to promote the presence of the country into the global politics' scene, through a searching for political autonomy and universalism (Vigevani and Cepaluni, 2007; Ricupero, 2010:35; Lima, 2012). Furthermore, Lula's mandate was characterized by a virtuous cycle oriented towards the economic development which would have positively affected the social question, as well as a more equal distribution of rights and opportunities would have directly produced a more rapid country's growth, and favoured its natural entrance in the world politics, allowing Brazil to join the group of the systemic influential powers.

The favourable international context led to the emergence of new actors, new international issues and a renovated pluralist structure based on minilateral forms of cooperation and relationships, which has contributed to the achievement of significant targets of the Brazilian foreign policy and its global aspirations (Flemes and Saraiva, 2014: 224). The external agenda of the new millennium has presented both elements of continuity and differentiation from the previous ones. Maria Regina Soares de Lima affirmed that Lula's policy "combines an orthodox macroeconomic policy, totally similar to the one of its predecessor, with a heterodox foreign policy much more oriented toward the autonomist strategy" (Lima, 2012:20).

If the main feature of Lula's government consisted in the pursuance of the traditional elements of universalism and autonomy, this latter element (autonomy) was supposed to be achieved through the adoption of the paradigm of diversification of interests, fields of action and partners which would have favoured the development of a foreign policy free from the impositions coming from powerful and hegemonic states (Vigevani and Cepaluni, 2007; Vigevani and Ramanzini Jr. 2014). The international engagement of the country was constructed along the lines of transformation of the global governance in order to establish a revised balance of power, based on alliances with actors other than the typical great powers. This was sought to favour more freedom of action of Brazil, in contrast to the previous linkage to the preferences and the interests of a major actors (Lima, 2012). The new elements ended up by dividing the foreign policy agenda of Brazil in many sub-agendas, all subordinated to the objective to introduce a stronger prominence of the president Lula da Silva in the international system and the

ideological and pragmatic challenges that he was posing both to the domestic and the world politics, economics and society (Lafer, 2009, Albuquerque, 2005 apud. Antunes da Silva, 2015).

All along the twenty-first century the Brazilian foreign policy has been oriented toward its global projection, as well as the recognition on the part of the international actors, in addition to such issues as the reform of the multilateralism, allowing for benefits to those countries agreeing with its leadership. To achieve all these objectives, Brazil has initiated a deep transformation of its image and character, assuming a complex but interesting international identity. In the same vein, the enlargement of its field of interests came to encompass new partners and responsibilities.

As for the importance and the priority given to the integration process, it has been maintained, in spite of some difficulties experienced in the passage from Lula da Silva's first mandate to the second one. At the same time, the region and its integration, became one among many other foreign policy priorities. This chapter aims to introduce the multiple identity of Brazil and the evolution of its foreign policy, globally projected and developed during the last twelve years of progressive socialism's governments of Lula da Silva and his follower, Dilma Rousseff (as of 2011).

3.1 The emergence of a complex international actor

A great amount of literature has been written in the last decade comparing the engagement of the country in the regional and international scene under the two mandates of the president Fernando Henrique Cardoso and his successor, Luis Lula da Silva. While some academics have focused on the elements of continuity of Lula, which could not ignore the successful results obtained throughout the policies implemented by the previous mandates (Lafer, 2009; Ricupero, 2010), some others have noted the divergences between the two presidents and their policies. If in the decade of 1990s, the foreign policy of the country was oriented towards access to the international multilateral institutions, the diplomacy of the subsequent period assumed a more proactive behaviour in the multilateral fora aimed to transform Brazil in a “global player” and a “global trader” (Flemes and Saraiva, 2014:215). At the domestic level, the Brazilian leftist government was opting for policies of equal distribution of rights and welfare in order to increase the economic power of its population. Such policy was thought to produce development and the growth of the national economy. At the same time, at the international stage, it was deemed necessary to capitalize on the credibility of the country achieved with the previous president Cardoso, in order to translate it into the definitive international participation and recognition of the country's prestige (Lima, 2012).

For a long time Brazil has been able to act in line with a role of the promising country, capable of reaching higher degrees of development and a recognized legitimation in the international system. The “country of the future”, as Zweig called it, had all the necessary conditions to definitely transform itself into a powerful state of the present, taking advantages of the international changes and the importance of regional actors, with higher political and economic capacities, in a world structure that has reconfigured itself around regional and emerging powers.

During two centuries, Brazil has built for itself a complex and variegated identity that has been reinforced in the last two decades when the country has moved toward a broader field of action, attempting to take part in the international politics by presenting itself as a “middle power” or an “intermediary” one.⁵⁵ Both terms are usually used in a similar attribution to refer to a particular international actor that occupies an intermediary position in the distribution of material capacities and resources that has been subjected to the systemic boundaries (Rodriguez, 2013:2); actors that are “[...] neither great nor small in terms of international power, capacity, and influence, and demonstrate a propensity to promote cohesion and stability in the world system” (Jordaan, 2003 apud. Malamud, 2011:2).

Owing to the limitation of its capacities Brazil is considered “a monster country that does not scare anyone” (Lafer, 2009) because it does not prioritize military power, neither does it possess any form of political and cultural attraction, while rather focusing on its economics unipolarism in the region (Schenoni and Actis, 2014; Schenoni, 2014.b). All of these factors along with the geographical dimensions of Brazil, the intermediary position in the international structure, and a continental perspective, made the country an “uncomfortable actor”, mainly within the regional borders (Brigagão and Seabra, 2009). In more general terms, since the 1980s, the economic aspects of power came to overcome the previous international emphasis on the use of force and military capacities. With the entry of free market into force, a stronger interdependence and liberal theories flourishing globally, conflicts have been no longer exclusively military; the new wars have been also (and especially) economic, and fought with instruments related to the GDP growth, trade flows and public debt. As Cobden expressed in 1840's futuristic prevision, “we can keep the war from actual world, and I trust that the world will do that through trade” (apud. Waltz, 1959). Argentina's president Arturo Frondizi, similarly declared that

⁵⁵ The seminal account of “middle powers” in world politics has been proposed by Robert Keohane that used to refer to those countries playing as “system-affecting” actors, which “cannot hope to affect the [international] system by acting alone [but] can nevertheless exert significant impact on the system by working through small groups or alliances or through universal or regional international organizations” (1969:295). The concept of “middle/intermediary power” has been collocate between the old concepts of “great power” and “small power” in the definitions offered by the former academics and their works on the distribution of capacities and the reallocation of power in the international system.

"[...] forced to peacefully live together, great powers ... must transfer their contradictions to the political and economic field of competition" (apud. Paradiso, 2007).

Notwithstanding the reduced influence of the use of force and the military threats, the conflicts and the moments of rivalry among countries have always been present, even if not always producing dramatic conflicts. Brazil has imposed its presence both in the region and in the global scene through its diplomatic abilities that, started with Rio Branco at the beginning of the twentieth century, have been characteristic of the Brazilian foreign policy. With the first presidential mandate of Lula and its Minister of External Relations, Celso Amorim, the Brazilian diplomatic activity was globally recognized for being extremely professional and properly prepared: it was by the maintaining of this pacific attitude of mediation among conflicts and disputes, and its solidarity toward the less developed and succeeded country that was working towards its international recognition as a benevolent, pacific country, promoter of democracy and equity (Almeida, 2004) along the lines of what some scholars have defined a "middle power diplomacy" (Fujita, 2013).⁵⁶

The strong commitment to peace and peaceful resolution of conflicts has marked Brazil's international action in situations of crises and of international multilateral cooperation, as well as peacekeeping executed under the aegis of the United Nations' agencies. Such political choices have contributed to its character of a "diplomatic country". Furthermore, on the basis of mediation and respect of Human Rights and the International Law, Brazil has in recent years opted for a more legally oriented strategy of action in order to be more easily accepted as systemic challenger. Brazil has got engaged in procedures of international norms' creation in order to be able to implement a renovate normative framework which would have taken human lives as the main target of protection in situation of conflicts and violations of international norms. This new operational-field has recently elected Brazil as "norm entrepreneur" and the "Responsibility while Protecting" (RwP) proposal presented at the General Assembly of the United Nations as evolution and more appropriate modification of the concept of R2P was representing a significant step in the achievement of the status of "normative power".

Because of the lack of coercive power, the Brazilian foreign policy has been promoting its international participation on the basis of a trustful and coherent attitude with the other actors, in order to achieve broader support and higher credibility and international recognition (Lafer, 2009:76). This behaviour is an expression of the Brazilian 'soft power', describing the multilateral diplomatic engagement of the country in order to achieve "a secure space for the defence of national interests"

⁵⁶ Throughout the twenty-first century, Brazil has then got engaged in a "middle power diplomacy" representing the "strategy adopted by middle powers [which] encompasses universal norms and values, and influences regional and global strategic environments" (Fujita, 2013:1)

(Lafer, 2009:78). At the same time, the augmenting of both the global prestige and the relative gains has to be reached not via the expansion of material resources (intended as military and economic capacities), but above all through the convincing and the art of persuasion, which represents a traditional alternative in the case of scarcity of material resources, but of abundance of symbolic ones (Flemes and Saraiva, 2014:214).

Flemes and Saraiva (2014) continue affirming that the Brazilian soft power is articulated around some fundamental lines, which involve the promotion of concepts like non-intervention, self-determination of peoples and states, negotiations and pacific resolution of controversies on the basis of the respect of the international law (Arbilla, 2000:361; Flemes and Saraiva, 2014:215). Furthermore, by favourable adopting both the position of the country as the "last among the firsts" developed during the period of the president Cardoso, and the more recent one of "first among the lasts" (Lima, 2012:20), the country has occupied a place of mediation in the system: a "bridge" between rich and poor countries. Brazil is striving to build consensus among the states to grab a permanent seat in the UNSC and in doing that the country is committing itself to the international agenda of "great powers" by increasing its military power and taking part in the international peacekeeping missions (e.g. United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti- MINUSTAH). But when it comes to economic (financial and trade matters) Brazil aligns with the emerging and developing countries, asking for a more "democratization and/or liberalization of world politics" on the basis of its national interest (Lopes, Camarões, Gama, 2013:24).

Brazil has joined the group of 'emerging powers' due to the incredible results achieved in terms of economic progress and development. After the return to democracy occurred in 1985, Brazil has almost immediately adhered to the largest number of international regimes and has assumed a different activism within the international organizations. The foreign policy of Brazil aimed to reform the structures of an international system, which was witnessing a rapid transformation, and was not always followed by its major actors, resisting to a possible redesign of its principal mechanisms. The entrance into the club of the emerging powers has occurred gradually and has been achieved both in the economic and political fields, only after a period of intense domestic changes and external challenges.

The increasing consideration by the international system has positively affected the perception of the state itself and its capacity, at the point that Brazil has hardly worked to be recognized as a "regional power". During the first mandate of the leftist government of Lula da Silva, Brasília aspired to realize the project of being a "natural leader" (Saraiva, 2010) in the South-American region, built on the basis of its vocation and "natural responsibility", a written destiny to care about the neighbours (Toledo,

2014). The regional integration came therefore to assume the features of the most ambitious project of Brasilia's foreign agenda because it represented an opportunity to augment the foundations of the country's regional leadership (Almeida, 2005). Paulo Roberto de Almeida continues affirming that aimed to cover the role of leadership in the region, the country should possess an excess of military and financial capacities as well as a proper exercise of 'soft power' understood as the charismatic personality of its representatives and the power of convincing the others, not feeding rivalries and resentments. In other words: "exerting the leadership without exhibit opulence" (Souto Maior, 2006 apud. Almeida, 2005).

When South-America is analysed, it is commonly used to accept the idea of Brazil as the 'voice of the region' and therefore as the 'regional power', due both to its physical dimension and to its recent economic rise and international prestige. Since the country has aimed to cover the role of "local hegemon" it has to "harness regional institutions and promote and enhance their particular vision of regional order" (Fawcett, 2005). A regional power is "a middle power that commands support within its region and recognition beyond it" (Nolte 2007 apud. Malamud, 2011:3), therefore it is implicit the idea that the exercise of this role requires a certain degree of recognized leadership.

The cooperation in and the coordination of the regional area was considered, since the origins of a more universalistic foreign policy, the main way for the international insertion of Brazil (Lima, 2008 apud. Malamud, 2011:1), which defines its international identity as an emerging power of continental dimensions and regional interests aimed to promote the development and the stability within the neighbourhood (Souza, 2008). In addition, the many different created institutions and the full engagement of Brazil in their promotion and evolution was the first step towards the country's higher levels of commitment and in line with its complex identity. Unlikely, the regional support to the ambitious Brazilian plans has been a difficult goal to achieve and has contributed to a further change of the country's foreign policy, this time oriented to an individual action for the global insertion.

3.2 Going Global

By owing the fifth land mass and being the sixth greatest economy in the world, Brazilian participation in multilateral international coalitions and mechanisms is aimed to subvert the current international system and substituting it with a fairer and more democratic one (Amorim, 2003). Furthermore, by also taking opportunities from its rapid economic growth that was supposed to reach half of the world GDP together with other emerging countries at the end of 2020, and implementing

political strategies of autonomy which have helped the country to pursue all along the last two centuries an independent foreign policy, Brazil is nowadays entering the international scene as a country with great capacities and truly global presence (Özdamar, 2011:13, Almeida, 2014).

If all along the twentieth century Brazil attempted to mark the delimitation of borders and reach peaceful contacts with the neighbour countries, while maintaining a cordial but distant relationship with the possible regional rivals, both Argentina in the South and the United States in the North (Sweig, 2010); the last decades before the turn of the millennium were characterized by stability and above all a great advocacy for regionalization, due to Brazil's aspirations of establishing a consensual hegemony in the region (Borges, 2008). The ambitious pretensions of the Brazilian foreign policy were moving from the bilateral strategic cooperation to the multilateral regional and international participation throughout the aspiration for a permanent seat at the UNSC and the participation in this institution as non-permanent member,⁵⁷ the building coalitions with developing countries as occurred during the Doha negotiations, or within the economic and financial system by proposing a reform of enlargement and more fairness in the WB, IMF and WTO; by actively contributing to international dialogue on such vulnerable international matters like climate change, South-South cooperation, security operations and coalitions of emerging powers to take a decision on the most variegated and divisive questions of world politics (Borges, 2008; Sweig, 2010).

In 2003 the election of Luiz Lula da Silva was suspiciously seen in the region and the international system, as his foreign policy was anything but surprisingly new (Vizentini, 2011). It continued the peaceful orientation and the proactive behaviour in world affairs, as in the previous decades, with the difference of a more engaged prominence attributed to the Brazilian diplomatic activism (Amorim, 2011.a:14). The main points of Lula da Silva's government were to strengthen the multipolarity of the international system, towards forging an alliance with emerging countries and African nations. At the same time, it was seen indispensable to make South America “politically stable, socially just and economically prosperous” and reinforce the Brazilian legitimacy and representativeness in the international institutions, in order to increase the international standing of the country (Gonçalves, 2011 apud. Lopes, Camarões, Gama, 2013).

To reach the status of “global player” in world affairs, the strategy adopted by President Lula was characterized by the “autonomy through diversification” (Vigevani and Cepaluni, 2007). This

⁵⁷ In the last two decades, the Federative Republic of Brazil has been elected for four times to assume the role of non-permanent member at the Security Council of the United Nations. The mandates occurred during the presidencies of Collor de Mello (1993-1994), Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1998-1999), Lula da Silva (2004-2005 and 2010-2011). The UNSC's mandates have a last of two years, but every year there is the change of five states occupying a non-permanent seat.

particular policy was expected to allow the country to adhere to international norms and principles by means of South-South and regional alliances, strategic partnerships, and through agreements with non-traditional partners (i.e. China, Asia-Pacific, Africa, Eastern Europe, Middle East, among the others). Eventually, asymmetries in external relations with powerful actors would be reduced (Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007:1313). At the same time, the previous strategy of the government of Cardoso (autonomy through participation) was maintained and the country continued its engagement with international liberal regimes and institutions (Vigevani, Oliveira and Cintra 2003).

The changes occurred at the beginning of the 2000s and the successes achieved in the subsequent years have pushed the country forward, both politically and economically. “[No] longer relegated to the backseat, Brazil and emerging countries have become driving forces in a changing world order” (Lopes, Casarões and Gama, 2013:2). The last decade has been characterized by a more active participation of Brazilian diplomacy in different fields, from the still present attempts to reform the San Francisco (political) and the Bretton Woods (economic) system, including regarding matters of security, solidarity with the weakest and poorest countries, and promotion of international norms shaping the behaviour of states in the world system, in a more efficient manner. Despite all, the Itamaraty has recently decided to invest in weak strategies (most of the time we are talking of intergovernmental structures) with the aim to reduce the space of action of those usually recognized as great powers of the system. “This soft balancing strategy was aimed at increasing, if only marginally, the degree of multipolarity in the world”, (Celso Amorim, apud. Hurrell 2008). In all these fields, Brazil has been making use of its soft power as the most important foreign policy tool, opting for a diplomatic action in a changing international order.

3.3 Many priorities, any priority?

The Brazilian behaviour in the international system appears to be quiet and proactive in directing the other countries toward the development and the reaching of absolute gains. The emphasis on welfare and progress of all countries in the world allowed Brazil to exert a positive leadership through its foreign policy. “[By] creating the opportunities for the neighbours [and other partners]” (Menezes, 2010:142) and helping them through financial assistance and investments, Brazil has been forging around the globe a self-image of a benevolent and non-imperialistic country (Barbosa, 2008), who has not been searching for a hegemonic position to take advantages on the regional and international

scene. It is for this reason that Brazil has got engaged in a strong relationship with the neighbours and given priority to its relationship with Argentina (Giaccaglia and Lechini, 2011:251) for a long period.

The evolution of the Brazilian foreign policy since Lula's first government has been oriented towards a more global commitment that has resulted in an enlargement of its interests and fields of action along with a more careful selectivity in the choice of its strategic partners and engagements. Brasilia's 'soft power' has been therefore employed with a twofold objective: to guarantee the autonomy of choice of the external matters and of its development, on the one hand and reinforce its position in the world politics, in its new and different configuration centred in the multipolarism, but aligned with the subdivision in networks of diplomatic action, on the other hand (Flemes and Saraiva, 2014). Eventually, there was the policy of selectivity which was reminiscent of the Pragmatic Institutionalism introduced by Leticia Pinheiro (2000). The latter was attributing special role to Brazil's choice of privileged and international strategic partners, in order to guarantee through the elements of the Neo-institutionalism (institutions, alliances and cooperation) its own autonomy, as well as the increasing of its power capacities and the realization of its domestic goals and interests (typical elements of a pragmatic vision of the International Relations, looked forward by the Neo-realism). On the other hand, Brazil was creating its international agenda by establishing "networks of diplomatic action" that, exactly like in the discourse of Pinheiro, were aimed to guarantee the autonomy of choice and promote its global rise, through the exercise of its soft power within the network-based world order (Flemes and Saraiva, 2014:217). The authors divided the policy of networks into three main groups. The first included the "networks of advocacy", representing forms of cooperation among members which share common interests of world politics, like in the case of Brazil may be the group of IBSA (G4), the BRICS and the BASIC, all group formed by the emerging economic countries of the new millennium. The second one was formed by the "networks of mediation" and consisted of actors (usually great powers) aiming to solve specific problems of the global governance, often linked to the security issues (in recent years, this networks have seen the active participation of Brazil as mediator in the International relations, both in the regional crises and in nuclear matters of world politics). The third group comprised the "networks of substitution" which represented the "product of systemic pressures created by the emerging powers" as for example those group of states that aspire to the substitution or transformation of the formal institutions (Flemes and Saraiva, 2014:217-218).

The transformations occurred to the Brazilian foreign policy agenda since the rise of the leftist government have been numerous and subjected to evolutions, change of priorities and re-organization of interests. All these fields of foreign policy may be illustrated by an example that reminds to a circular

structure of areas of interests, that moves from the closest relationship of Brazil (represented by Argentina) to the most external circle represented by the multilateral institutions of global governance. Of course, this circular structure of interests and priorities of foreign policy is also including the sub-regional and sub-continental institutions in order to dictate the future projects of Brazil in the geographical proximity to move further to hemispherical targets and multilateral networks.

The leftist governments were aware of the importance of a solid region at their back but at the same time they had the strong conviction that it was necessary to strengthen the ties with all the countries of Latin America and maintain a mature relationship with the United States, the European Union and those developed nations, like Japan; as well as to strengthen the cooperation with the developing countries, especially with the BRICS and with all the African continent. The participation in the multilateral institutions was oriented toward establishing fairer and more democratic mechanisms and organs of representation of the international system (Silva, 2003). This significant list of priorities of Brazil's foreign policy has remained largely unchanged in the following governments of Lula da Silva (2007-2010) and Dilma Rousseff (2011 to present days), in spite of the sometimes changing order of importance of the priority in the official discourses and especially during the practical implementation of the Brazilian external relations.

3.3.1 South-American Integration in 2000s: the key role of Brazil

Since the rise of the new millennium and in the context of the political and economic changes in South-America, the most significant and important change in the Brazilian foreign policy concerned the regional area. At the face of increasing difficulties of Brazil to exert the leadership over the other South-American countries and within the institution created as a result of the Brazilian efforts, the government of Lula da Silva opted for a different strategy in order to see its national interests realized and avoid a further backwardness in its run for a more prominent global role (Toledo, 2014).

In the first presidential discourse, Lula da Silva declared that its main objective was to transform Brazil into a "sovereign and worthy nation, aware of its own weight in the international scene" that will "broaden its horizon", through striving toward a politically stable, economically prosperous and democratically united South-America, as well as revitalizing MERCOSUR that had been suffering from the domestic crises of its member-states (Silva, 2003). In a context of international systemic challenges, where the multipolarity came to be reflected in the changing design of an international institutional architecture which highlighted the regions, it was a Brazilian choice

"[to] opt for a solitary presence in the world or to search for an association with the countries around it, with whom [Brazil] shares history, values and possibilities of economic complementarity. Brazil has clearly opted for the second option... [and] South-America became a priority of its foreign policy"
(Garcia, 2008:22- translation of the author).

MERCOSUR was not just a neoliberal economic project, neither just a market (Briceño, 2007:195). Thus, Brazil assumed the integration of the region as a political project, but which was built on economic and trade foundations that needed to be strengthened by means of introducing social and institutional changes. This was necessary to overcome the period of stagnation that was affecting the economies and political action of its member-states (Braga, 2013), who tended to implement individualistic policies, in a line of action which was detached from the regional and sub-regional context (Bernal-Meza, 2013).⁵⁸ The political changes occurring since 2000 and following the election of leftist governments coincided with the new priorities and a stronger emphasis on a revamp of MERCOSUR, reaffirming the commitment to the original idea of integration and the creation of a common South-American space (Sarney, 2005).

The MERCOSUR renovated its economic composition while assuming social and political aspects, promoted by the new Brazilian engagement toward the region which has resulted to be strictly bound to the concept of "Logistic State" (Cervo, 2008). This paradigm is expected to give impulses to the productive integration toward the development of infrastructures and the energy cooperation, and a more equal redistribution of capacities and opportunities for the member-states of the integration project.⁵⁹ The creation of a mechanism aimed to solve the structural asymmetries that the member-states presented, the Fund for the Structural Convergence of MERCOSUR (FOCEM)⁶⁰ was supposed to

⁵⁸ At the end of the 1990s, the prosperous period for trade within the MERCOSUR was subverted primarily because of the internal economic and financial crises experienced by the states, first the major ones (Brazil-1999 and Argentina- 2001) and that not so later has affected the smallest and highly dependent partners (Uruguay and Paraguay), due to the augmented intra-regional trade and the level of correlation of their economics upon the others, that the integration project produced (Braga,2013:445).

⁵⁹ According to the paradigm of the "Logistic State", the State transfer to the society its responsibilities as entrepreneur and promoter of opportunities and projects, while at the same time it maintain its control and assistance to the society for operating in external markets (Cervo, 2002). As the neoliberal policies had shown their failures and incapacities all over the previous decade, the vision of the leftist governments was combining together the main features of liberalism with state's interventionism. The central state is not a mere spectator of the liberal forces of the market, neither it is limited in its role of services' promoter. Then, the role of the state is to support and legitimate the initiatives of the economic and social actors, providing them of the necessary freedom of action, while at the same time creating the condition for a competitive attendance of the society in the international context and offering assistance for the development (Cervo, 2010).

⁶⁰ As the Latin America has always been aware of its enormous differences and inequality (in territorial, economic, social and development terms) the creation of MERCOSUR has tended to globe within its borders some of these asymmetries, both structural (derived by the economic dimension) and those originated by the public policies implemented. The creation of FOCEM, derived by the decision of the Common Market Council -CMC n.45/04, represents a way to overcome those problems and the eventual impasse that could cause to the integration. The FOCEM gives its contribution to the development of the smallest economics by working on "reinforcing the principle of solidarity" (CMC n.18/05) among states. Each member of MERCOSUR

assist the weakest sectors of economics within the trade area in order to create infrastructures and level the economic and social condition of member-states, in particular of Paraguay and Uruguay, to which the art.6 of the Treaty of Asuncion and Protocol of Ouro Preto established a special condition as they see and consider the differences and delays they present, if compared to the other partners (Godoy,2011).⁶¹ Through this instrument, the smallest economies pay less and gain more: the distribution of the contributions is inversely proportional to the dimension of the economy.

Moreover, to increase the quality of the integration and the trade within the region, MERCOSUR has promoted the creation of new transport routes and energy policies, reflected in the establishment of the IIRSA (Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South-America) in 2000. The President Lula da Silva affirmed that "any integration might be impossible without roads, bridges, [...], without the political conviction of the governments"- mainly Argentina and Brazil (Sombra Saraiva, 2004). What we witnessed was the typical pragmatism of the Brazilian foreign policy. Brasilia was aware of the necessity of a physical integration for the development of a political and ideological one, and acknowledged that productive and social dimensions work together in guaranteeing beneficial results to all.

It was in the following years that this project became more significantly affected by the role of the Brazil of Lula which has considered it as a legitimate way to impose the political leadership of the country through the financing of the projects by investments of the National Bank of Economic and Social Development (*Banco Nacional do Desenvolvimento Económico e Social*- BNDES) all around the region (Saraiva, 2010:14).⁶² The Brazilian prevalence in the sector of infrastructure within the region let

contributes to pose an established percentage of the definitive amount of financial resources, differing among them on the bases of their levels of economics and development: Brazil (70%); Argentina (27%); Uruguay (2%) and Paraguay (1%). The amount of resources is then distributed on the following percentages: Paraguay (48%); Uruguay (32%); Argentina and Brazil (10%) (Vazquez and Briceño Ruiz, 2009:40; Godoy, 2011).

⁶¹ As the integration process of the Southern Cone do not own any personal and common financial budget, the policies to be implemented and the amount of money that should be applied must be approved and financed by all the members, considering that all of them will contribute to finance those policies of resolution of those internal asymmetries that will be an obstacle for the achievement of regional benefits (Godoy, 2011).

⁶² During the mandates of President Lula, the BNDES came to be considered a trustful and efficient mechanism of foreign policy and in particular of strengthening of the regional integration process while at the same time assisting the Brazilian industries in their attempts of internationalization. From 1997 to 2009 an amount of almost US\$ 2,5 billion of the Bank funds were destined to projects in countries of the Common Market of South-America, while only in the first semester of 2010, soon later the international crises, the amount increased significantly to reach US\$ 378 million of investments toward the region. By acting for the regional financing, the BNDES is developing the national strategy: it is investing in the creation of the region by increasing the national demand of exporting services. The BNDES is then contributing and assisting the Brazilian companies in the internationalization of their economics and services. In Carvalho, C. 2010. *O papel do BNDES no aprofundamento do Mercosul*. Paper presented at the V Congreso Latinoamericano de Ciencia Política. Asociación Latinoamericana de Ciencia Política, Buenos Aires. Available at: <http://www.aacademica.com/000-036/840.pdf>. For a discussion about the pro and the benefit of Brazil in supporting and financing, via BNDES, the development and the infrastructures within the region, we suggest to check the article available at: <http://www.cartacapital.com.br/revista/804/obras-em-variaslinguas-6655.html>. Accessed September 27th, 2014.

many countries protest against this form of action and highlighting the superiority hidden behind that benevolent attitude and solidarity that seemed to move the country in engaging itself into the regional integration and development. The Brazilian regional policy was rather perceived as being oriented to make of the region an attractive pole for foreign investments, which allowed one particular country to obtain more significant political and economic advantages.⁶³

The absence of a social dimension of MERCOSUR all along the first decade was linked to the exclusive trade aspects of the integration process, but the cooperation between Argentina and Brazil's presidents worked to face with this omission and advanced further themes to discuss. After a reunion among the member-states in Asuncion, a Programme for the Consolidation of the Customs Union and the Launching of the Common Market, better known as "Objective 2006" was approved, aimed at mutual welfare of both economics and societies within the block.⁶⁴ It was in this same period that MERCOSUR absorbed new political and institutional competencies, including the one referring to the Brazilian proposal of the creation of a Parliament of the Common Market of the South (PARLASUR)⁶⁵ through direct elections in the member-states.⁶⁶

The motivation that pushed the Brazilian President Lula to engage himself in this new project of creating a community institution was bounded to the perspective of an institutional change within the regional process itself and in particular related to the question of sovereignty: a debate was built around

⁶³ The Brazilian financing of the regional development through the national instrument and resources led to significant results since 2008, when, while the entire world suffered of an international economic and financial crises, the states of MERCOSUR were able to survive as they seemed to promote a deeper integration among them, in order to protect themselves from what could be the negative effects of the global economic interdependence: the intraregional exchanges increased and in some cases it seemed that the region was aware that a better articulation and cooperation would be beneficial among the difficulties and international financial threats (Vigevani and Ramanzini, 2013: 213).

⁶⁴ The definitive passage from a Custom Union to a Common Market was to realize by passing some principal steps reunited in four specific programmes: the Political, Cultural and Social Programme; the Customs Union Programme; the Programme for a Basis for the Common Market; and last a Programme of a New Integration. Those programmes aimed to combine the social and the economic agenda and to reach the prefixed goals before 2006.

⁶⁵ The principal features of the Parlasur were to strength the inter-parliament cooperation, to facilitate the adoption and internalization of common laws, to represent the interests of its citizens through real and effective decisional powers, as well as through the distribution of the common resources of the FOCEM and support the commitment of democracy and the respect within the region and the regional institutions of the democratic values. In 2009, a political agreement among the states part of MERCOSUR accepted a differential number of representatives for each state on the ground of the asymmetries existing within countries; thus Brazil elects 37 representatives; Argentina, 26 and Venezuela, 23; while Uruguay and Paraguay will maintain the previous number of 18 representatives in Parlasur, at least until all countries will not adopt a direct election for choosing their representatives.

⁶⁶ Nowadays, with the exception of Paraguay that has already directly elected its parliament representatives in the MERCOSUR, for the other states the choice is an exclusive of the national Congress. Argentina will adopt this direct mechanism, established in the Constitutive Protocol of Parlasur (2005), during the next presidential elections in October when the Argentine people will vote for the Presidential candidate and the representatives of the Parliament of the integration process. In the case of Brazil, instead, the Congress is still the organism which choose the Parliament representatives and an institutional reform in this matter seems will be applied before 2020. Further information are available online at: <http://www.valor.com.br/internacional/3839422/argentina-aprova-eleicoes-diretas-para-o-parlamento-do-mercosul>. Accessed March 29th, 2015.

the *pro et contra* of the implementation of supranational or intergovernmental regional bodies.⁶⁷ This has always been central topic since the birth of MERCOSUR, in particular because of Brazilian strong opposition to lose its sovereignty in favour of regional community entities: the idea of “one man, one vote” would pose serious difficulties to Brazil's attempts of pursuing its regional and international purposes, as the other member-states would join together in an attempt to balance the position of the giant (Barbosa, 2007: 19).

The proposal of a Parliament could have represented a way to overcome the institutional stagnation and the loss of credibility and legitimacy of the institution, both regionally and globally. However, the Itamaraty itself had assumed a position of strong support of the intergovernmental structure within the region, which guaranteed that individual states would not lose their relative power (Vigevani and Ramanzini, 2013).⁶⁸ What still prevailed was the continuation of an institutional deadlock of the regional project that came to characterize MERCOSUR as a "latent low institution" (Hage 2013:177). Brazil therefore was concerned about maintaining the region among its priorities, as the regional project represent more costs and limitations to its global plans rather than being instrument of support for the Brazil's international relaunch, has to be linked to the need of the country to guarantee a stable and peaceful environment, mainly around itself. Any form of discontent and confrontation in the South-American space would have put on hold Brazilian global projects and forced the country to look to the region (Fonseca Jr. 2015). Thus, the relaunch of MERCOSUR and the creation of a broader institutions which would have grouped together all the southern continent, Union of South-American Nations (UNASUR) was aimed to guarantee the regional stability and cooperation, as well as to work toward the regional acceptance of Brazilian role of leader, above all among those other major and conflict-prone countries (Argentina and Venezuela).

In the passage from the first to the second mandate of Lula da Silva the Brazilian foreign policy changed position, due mainly to the reluctance of the region to the Brazilian initiatives and recognition of the "natural role" of regional leader (Menezes,2010 apud. Toledo:2014).⁶⁹ Then Brasilia has then

⁶⁷ Both concepts are linked to the idea of a shared sovereignty but as in the supranational institutions the political, economic, decisional and legislative competencies are transferred to an organism that is independent from national governments of the member-states, in the other case, each state preserves its own sovereignty and decisional power (Barbosa, 2007:18).

⁶⁸ Among the main arguments of the Ministry of External Relations of Brazil, Barbosa reports that (the English is our): "[MERCOSUR] is an evolution process that, at the initial steps, imposes the gradualism and the flexibility in the application of internal decisions; thus the fact of not being a supranational rather an intergovernmental organism, it will give more legitimacy to the and facilitate the effective construction of the integration" (Barbosa, 2007: 18).

⁶⁹ The position of "natural leader" was not meaning the assumption of an hegemonic position in order to take some advantages from the neighbours; but Brazil was more likely to lead and organize the South-American space due to its major resources (Menezes, 2010, apud. Toledo, 2014:12).

started to search further for the international recognition and regional leadership: mainly among regional blocs and multilateral institutions, developing countries and emerging economies.

3.3.2 A foreign policy for the Americas: caught between North and South.

The creation of a new regional integration pole, reflected in the founding of UNASUR in 2008, was a direct consequence of the aspiration of South-American countries to participate in all the regional, especially the one strengthening political, social and security dimensions, rather than being restricted to economic and trade ones (Saraiva, 2010). Born from the stipulation of an agreement of partial economic complementarity (AAP.ACE.n°59) signed in 2005 and that was incorporating in a unique project both the MERCOSUR and the Andean Community, the Union of Nations of South-America represented the suitable alternative for Brazil to escape from the problems of the previous integration and the obstacles posed by the regional partners that started to oppose any deepening or enlargement of the MERCOSUR.⁷⁰ At the same time UNASUR was seen as a way to allow the country to overcome the limits imposed by a no more symmetrical bilateral cooperation and regional engagement with Argentina.

In 2004, the non-participation of Nestor Kirchner in the creation of the Community of South-American Nations (the antecedent of the UNASUR) was a strategic demonstration of Argentine defensive and preventive attitude toward the Brasilia regional reform aspirations, which were not only considered as a functional integration project but also recognized as instrument to project Brasilia internationally and guarantee its power. Few years later Argentina finally joined the institution, assuming along with Brazil an essential role in solving the regional crises (as for instance between Venezuela and Colombia; and during the coup d'état in Ecuador). The evolution of UNASUR, however, was defined by an exclusive engagement of Brazil, who was not always supported by Buenos Aires as a cooperative partner willing to share the hegemony's costs and benefits (Russell and Tokatlian, 2014).

Thus, the Brazilian foreign policy was still paying attention to the space of geographical proximity, this time including the countries of Central America and the Caribbean. The engagement in Latin-American questions has always been a dramatic and not comfortable area for Brazil, mainly due

⁷⁰ Bolivia was already part of an agreement of association with the initial members of MERCOSUR, through the application of a partial agreement of economic complementarity (AAP.ACE.n°36) signed in 1996 and out in force the following year. Nowadays the country is ready to join the full participants in the integration process, once the opposition of Paraguay seems to be definitely over: <http://en.mercopress.com/2014/12/18/paraguay-s-objections-prevent-bolivia-from-full-mercosur-membership> . Accessed January 13th , 2015 and <http://www.ultimahora.com/hay-acuerdo-regularizar-ingreso-bolivia-al-mercosur-n888980.html>. Accessed April 20th, 2015. Bolivia will definitively be a member-state of MERCOSUR, as soon as all the former members of the regional institution will approve it: <http://www.parlamentodelmercosur.org/innovaportal/v/8270/2/parlasur/bolivia-a-pouco-de-ser-membro-pleno-do->. Accessed April 20th, 2015.

to the influential and strong presence of the United States in the political, economic and international affairs of this sub-region. The decision of Brazil to create a regional integration platform excluding both the countries of the Central America and of the Caribbean was based on the difficulties that the country would have met in exerting the regional leadership if it was coming to work together with other significant regional actors, like Mexico and Venezuela, Colombia or Cuba, and to be submitted in any case to the US hegemony.

Although the Brazilian foreign policy have attempted to carefully delimitate its regional integration projects, the northern neighbours have been included among the priorities of its external agenda and during the governments of the left-wing many forms of cooperation and ideological understanding have occurred. The country has got engaged in the inter-American community and has covered a significant role in the efforts implemented for the collective security and the economic cooperation within the Western hemisphere. The participation in the Organization of the American States and the Inter-American Development Bank has been seen as an effort of the Brazilian foreign policy to support the economic and political integration and strengthen its relationship with the continental neighbours, in order to gain major prominence as both regional and global actor. Then, the country has attempted to spread its influence over the region through a significant assistance to the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.⁷¹ In particular, the Brazilian government was offering economic support and financing infrastructures and investments toward the region, through the BNDES, besides promoting technical assistance and university scholarship for the citizens of the respective countries. Moreover, Brasilia has got engaged in the reinsertion of Cuba in the international organizations and questions and in solving the political crises arisen in Honduras as consequence of the coup- d'état of 2009 and ended in 2011.⁷² The Brazilian commitment to a broader region has resulted in a strong assistance offered to Haiti, since the assumption of the command of the international peacekeeping operation in 2004 to solve a situation that has worsened after the episode of earthquake of 2010, and in the reception of Haitians moving to Brazil.⁷³

⁷¹ Further information about the initiatives promoted by Brazil, in the framework of the CELAC, are available at: http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=689&catid=145&Itemid=434&lang=pt-BR . Accessed August 10th, 2015.

⁷² Additional information: http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2616:declaracao-dos-estados-partes-do-mercosul-e-venezuela-sobre-o-acordo-de-cartagena-das-indias-sobre-a-situacao-em-honduras&catid=42&lang=pt-BR&Itemid=280 . Accessed August 10th, 2015.

⁷³ Further information about the topic are available by accessing the official site of Itamaraty at: http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5221&Itemid=478&cod_pais=HTI&tipo=ficha_pais&lang=pt-BR . Accessed August 10th, 2015.

Even if Brazil has attempted to maintain its autonomy of political choice from the Northern great power (i.e. the USA) and to avoid the inclusion of Mexico in any of its regional projects, both countries have close relations with Brazil. With the former, Lula's first presidential discourse has been oriented toward a relationship with the great power based on a mature attitude and parity of positions, rather than on the submission of the Southern country to the imperialism of the northern one (Silva, 2003). On the other hand, with Mexico, Brazil has maintained strong relationships mainly in the economic field due to the great trade capacities of the country and the possibilities that Mexican markets present in the continental and global area. A particular attitude of Brazil has characterized the relationship with Venezuela that presents itself as both a South-American and Caribbean country, due to its geographical position in the middle of Latin-America and all the economic and political mechanisms of the region (Bernal-Meza, 2013:645). The inclusion of the country as a full member of the MERCOSUR has been cause of misunderstandings and worsening of the pacific relationship among the former member-states (Vazquez and Briceño Ruiz, 2009), as well as the presence in the UNASUR, as one of the former country to support the Brazilian project has caused dissatisfaction among the other participants and in many occasions has been cause of controversial disputes mainly owing to Caracas' ideological positions that are considered too extreme and differ both from the ones of the other regional countries and the institutions themselves in which it takes part (Bernal-Meza, 2013). The ambivalent relationship of Brazil with Venezuela has to be related to the energy and strategic field of operation because of the characteristics that Caracas presented as:

"[...] a major supplier of energy resources, an important economy and a key actor in the Amazon region, [and] also a gateway for Brazil to strengthen its political and economic presence in the Caribbean, and secondarily, in Central America"
(Vaz, 2014:12).

The result seems to be a loss of legitimacy and credibility in the international system of the broader regional project of South-America and a further impasse of the internal institutional mechanisms in the face of the too divergent positions hardly allowing to find a common and converging point of view.

3.3.3 From South to Global

The Minister of External Relations of the first Lula's mandate affirmed that "[the] strengthening of the regional cohesion would allow to our voice to be better listened to, [...] and to have a major weight in the international context" (Amorim, 2004:42). The "universalist" character of the Brazilian foreign policy is looking for its presence in the international system and the mechanisms of global

governance. Given the political action of Lula da Silva, Brazil “became more active internationally, resorting simultaneously to bilateral initiatives, regionalism, inter-regionalism, *ad hoc* coalitions, and multilateralism" (Vaz, 2014:10).

In reaching these objectives, the Brazil of Lula has slightly moved away from the strategy of the previous governments and has promoted the international presence through the diversification of partners and targets. The old relationship with great powers and the participation in multilateral international institutions have been maintained but much more importance has been given to the partners and initiatives of the Southern hemisphere and the developing countries. In the international development agenda, some middle powers started to act as mediators between the richest and the underdeveloped states. Among these intermediary actors, Brazil started to exert its role of leader in order to coordinate the joint action of all the countries of the periphery, while at the same time aspiring towards convergence between the general interests of this group and its own interests (Lima, 2012:6).

The relationship with the African countries was based on the “moral debt” and historical links and roots that the country developed with the continent that has promoted the implementation of projects of regional and bilateral incentives and forms of cooperation (technological, political and economic) for the development of their strategic sectors and the fair and competitive participation of those countries in the global markets, assisted by Brazilian qualified personal and direct investments (Saraiva, 2010). The increasing number of agreements signed with African countries and the significant number of embassies and diplomatic offices of Brazil inaugurated in the neighbour continent have been representative of the Brasilia's goal of promoting the international rise of developing and less-developed countries, through forms of solidarity and positive cooperation and financial aid, in contrast to the mechanisms of "donor-recipient" cooperation, characteristic to the previous North-South relations. At the same time Brazil attempted to transform the global governance's rules, aiming at the attendance of the African and the other less developed countries of the South, into a renewed international system.

In order to reduce the prevailing asymmetries in the world politics, the Brazilian foreign policy has taken some advantages from the transformation of the international system in 2000s and has established a joint action of diplomacy with the other emerging countries, mainly India and South Africa. The creation of the IBSA (also known as G3) occurred in 2003 with the Declaration of Brasilia made by the three Southern emerging powers and major democracies, who decided to establish a multilateral cooperation that would deal with matters of peace, regional security, trade and development (Lima, 2005:24). Furthermore, they attempted to promote among them mechanisms of anti-protectionism and distorted markets (Malamud, 2009:143), and through a joint diplomatic action, the IBSA wished to

assume a growing prestige to let the group be recognized as the leader of the Southern hemisphere (Vieira and Alden, 2011 apud. Lopes, Camarões, Gama, 2013:16). As the group of IBSA has been composed in its totality by states that do not constitute great powers club, their principal attempt has been represented by the creation of strong ties based on common aspirations and that share specific interests, values and norms of the global governance, adhering in this way to the "network of advocacy" of the world order (Flemes and Saraiva, 2014:217).

A further example of network of "advocacy" has been a broader coalition of emerging countries, known in the world politics as the BRIC(S) coined by Jim O'Neill in 2001 (the countries admitted South Africa into their group in 2010). Since 2009 the meeting between Brazil, Russia, India, China and South-Africa has affirmed the presence of BRICS in the international system (Almeida, 2014).

Differently from the kind of relationship that Brazil has got engaged in with the other emerging countries of the South, based on the spread of democratic values and principles of Human Rights, the one with China and Russia has been characterized by Lula's adoption of a pragmatic discourse made essentially of bilateral trade and political influence of this emerging powers, Furthermore, the increasing prestige and economic capacities of these countries, as well as the joint ambition of subverting the financial mechanisms of Bretton Woods system, have converged and led to the creation of the New Development Bank⁷⁴ of BRICS, which aimed to represent an alternative to the WB and the IMF. It was expected to "mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries"(Agreement on the New Development Bank, 2014).⁷⁵

"[...] Brazil needs to articulate its political, economic and technological alliances with the states of the periphery [...] to promote and defend its interests: Brazil needs to transform its traditional relations, historically unbalanced, with Great Powers"
(Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães, 2006 apud Vigevani and Cepaluni, 2007: 292-3)

The participation in the coalitions of the emerging countries was just one way for the country's to promote its ideal of a fairer and more democratic multipolar system. These were seen as a necessary

⁷⁴ Further information about the New Development Bank of BRICS see, Powell, A. 2013. *BRICS Leaders Optimistic About New Development Bank*, published in Voice of America, March 23rd, 2013 and available at: <http://www.voanews.com/content/brics-summit-leaders-optimistic-about-new-development-bank/1629583.html>. Accessed August 11th, 2015. See also Khanna, P. 2014. *New BRICS Bank a Building Block of Alternative World Order*, published in July 18th, 2014 and available online at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/parag-khanna/new-brics-bank_b_5600027.html. Accessed August 11th, 2015. About the definitive implementation of the Bank and the possible consequences for the Bretton Woods System see Rogers, J. 2015. *World Bank & IMF 'corroded'*, published in RT, June 15th, 2015 and available at: <http://www.rt.com/business/268111-institutions-brics-alternative-renminbi/>. Accessed August 11th, 2015.

⁷⁵ The full agreement is available at: <http://brics.itamaraty.gov.br/media2/press-releases/219-agreement-on-the-new-development-bank-fortaleza-july-15>. Accessed August 11th, 2015.

complement to the existing mechanisms of global governance, led by great powers in an attempt of its transformation from the inside. The G20 represented, at the multilateral international level, the economic side of the Brazilian and other countries rise (Oliveira, 2005) aimed at fostering change in the structure of the global order, through a reform of the political, economic and security mechanisms. Finally, the request of Brazil to receive a permanent seat at the Security Council of the United Nations was another example of its attempt to exert some systemic pressures over the international *status quo* with the main objective to substitute the current world configuration. In this sense, especially the G20 and the G4 (formed by Brazil, India, Germany and Japan) are expression of these "networks of substitution" (Flemes and Saraiva, 2014:218).

The global presence of Brazil was developed around the same fields of action and strategies of the previous mandates, showing how partly true was the assumption of a foreign policy that was presenting elements of continuity over the years. Even if the country has maintained under Lula da Silva a certain similarities with the former foreign policy, the elements of discontinuity have been represented by these new coalitions, originated by a significant change in the international relations that were not present before and by the major resources at disposal of the country that have allowed to assume a balancing position facing with great powers. Furthermore, the establishment of specific relationships and strategic partnerships with new countries and regions has represented an innovative point of Lula da Silva's mandate, aimed at maintaining a high spirit of "universalism" and "diversification" of its external relations,

The establishment of political and economic forms of cooperation with countries of the Middle East was seen as a Brazilian "sign of its ambitions in global political and economic affairs" (The Guardian, 2010).⁷⁶ The economic and diplomatic relations with those countries, in particular with Syria, Libya, Iran, Palestine among others, had already started in the previous century, and were representing both emerging markets and natural destinations of Brazilian exports (Amorim, 2011b). But it was with Lula da Silva that a Brazilian President was for the first time including in its external agenda an official visit to the new partners' respective heads of the states.⁷⁷ In particular, the relationship Brazil-Libya has

⁷⁶ The full article is available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/dec/21/brazil-israel-palestine-diplomacy>. Accessed August 13th, 2015.

⁷⁷ Details about the relationship between Brazil and the Middle-East are available online. For Brazil- Iran information, visit: http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5248&Itemid=478&cod_pais=IRN&tipo=ficha_pais&lang=pt-BR. Further news about the bilateral relationship between Brazil and Syria is available at: http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5513&Itemid=478&cod_pais=SYR&tipo=ficha_pais&lang=pt-BR. For more information about the most recent agreements and relationship between Brazil and Libya, see:

intensified since the Brazilian favourable vote of credentials to the National Council of Transition that would have allowed the country to join the 66th General Assembly of United Nations, in 2011, recognizing the existing government as representative of the people of Libya.

At the same time, the relationship with Iran has seen an increasing economic and trade cooperation since 2002, but the most significant episode of partnership and strategic political action occurred with the articulation of a definitive solution, undertaken among Brazil, Turkey and Iran, for the nuclear question of Teheran that was signed in 2010.⁷⁸ The solution was preparing the basis for a major trust and a releasing of the negotiations between the P5+1+Iran that would later occur in July, 2015. This particular and intense relationship with both Turkey and Iran was expression of the capacity of Brazil to insert itself into a network that was conceived to be occupied only by great powers: the "networks of mediation" (Flemes and Saraiva, 2014) which usually deal with specific questions of security, by temporarily joining together states that may solve the emergency situations.

Without making any exception among old partners, emerging countries and great powers, Brazil has got engaged in many episodes of bilateral strategic partnership. If the most significant one has been the strategic relations signed with Argentina, the one with Turkey, which resulted in a Strategic Partnership Action Plan 2010 aimed to insert Brazil in an optimal position between African, Middle-Eastern and European interests; and similar other forms of association and cooperation have been realized, with further and very different countries (Vaz, 2014:12).

Moreover, Brazilian foreign policy has been active not only in the promotion of its strategic bilateral relationships, but has posed many efforts in the implementation of relationships with other important regional actors, as well as in the signature of new alliances and strategic relations between the MERCOSUR and other regional or national actors, that have assumed the format of bloc-to-bloc or bloc-to-state relationship (the 4+1 format) (Bielsa 2004:12; Ferreira-Pereira, 2015:651).

In this same first decade of the twenty-first century, the Common Market of South-America has been encouraged to establish forms of cooperation with extra-regional partners: in 2007 the Free Trade Agreement with Israel was definitely concluded,⁷⁹ the former of a series of relationships that the

http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=5379&Itemid=478&cod_pais=LBY&tipo=ficha_pais&lang=pt-BR. All sites accessed August 13th, 2015.

⁷⁸ For an exhaustive explanation of the Nuclear deal's evolution see International Crisis Group. 2014. *Iran and the P5+1: Solving the Nuclear Rubik's Cube*. Middle East Report(52). Available at: [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iran%20Gulf/Iran/152-iran-and-the-p5-plus-1-solving-the-nuclear-rubiks-cube.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iran%20Gulf/Iran/152-iran-and-the-p5-plus-1-solving-the-nuclear-rubiks-cube.pdf). Further information are available at: <http://www.nti.org/analysis/articles/brazil-backing-iran/>. Accessed August 13th, 2015.

⁷⁹ More details on the Free Trade Agreement signed between MERCOSUR and Israel are available in Pinto Coelho, C. 2009. *O acordo de Livre Comércio entre Mercosul e Israel*. Dissertation for the obtaining of the Master Degree in International Relations. Brasilia: Universidade de Brasilia.

integration was implementing with single states, in order to increase the international credibility of the South-American integration process and at the same time link the region to the Middle East world. In that time other agreements have been concluded with Egypt (2010) and Palestine (2011). Few years before the region signed an agreement with another emerging country and big partner of Brazil in the creation of a South-South cooperation: India (2004).

Related to the inter-regional agreements on forms of cooperation, MERCOSUR has established over the years strategic partnerships with other regional blocks all around the globe. In 2009 it was the turn of an agreement with SACU (South African Custom Union). But the most significant sample has been represented by the strategic alliance implemented with European Union, started in 1995 as a reaction to the United States' attempt to implement the FTAA (Free Trade Agreement of the Americas) over its Southern backyard.⁸⁰ Within this inter-regional relationship (EU-MERCOSUR), the role of Brazil for the furthering of the process has been essential,⁸¹ especially in its initial phase, as both Brazil and EU were considering each other as strategic economic partners,⁸² despite maintaining some trade barriers.⁸³

The Strategic Partnership Brazil- European Union, signed in 2007, conveyed the recognition of Brazil as an important actor, "while acknowledging its status as an emerging pivotal power" (Ferreira-Pereira, 2015:651). This master position has then been used for the relaunching of the partnership between the two regional blocs (MERCOSUR and EU) that started in 1995 had entered in a situation of impasse during the years. The return to negotiations under the aegis of Brazil was interpreted as part of

⁸⁰ For the reasons why MERCOSUR should negotiate extra-regional trade agreements, access the website available at: http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/index.?-com_content&view=article&id=6496&catid=130&Itemid=593&lang=en-GB. Accessed April 8th, 2015.

⁸¹ Since 2000, the European Union is negotiating with MERCOSUR an Association Agreement that has suffered of many stops and relaunches over the years. During the negotiations occurred in 2013, at the Ministerial meeting between representatives of the two regional blocks, both of them agreed on the necessity of working for implementing an market of exchanges of goods and services exchanges. The role of Brazil has been relevant until this moment, as the country with the biggest economic and the highest international weight has been considered- from the extra-regional actors and institutions- the most legitimate representative and the single voice of the region and regional interests within international multilateral forums and platforms. Unlikely, this recognition was not commonly accepted within the region itself where the position of Brazil was seen as suspicious and as a form of dominating and imposing its control over the neighbourhood.

⁸² The EU-Brazil strategic partnership was established in 2007, when after some years spent in the ambiguity about the future of an interregional agreement, Brazil individually and autonomously moved toward its economic and political partner. The areas of cooperation are referring to peace and security, sustainable development, regional cooperation, science, technology and innovation and culture. The European Union represent the main trade partner of Brazil: the country exports almost 20% of its total exportations to the European Union and imports from the Common Market about the same percentage. On the other hand, Brazil is in a high position in the ranking of Union's exportation among the world trade partners. See also [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release MEMO-14-122_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-122_en.htm) . Accessed April 8th, 2015.

⁸³ For the trade barriers between EU and Brazil: <http://www.eubrasil.eu/en/2015/04/10/eu-confirms-brazil-as-a-strategic-economic-partner/>. Accessed April 8th, 2015.

the foreign policy strategy of the country and was in most cases producing a feeling of *malaise* within the regional actors, mainly Buenos Aires (Ibid., 2015:648-652).

Further strategic partnership have been concluded under the Brazilian leadership, as the country has understood that a key role in forging ties with other regional actors will improve and increase its recognition as global player: thus, the relationships instituted between South-America and the other regions (i.e. Asia, Africa, Europe) have been central in the foreign policy agenda of these last years of global attendance, and in many cases these partnerships have been linked to the need of the country of forging an alliance with the key-actors of the other region, increasing at the same time its circle of bilateral relations (Vaz, 2014:11).

3.4 Foreign Policy During Dilma Rousseff's Presidency

In 2011, the new elected Brazilian President, Dilma Rousseff, assumed the role of leader by presenting a programme of continuity with the main points implemented during the two previous mandates, by her predecessor and political mate, Lula da Silva. "Continuity" in the main line of changes, has therefore been the political watchword of the new decade of the twenty-first century that was coming, both in the domestic and international scene.

However, the first mandate of the President Dilma Rousseff has evolved in a difficult and unexpected international and domestic context. The political mandate has represented a "thorny mission" (Antunes da Silva, 2015), in which the necessity of offering a major engagement and attention to the domestic problems and difficulties has contributed to distance the foreign policy from the main priorities of the country. The wide program and plan of action inherited by her predecessor was maintained in order to guarantee the continuation of the autonomous and universalist-development strategy, initiated with Lula da Silva, but the main priority of Dilma's government was linked to the achievement of people's basic need: reduction of poverty, access to health and education as well as a safer and more secure life.

The missing of a charismatic personality of the recent President, if compared to the immense capacity of Lula da Silva, has contributed to a loss of presence and affirmative attitude of Dilma Rousseff that has slightly affected the presidential diplomatic action. Thus, in her "less personal and intuitive" foreign policy (Vieira de Jesus, 2014:19), the government of Dilma Rousseff has attempted to develop concrete results, assuming a technical attitude and sight toward the many priorities of the

political agenda, and by giving more importance to the economic aspects rather than the international projection's goals of the country (Flemes and Saraiva,2014).

As mentioned, this change of priority has in part resulted from the complex international context with whom Dilma Rousseff has faced with and that was characterized by a new international economic crisis, this time affecting the great powers (mainly US and European Union) and reversing the negative effects on the Brazilian economics that started to decrease as well as their exportations, while the inflation and the general popular dissatisfaction came to grow up again.

But, notwithstanding the evident stalemate in the Brazilian foreign policy, the voice of the country has continued to be heard, even if less prominently than before (Antunes da Silva, 2015). The Brazil under Dilma Rousseff has got engaged in the proposal for a resolution of the EU financial crises through the compromise and participation of the emerging powers in overcoming the impasse. From this moment the relationship between Brazil and the EU, came to assume less of a priority as the old great power was not able to exert the same influence and appeal over the country and the region as before.

It is significant at this purpose the evidence derived by the unsuccessful attempts of restarting the inter-regional negotiations. The difficulties that Brazil met in reaching a consensus and a common acceptance of its position resulted in a slowdown of the creation of the bilateral Free Trade Agreement that was further aggravated by the Brazilian individual signature of a trade agreement with the EU. In addition, further complications derived by the opposition of both parties to reduce the trade barriers that were protecting the sensible and competitive sectors of their economics (in particular in the agricultural sector) and proceed to the liberalization of the market. Over the years the round for negotiations have been replaced, but a definitive solution seems to be still far, as some countries of MERCOSUR are contrary to join in a very competitive market, at least in current sensible years: it is the case of Argentina.⁸⁴ The re-initiation of the negotiating process that seemed almost completed in 2014, has nowadays suffered a new paralysis. A loss of primacy of Brazil in the negotiations between the two regional bloc started to be notable, as it was in the issue of the relative importance of its position *vis-à-vis* minor MERCOSUR member-states, Uruguay and Paraguay. Those countries were most favourable to promote a “one to one” free trade agreement with the European Union (as Brazil did few years ago)

⁸⁴ See more at: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/02/25/uk-eu-mercosur-argentina-idUKBREA100Y820140225>. Accessed March 23rd, 2015.

rather than wait for the full commitment and acceptance of the entire South-American block. As the current Uruguay's president claimed: ⁸⁵

"The idea is that if we can advance as a block, let's advance as a block, which is the best since it gives us greater standing and influence, but if we can't advance as a block we will study the steps to be considered and act on them"
(Vazquez, T. 2015).

Although the beginning of the new year (2015) has been celebrated by the revamp of the discussion of extra-regional agreements of bilateral economic, energy and infrastructure cooperation and furthering of the process of inter-regionalism referred to the signature of the EU-MERCOSUR agreement; what still persists are the difficulties of the South-American block in presenting itself as a unitary actor on the international stage.

At the same time, the Itamaraty has developed a key role in mediating for a peaceful dialogue between the president Maduro and the opposition in Venezuela, in order to let the country be re-inserted in the UNASUR's meetings. The new-born Development Bank of BRICS was supposed to subvert the unfair institutions of Bretton Woods and guarantee one more time the support to and the compromise with the development cause of the less developed countries. In 2011, as referred earlier in this dissertation, Brazil attempted to pull off the shot and consecrate its international presence and image as middle and normative power, committed to the respect of human rights and international law (Vieira de Jesus, 2014:20), by introducing at the Assembly of the United Nations the evolution of the norm of the R2P: The Responsibility while Protecting, in order to advance the doctrine and make it more coherent to the principles of UN that appeared to be undermined by the use of coercive power in humanitarian interventions, as the UN Chart did not foreseen it in these cases. The abandonment of this project some time later has been a negative point of the Brazilian foreign policy of Dilma that lost her chance for a return to highest positions in the international politics.

In the following years Dilma's engagement in international quests has been superficial and has resulted in a less will of the President to participate to international debates, as well as in the closing of some embassies in Africa and in the difficulties in assuming a position in the matters related to the

⁸⁵ For further information about the attempt to go over the current impasse in EU- MERCOSUR negotiations, check <http://en.mercopress.com/2015/04/13/uruguay-brazil-meeting-to-attempt-an-advance-in-mercosur-eu-trade-talks> (accessed April, 15th, 2015). The loss of Brazilian prime role is reported in <http://en.mercopress.com/2014/11/28/mercosur-and-eu-could-not-establish-a-date-for-the-exchange-of-new-proposals> (accessed April 20th, 2015. About the "one to one" deal with European Union proposed by the South-American minor countries, check at <http://en.mercopress.com/2015/04/20/uruguay-insists-with-the-eu-trade-accord-even-leavingmercosur-aside> and at <http://en.mercopress.com/2015/02/01/mercosur-does-not-exist-uruguay-should-try-a-one-to-one-deal-with-the-europe> (accessed April 20th, 2015).

Middle-East crises, or in intervening in the Iran Nuclear Deal in support of the Iranian position as it had occurred few years before (Antunes da Silva, 2015).

This change of political attitude has resulted by some domestic difficulties that the country has experienced and that have affected its international image and the work done by the government. At the end of the first mandate of Dilma Rousseff (2013-2014) many social protests occurred across Brazil, on the eve of the World Cup and mainly related to the excessive waste of national money in sectors that were not seen as critical for the Brazilian population. The claims of the people who went to the street were related to the implementation of policy for improving the education and the health sectors, to end with the political scandals of corruption and the excessive rates of violence in the country (most of the time backed up by the very same military forces created to guarantee the citizens' safety). The international sport events became a platform of complaints for the Brazilian people's dissatisfaction and a rapid way to get a response from the government, which was reducing its international prestige and image of country committed to the development, the social agenda and both the welfare and security of its citizens.

The resized presence in the international scene was substituted by a renovate importance given to South-America, both to the regional integration projects and the strengthening of the bilateral relationships with Argentina and Venezuela, in order to maintain the regional stability, democracy and the promotion of social cohesion, competitiveness and policies of convergence among the neighbours (Vieira de Jesus, 2014:22). A return to collaboration between Brazil and the US was aimed to act in the international system on the basis of a convergence of interests in global matters. The espionage scandal has stormed the Brazilian government that maybe for the first time since Rousseff's election has replied with a firm and high voice to the US, denouncing the despicable attitude (Antunes da Silva, 2015). Nowadays, despite the divergences in the fields of security and humanitarian interventions, both countries appear to be interested in a deepening of the bilateral cooperation, as it was showed during the last meeting between Dilma Rousseff and Barack Obama, in 2015.

The re-election of Rousseff, in 2014, was based on promises about a strong programme of domestic growth while guaranteeing the stability and a foreign policy based on continuity and promotion of new fields of action (Onuki, 2014).⁸⁶ But by the time she was re-elected the country has stopped

⁸⁶ Discussion developed during the conference "*Eleições e Política Externa: O debate eleitoral e os rumos da política externa brasileira no próximo governo*" realized at Institute of International Relations (IRI-USP), in date September 29th, 2014, with the participation of professors Tullo Vigevani, Eduardo Viola and José Augusto Guilhon Albuquerque. The conference was coordinated by Janina Onuki.

growing: the economy has dramatically worsened and the international prominence and participation has reduced.

In conclusion, Brazilian foreign policy during the Rousseff's government has been presented as less active and globally involved. If it is true that the Brazilian president does not presents the same charismatic features of her predecessor, who has realized something that was "never before seen in Brazil's policy"(Almeida, 2010), but is also true that her engagement has been significant even if limited within a more pragmatic and modest response. The challenges presented by the international context required a more selected and well-thought foreign policy in all the different networks of Brazilian engagement. With Dilma nothing was left to its own devices, but each choice and decision, above all in foreign policy, has been more balanced: no attempts neither experiments were allowed. Instead, small and firm steps were made, to characterize the behaviour of a monster country that silently wants to change the system from inside, without inducing any suspect or fear.

3.5 Conclusion

The rise of Brazil, together with other emerging middle powers has influenced the current international and regional structure, albeit not always in a positive way: the outcomes of their requests have in many cases assumed a divergent and clashing feature, and have generated high costs for those countries (Lopes, Camarões, Gama, 2013:23). In other words "while attempting to exert control or influence over decision making about relevant international issues [...] by contrast with great powers, middle powers as Brazil will be much more sensitive to such effects" (Ibid., 2013:24).

With the election of Lula da Silva, the neoliberal model came to be subverted by a new political action that will "[create] the condition for the history" (Arendt apud. Bielsa, 2004:5) by implementing policies for the guarantee of both development and autonomy. The policy of Lula da Silva was introduced as "national and internationalist" meaning that the Brazilian diplomacy maintained objectives that "may be 'universalist' and at the same time firmly linked to the South-American priorities" (Amorim, 2004:41-43). The logic of autonomy, understood as the continuous capacity of be strengthened by a stronger presence in the international affairs that complementing the participation in the international regimes (autonomy through participation) without losing the national management of the foreign policy throughout a process of automatic alignment (autonomy through distance) and the searching for non-traditional partners and adhesion to international regimes and regional alliances (autonomy through diversification) (Vigevani and Cepaluni, 2007). Based on the concept of

“universalism” of the Brazilian foreign policy, assuming it in the form expressed by Celso Lafer, the country's action in the world politics might be characterized by “a plurality of interests, historical and political affinities that will represent the worry in diversifying as much as possible the external relations of Brazil” (2004).

If during the era of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the international participation and recognition of Brazil was to be achieved by occupying the position of “the last among the firsts” (Lima, 2012:20); with the election of Lula, Brazil has changed its strategy, now related to a pragmatic and smart perception of the world and participation in the global governance. It has contributed to combine the position of both “first” and “second class” country (Ferreira-Pereira, 2015), on the basis of the exogenous context and the perceived importance of the matter in question, for its relative gains. Then, the main characteristics of the Brazilian Foreign Policy resulted in pragmatism and nationalism, as the country forged alliances with developing countries, particularly with other middle powers- like India and South-Africa with whom has created the group of IBSA, or joined with China and Russia, with whom it has created the BRICS, and by creating groups of discussion- like the G20- to face the great powers of the system in a bargaining game (Oliveira, Onuki, and Oliveira, 2006). Moreover, the Brazilian foreign policy has acted in a proactive way in relation to the international organizations, both economic and political, and has not abandoned the coalitions with developed countries; it has improved its “South-South diplomacy”, as the Lula's government has initiated a project of cooperation for the development with those poorest countries of Africa, Asia, Middle-East and of course Latin-America (Lopes, Camarões, Gama, 2013:15)

The President Lula, and all the diplomatic body at his follow (composed by Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, Marco Aurélio Garcia e Celso Amorim), strongly believed that a country like Brazil, full of resources and with strong soft power and diplomatic capacities was not conceived as submitted to any hegemonic power. The Brazilian foreign policy was therefore described as autonomous, searching for an independent, firm and peaceful implementation. This objective was to be reached mainly by engaging in the promotion of the multilateralism, in its fairer and more democratic features.

The Brazil of the twenty-first century seemed to have understood that its development depends on the networks of relationships that it will be able to develop and in which it is going to participate, by assuming its double identity of both a South-American and an emerging developed country “[by making] the policy of their geography” (Danese, 2001) and hence, working as mediator between the different networks. The many priorities of the Brazilian Foreign policy reflects this complex identity of the country that requires a strong support everywhere in order to achieve positive results. If on the one hand, the

engagement into the regional and hemispherical project should assist Brazilian rise to the international level and support the attempts of transformation of the global governance mechanisms, the participation and accommodation of the country in those same institutions that it is aimed to change, represented a strategic choice of Brazil and the governments of the new century in the pursuing of the national interests. By referring to this controversial situation as the "tragedy of middle powers politics within international institutions", some authors point out the difficulties of a country to organize a coherent discourse and behaviour in its foreign policy, while not possessing the capacity of acting as a great power and shape and follow the international norms (Lopes, Camarões, Gama, 2013:24).

Looking for its global recognition and active participation, the Brazilian ambassador, Gelson Fonseca Jr., claimed that it is necessary for Brazil to maintain a coherent and positive discourse in its engagement in a "networked world order" (Flemes and Saraiva, 2014): old and new priorities should be placed at the same level of importance, in order to not feed any feeling of mistrust and resentments among the partners and at the same time being able to achieve its international goals (Fonseca Jr. 2015). Almost all along the twenty-first century, the agendas of foreign policy of Brazil have recurred to assume each partnership, strategic alliance, project of cooperation or integration and multilateral participation as priorities of the government to be safe-guarded and carefully developed. Therefore, at the common question that might arise of which one is the real priority of foreign policy, when anything is a priority, the response reminds to the unpredictability and the unsafety to bet everything (the country's resources and efforts) on something that we cannot assess the accuracy of a possible gain. Then, the absence of a specific partner and of a selective line of action in foreign policy may be described as a "building of coalitions of variable geometry" (Lopes, Camarões, Gama, 2013:17)⁸⁷ (see Annex 2).

This attitude appears to be a feature of those emerging countries that, over the years, have become reluctant to the idea of using the regionalism's phenomenon to guarantee the multipolarity of the system, and at the same time they passed over the attempt of helping themselves by adopting their own regions as platforms for realizing the following jump toward the achievement of the international goals and projections, as it could happen at the beginning of their rise (Malamud and Gardini, 2012:125). If the system presents nowadays enough space for many poles governing at the same time,

⁸⁷ Brazil has took part in both forms of multilateralism, joining the international institutions and regimes (ONU, WTO, among many), and forms of unilateralism, preferring the formation of small coalitions among other middle powers, at the regional and international level (Flemes, 2007), while at the same time maintaining strategic relationships with old important partners and new ones both as single actor in the international system and promoter of the interests of the region to which it belongs (mainly MERCOSUR), through the stipulation of double negotiations, that will commit the country to a full agenda, or a partial one (as may be the cultural one developed with the CPLP, or the trade agenda promoted with China, among others).

emerging powers seem do not have any intention to sacrifice themselves to be the paymaster within their own regions and therefore to pay the costs and suffer the headaches that this means, above all when the region is not reacting in enforcing the paymaster's role.⁸⁸

The main objective of this chapter has been to introduce the evolution of the Brazilian foreign policy over the years, showing how the increasing of capabilities of a state is strictly linked to a change in its political performance and priorities of action. The positive economic performance of Brazil and the increasing international prestige have contributed to spread in the national institutions the idea that walking alone on the way for the global governance would have been beneficial for the country as it would have avoided any dealing with opposing partners and attempts of failure. The great successes of Brazil were supporting its self-perception of a country that could work alone to achieve its objectives. Aware of that, the second mandate of Lula presented Brazil as standing in the middle, between the region and the world, but mainly oriented to the broader arena.

The representation of Brazil has changed since the difficult and less optimistic outcomes achieved by the country during the first mandate of the President Dilma Rousseff. The new image of Brazil was of a country standing with both the feet in the region but still looking at the world politics, in a more modest and less active way. The attempts of regional coming back were linked to the reduced perception of its capabilities and power. The autonomous international policy was then to be substituted by a one where the country was not owing the necessary resources to support the costs and the dangers of the international system. The joint action with other countries in the international system therefore tended to be presented as more positive. Because of that, Dilma Rousseff's policy came to reconsider the region and to relaunch once more both the common institutions and the strategic partnership with Argentina. In doing that the international action has been reduced but in general a certain degree of continuity between this mandate and Lula da Silva's one was maintained (see Annex 3).

In conclusion, the changes of political action and priorities of the Brazilian governments of the new millennium have been noted among the other countries of the region, who reacted with resistance

⁸⁸ The emerging countries of the twenty-first century are geographically situated in the Southern hemisphere and are representatives of different areas of the world, as they are collocated in separated continents or areas of influence. Since the first appearance of the acronym ideated by economists- BRICS- in order to refer to the emerging economics of the new millennium (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South-Africa) and their respective regions (South-America; Central Asia, South-Eastern Asia and Pacific, Eastern Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa) nowadays the world has met many other "letters" that are showing high results in terms of economic and financial duties and is acquiring a stronger political capacity and will to subvert the old-fashioned structure of the international system and introduce a fairer and more democratic multilateral system.

in most of the cases in order to guarantee their own interests, mainly the latter were seen under a threats on the part of the regional giant.

Chapter 4

The implications of the global Brazil upon the relationship with Argentina and the region (MERCOSUR)

The South-American giant has always acted as "mediator" within the sub-continent, aiming to impose a positive and benevolent leadership, through both diplomacy and rule of law (Fonseca Jr. apud. Lafer, 2009:47) and striving towards gradual regional accommodation (Brigagão and Seabra, 2009), rather than opting for imposition and coercion. However, the creation of a stable regional area under its influence has proved difficult to be achieved. The previous chapters have explored Brazil's efforts towards the creation of a strong region that would have reflected the global growing power of Brazil, a space of cooperation and empowerment by the neighbour countries, while also focusing on the institutionalization of a South-American project, seen from Brasilia as necessary to attenuate the mistrust and the regional misunderstandings (Lafer, 2009:84).

If with President Cardoso the Brazilian foreign policy invested in the "soft power of credibility" (ibid,;118), in which the Itamaraty constructively dealt with global matters through the participation in international multilateral forums, with the following president the country has maintained a typical attitude of 'soft power' country, while aiming to improve Brazil's international recognition. The many priorities of Lula's international strategy, previously described, have been informed by a broader perspective of action of the country and the achievement of more salient weight in the international rule and norm making. Although the country has maintained its interests in the regional integration and the cooperative relationship with the neighbourhood, and in particular with Argentina, there proved to be many obstacles to a potentially improved Brazilian international position on the part of the regional leaders.

The implications of the global aspirations of the giant with the region and the strategic partner will be analysed below. The chapter therefore presents an empirical evidence of the case-study which should support the initial hypothesis. The underlying aspiration of the analysis is to explore the link between the growing international prestige of Brazil and the difficult acceptance of its policy and role in the region.

4.1 The linkage with the region

The previous chapters described the main role played by Brazil in 2000s, in terms of the relaunch of the MERCOSUR integration project as well as of its acceptance of the new members and new fields of action. It seemed that MERCOSUR was again about to reflect its initial principles and targets, entering a stage of radical transformation. The regional crisis occurred at the turn of the millennium and its repercussions for the region have accentuated the debate on the negative external influences on the MERCOSUR integration process. The revision of the model occurred with the rise to power, in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, of governments with a new distinct position as the one predominant in the previous decade (Briceño, 2007).

In 2003 the new elected governments of Argentina and Brazil, while being expression of a more pragmatic socialism, have critically assessed the previous economic policies and engaged themselves in a change of action. It is worth emphasising that Lula's favourable position to implement these changes in order to make the integration more viable, inclusive and useful occurred during his first presidential mandate (2003-2006), when Brazil was still interested in gaining the regional legitimacy and recognition as a "natural leader". As already been demonstrated in the previous chapters, Brazilian change of attitude toward the regional institution resulted in the different approach towards the neighbours all long the President Lula's second mandate (2007-2010). In response to the reluctance of the region towards the Brazilian initiatives, Lula's foreign policy chose to act with growing indifference in the region, looking beyond it and seeking international recognition on the part of other regional blocs, multilateral institutions, developing countries and emerging economies.

The Brazilian engagement towards the region has been strictly bound to the concept of the "Logistic State", which substantiated in giving some impulses to the productive development of infrastructures and the energy cooperation. Brazil's large employment of the funds coming from the BNDES for the financing of the IIRSA projects that would improve the South-American infrastructure would eventually positively affect the development of all the region, was linking together the productive and social dimension of the integration, guaranteeing a better redistribution of the growth and the welfare among the populations. The regional partners have nevertheless viewed this action in negative terms: Brazil was accused of hegemonic and opportunistic motives towards the sub-continent, allegedly hidden behind a benevolent attitude and solidarity discourse. While according to the latter, the country was engaging itself in the regional integration and development, in reality, the Brazilian regional policy

was oriented towards attracting foreign investment, allowing for the country's more significant political and economic advantages.

The Brazilian national financing of the regional development since 2008 led to significant results in the times when the world was suffering from the international economic and financial crisis, the states of MERCOSUR were able to survive. They seemed to promote a deeper integration among them, in order to protect themselves from what could be the negative effects of the global economic interdependence: the intraregional exchanges increased and in some cases it seemed that the region was aware that a better articulation and cooperation would be beneficial among the difficulties and international financial threats (Vigevani and Ramanzini, 2013: 213).

All along this period, Brazil has reacted to the post- 2008 crisis in a different way than the (other) affected countries, by increasing the demand of money and loans and at the same time avoiding a reduction of the productive investments that allowed for industry and infrastructure development, in spite of such difficult period (Lacerda and Oliveira, 2013).⁸⁹ The construction of infrastructure within the region has been realized by the participation of the Brazilian leading companies, such as Odebrecht, Camargo Corrêa and Andrade Gutierrez.⁹⁰ But when the international economic and financial crisis reached the Southern Cone countries, the other economics started to distance themselves from the neighbour. Eventually, the regional integration came back to a period of uncertainty and stagnation, while the states tended to establish agreements with extra-regional partners. At the end of 2014, by the end of the first mandate of Dilma Rousseff, the difficulties and the slowing of Brazil's growth were already notable, and they would worsen even more in the beginning of her second mandate.

The main objective of the Brazilian President was to promote the revival of MERCOSUR, by covering many of its economic difficulties and impasses: the creation of institutions and mechanisms as well as the attempt to widen the duties of these organisms and the enlargement of the regional block

⁸⁹ During the mandates of President Lula, the BNDES came to be considered a trustful and efficient mechanism of foreign policy and in particular of strengthening of the regional integration process while at the same time assisting the Brazilian industries in their attempts of internationalization. From 1997 to 2009 an amount of almost US\$ 2,5 billion of the Bank funds were destined to projects in countries of the Common Market of South-America, while only in the first semester of 2010, soon later the international crises, the amount increased significantly to reach US\$ 378 million of investments toward the region. By acting for the regional financing, the BNDES is developing the national strategy: it is investing in the creation of the region by increasing the national demand of exporting services. The BNDES is then contributing and assisting the Brazilian companies in the internationalization of their economics and services. In Carvalho, C. 2010. *O papel do BNDES no aprofundamento do Mercosul*. Paper presented at the V Congreso Latinoamericano de Ciencia Política. Asociación Latinoamericana de Ciencia Política, Buenos Aires. Available at: <http://www.aacademica.com/000-036/840.pdf>

⁹⁰ For a discussion about the *pro et contra* of Brazil in supporting and financing, via BNDES, the development and the infrastructures within the region, we suggest to check the article available online at: <http://www.cartacapital.com.br/revista/804/obras-em-variaslinguas-6655.html> . Accessed September 27th, 2014.

were a clear example of hiding the problem and considering MERCOSUR an instrument of foreign policy. The many difficulties in engaging into the regional projects led to the abandonment of this strategy, opting for Brazilian *Alleingang*. Be it as it may, the decision of Brazil of keeping the regional institutions away from supra-nationalism has been useful to the extent that the country was not bound by any provision or mechanisms that would have obliged Brasilia to assume the costs of the integration project and act as its pay-master. While the move away from the illusion of a MERCOSUR revamp under the Brazilian leadership did take place, what still persisted were the difficulties of the South-American bloc in presenting itself as a unitary actor on the international stage.

The inefficient common agencies and the missing commitment to the regional process on the part of member-state, a minimum consensus that would require a sovereignty transfer and the development of a regional identity and unity that has always lacked in South America, are taken by some scholars as *sui generis* MERCOSUR model of the neo-functionalism (Malamud and Schmitter, 2007). This continuous running towards new objectives has not been exempt of risks. The promotion of further, more ambitious projects and initiatives which however were missing any coordinated implementation on the part of major states, and in particular Brazil, seemed to compensate for the unfulfilled integration promises regarding the previous integration phases.

The basic principle of the "spillover" mechanism (Haas and Schmitter, 1964) were completely by-passed in MERCOSUR; they were substituted by what Paulo Roberto de Almeida called a "*fuga para frente*" (Almeida, 2007 apud. Briceño, 2007:201), indicating a typical Latin-American behaviour: instead of lowering the challenge in the face of the difficult obstacles, they would pose it higher (Russell citing Ricardo Lagos, apud. Jimenez, 2014).⁹¹ In the theoretical and conceptual debate, such political options have been defined as mechanisms of "spill-back" and "spill-around" (Schmitter, 1970 apud. Briceño,2007)⁹², and eventually contributed to a new stagnation phase of MERCOSUR and the regional.⁹³

⁹¹ The full text of Diego Jimenez's interview with the Argentinean academic, Robert Russell, of November 9th, 2014 is available at: http://www.utdt.edu/nota_prensa.php?id_notas_prensa=10783&id_item_menu=441. Accessed November 25th, 2014.

⁹² In the theory of neo-functionalism, the process of "spill-back" is considered a regression in the regional integration in which the instances achieved previously lose their capacities to be influential and act in their specific sectors. The process of "spill-around", on the other hand, is characterized by the proliferation of independent efforts in the matter of regional coordination, none of them presenting the necessary authority and will to redefine the integration itself; it is just a fake perception of attempts of relaunching the integration through the creation of new objectives without realizing the previous ones (Schmitter, 1970 apud Briceño, 2007)

⁹³ For further information about the recent events of the first months of 2015, we suggest to consult the news available online at: <http://en.mercopress.com/2015/02/17/eu-tired-of-waiting-for-mercosur-to-sign-a-trade-agreement-paraguay-a-trusted-partner>, for the reason of a tired European Union in negotiating with MERCOSUR for the signature of the agreement (accessed February 18th, 2015). For the eventuality of an agreement between Uruguay and EU, without necessarily the commitment of the whole MERCOSUR due to the opposition presented by Argentina, check the online

4.2 Argentina's reactions to Brazil's global aspirations (2003-2014)

4.2.1 *The aggressive uncertainty of Nestor Kirchner (2003-2007)*

The post- 2008 international financial crisis significantly affected the precarious equilibrium and the economic security of those countries that in order to solve the problems and debts of previous decades, opted for an increasing vulnerability of their finances and trade, by linking their development and growth to international financial mechanisms and macroeconomic interdependence with extra-regional markets. The devaluation of the Real, in addition to economic measures adopted to avoid the disaster had a positive impact on the domestic sectors that moved over the stagnation and crisis. Argentina, however, acted in the opposite direction and the domestic economy was drastically affected by both the international environment and the protective measures adopted by Brasilia.⁹⁴

In December 2001, with Fernando De la Rúa's renunciation of the presidency (1999-2001), a tired and exhausted Argentina declared its default to the international community. The depreciation of Real had reduced the capacity of Brazil to import goods and services from Argentina, causing a worsening of the economic and social situation in the austral country (Solanas, 2003)⁹⁵, derived by the strong structure of interdependence among countries that the regional project promoted. In this critical situation, Buenos Aires came to accuse not only the global financial mechanisms (IMF and WB) that had stressed its finances and increased the debts and the dependence's relationship but the regional leadership of Brazil. The functioning of the regional integration project was also questioned. Latin America has paid "an high price for being the favoured test zone for neoliberal experiments" that have caused a financial crash and left the region in a situation of instability (Le Monde Diplomatique, 2003). The then-Argentina's President described the years that had preceded the collapse as:

"[a period] of wild privatizations with no regulatory frameworks to protect consumers, a time to force the disappearance of the state because the contradiction was that the state was useless, it interfered negatively with the economy, and markets were superior assigning resources"

(Senator Fernandez Kirchner, Cristina, 2005).⁹⁶

news at <http://en.mercopress.com/2015/04/20/uruguay-insists-with-the-eu-tradeaccord-even-leaving-mercosur-aside> (accessed April 22nd, 2015). For the new foreign policy of Argentina, more oriented outside the regional block, we suggest the news about the Argentina- Russia energy agreement reported at <http://en.mercopress.com/2015/04/23/cristina-fernandez-invites-russian-investors-to-argentina-thursday-she-meets-putin> and <http://en.mercopress.com/2015/04/22/gazprom-and-yfp-will-sign-agreement-to-develop-argentina-shale-oil-and-gas-deposits> (accessed 27th April, 2015) and the one about the agreement signed with China, available online at: <http://en.mercopress.com/2015/02/27/argentine-congress-approves-strategic-integral-alliance-agreements-with-china> (accessed February 27th, 2015).

⁹⁴ The full Economic Report of the Argentine Crisis is available at: <https://economics.rabobank.com/publications/2013/august/the-argentine-crisis-20012002->. Accessed June 03rd, 2015.

⁹⁵ Extracted from the documentary-film of Solanas F. (2003). *Memorias del Saqueo*. Buenos Aires: Cinesur S. A., ADR Productions, Thelma Film AG, (120 min).

⁹⁶ Available at: <http://en.mercopress.com/2005/08/24/buenos-aires-consensus-a-new-agenda-for-latinamerica>. Accessed May 15th, 2015.

After the initial freezing of the relationship with Brazil and following the accusations from the US of the economic mismanagement, Argentina nevertheless accepted the support offered by Brasilia. The government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002) supported its regional partner, letting Brazil be considered in Buenos Aires as a trustful friend and an example of alternative development to follow (Russell and Tokatlian, 2014:38). The positive image of Brazil increased both within the public opinion and the Argentina's elites. Buenos Aires addressed its foreign policy back to South-America, by opting for a strategy of "soft" regionalism as "minor member-state" that would have let it gain more self-confidence and a better outcome (Fawcett, 2004 apud Russell and Tokatlian, 2014:38).⁹⁷

But it was not until 2003, when even more significant changes in South-America took place. The neoliberal hegemony came to the end and the agendas of the new elected social progressive governments were now implemented. With the election of Nestor Kirchner (2003), Argentine politics entered a new stage: domestically, the new elected president was working on the stabilization, while internationally he was oriented towards the re-integration of the country (Candeas, 2005). The most likely description of the Argentine politics since 2003 was of an aggressive, less pragmatic and nationalist action, as compared to the previous time phase. Firstly, Argentina total hostility to the IMF and the international creditors led to the implementation of nationalist economic policies that would oust the country from the global financial markets. Moreover, the uncertain pragmatism of Buenos Aires resulted in the reorganization of its partnerships both on the regional and continental stage: the country was considering the significant presence of Brazil as a recent ideological ally, at the same time as the "carnal relationship" and the dependence from the United States were revisited (but not disappeared); showing an indefinite and unclear project of foreign policy.

The presence of Nestor Kirchner at the Casa Rosada (2003-2007) promoted a return to the bilateral collaboration and the regional integration: MERCOSUR was seen in a positive terms, due to the capacity to incentivize the international re-integration of the weakened country, provided that the project was revisited and redesigned (Gonzales, Moreira and Lerina, 2012:8). Then, the instrumentality of the regional project was oriented toward its use as a platform for a joint action of South-American countries within the international arena. Owing to the common initiatives of Argentina and Brazil, the bilateral

⁹⁷ The strategy adopted by Argentina remakes to the option of regionalism and regional participation in the position of minor states as defined by Fawcett L.(2004) in "Exploring Regional Domains: a Comparative History of Regionalism", in *International Affairs*, 80(3). Aimed to look for and promote the cooperation and the coordination in the region and a better domestic situation, Argentina promoted a soft version of regionalism in which the country proceeded to the recognition of Brazilian regional leadership. The only way for Argentina to re-insert itself internationally was to join the neighbour in the its regional projects and avoid to provoke the Brazilian reticence, by forcing Brasilia within strong and formalized regional arrangements and organizations.

cooperation was aimed to go beyond the economic disparities of the respective countries and end MERCOSUR's economic stagnation, by ousting the neoliberal policies of the previous decade and promoting a political project for the regional relaunching and stability (Sombra Saraiva, 2004).

With the pretension to overshadow the pack of reforms and measures decided by Washington, the signature of the Buenos Aires Consensus (2003) was characterized by the intensification of trade exchanges and direct investments, presidential visits, discourses and periodical consultations that resulted in an intensive bilateral proximity.⁹⁸ The prime objective was to reduce the asymmetries between the countries, to reformulate the economic integration and the volume of the bloc's exportations both in the intra and extra-regional market, to increase technological cooperation, and to proceed to the implementation of broader projects of integration, as it would have been for the creation of UNASUR, later in 2006. Differently from the Washington Consensus that used to concentrate on the efficiency of the markets, the bilateral commitment of leftist governments was aimed to contemplate, in the words of the Economy Nobel Prize Joseph Stiglitz: "[...] the importance of social equality and employment, which establishes a balance between the roles of government and markets".⁹⁹ Meanwhile, at the international level, both countries showed some similarities in attributing priority to the promotion of international regimes in their agendas, principally those related to delicate matters as Human Rights, nuclear proliferation and disarmament (Campos, 2008) and in proceeding to a reform of the structure and mechanisms of the global governance.

Despite all the initial successes, the political and ideological convergence within the neighbourhood occurring at the beginning of the new millennium was abandoned few years later, in 2005, when the threat of the Free Trade Agreement of America was finally over, together with any eventual predominance and interference of the United States in the regional matters.¹⁰⁰ The recognition of the Brazilian leadership was seen as a way to change the previous structure of dependence from the North, but the legitimacy of the Brazil's role has been a complex matter, allowing for the rivalry and the

⁹⁸ The leftist governments in Argentina and Brazil were sharing the same political ideology and the same objectives of economic development and international participation. The bilateral cooperation allowed for the convergence of interests and the argumentation within the multilateral forums of a common cause; it was particularly evident the affinity in those questions related to the economic integration project (MECOSUR and FTAA), extra-regional partners (European Union) and reforming of global governance and international organizations.

⁹⁹ Available at: <http://en.mercopress.com/2005/08/24/buenos-aires-consensus-a-new-agenda-for-latinamerica>. Accessed June 21st, 2015.

¹⁰⁰ The cooperation among the South-American countries and their engagement in many different sub-continental projects may be seen also as a strategy of contrasting and balancing the Northern hegemonic power. The US influence over the backyard had resulted in a strong submission to the policies of the international financial system and in the submission to the neoliberal proposal of regional integration model of the previous decades, the Open Regionalism. Since 2000s the regionalism in South-America came to assume new resemblances that allowed for the creation of what academics called as "post-liberal" or "post-hegemonic" (Briceño Ruiz, 2014; Rigirozzi and Tussie, 2012).

predominance of national interests to come back to the surface, at the cost of the regional ones. The growing international aspirations of Brazil were posing Argentina in an inferior position, regionally and internationally, and were mainly affecting Argentina's interests and political goals.

Since 2003, and the turn to leftist government, the strategy of Argentina towards the neighbour was shifting from the acceptance of its role of inferiority and periphery to a strategic option of 'soft balancing' Brazil in both the regional and international fields. Such "light balancing" of Argentina, as it has been defined by Russell and Tokatlian, resulted in a combination of the strengthening of the domestic economic and international development with the limitation of the excessive influence and leadership of Brazil within South-American questions, by establishing closer ties with other regional and extra-regional actors and international institutions (2014: 42-43).

Firstly, the regional difficulties in converging within the Brazilian aspirations were mainly based on the enormous differences that the giants presented, both in terms of economic asymmetries, territorial dimension, population size and culture. The perception of Brazil as a different actor within the region has significantly affected its influence over South-America (Danese, 2001). Argentina on the other side, taking advantages of the strong regional role played in the past, was seen regionally as the one that could lead a concert of countries against any eventual Brazilian hegemony. Buenos Aires therefore became able to coordinate a group of resistance and opposition against the Brazilian aspirations that had touched upon the highest priorities and levels of commitment of Lula da Silva.

In 2005 the relationship between the two partners witnessed a new confrontation on a similar international issue as back in 1994 on the Brazilian candidacy for a permanent seat in the UNSC. Few years later Brazil joined the emerging countries in the establishment of the IBSA group, which entered the international scene with a new proposal of reform of the global governance's agenda, involving the UN agencies and the multilateral economic and financial system of Bretton Woods. Once more, Brazilian aspiration met the opposition of Argentina, which declared that any reform should be debated within the General Assembly (Sombra Saraiva, 2004).

[...] For Argentina an outcome that ensures more equitable and fair rules for international trade is of great importance, which is why we actively participate in multilateral economic negotiations with the firm objective to achieve equity in the rules governing world trade and change situation of discrimination suffered by our principal export products through trade barriers and other trade-distorting instruments that developed countries apply"
(President Kirchner Nestor, 2007- Discourse at the 62° UN General Assembly)

The attempts of Brazil to invite an Argentine diplomat to join its delegation at the UNSC, in the biennium of 2004-2005, to show at least a minimum of solidarity with the neighbour's behaviour, were in vain. If for the Brazilian representatives, the non-permanent membership offer meant the maintaining

of the rapprochement and an understanding of the partner's conditions (Fonseca Junior, 2015); from Argentina's point of view it was seen as a behaviour of co-opting and silencing the divergences by demonstrating a 'carrot' in case of Argentina's benevolence and support to Brasilia's plans (Sombra Saraiva, 2004).

In 2005, in the context of the election of the new president of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Brazil proposed its own candidate, José Sayad, confident that the ideological and political proximity with Argentina and its engagement as cooperative and benign neighbour in the region would help to create a group of support and to gain over the US representative.¹⁰¹ Argentina, however, opted for contesting the Inter-American pretensions of President Lula and started a series of talks with the rest of the region in order to reach a common position in favour of a new candidate, the Colombian Luis A. Moreno that became the IDB president few months later. One more time Brazil aspirations were affected in its international projects by Argentine divergent position, that was able to mobilize the rest of South- American forces, in stark contrast to what Brasilia and the diplomatic skills of Lula had been able to do (Malamud, 2011; Simonoff, 2010).

At the regional level the political divergences between Brasilia and Buenos Aires were mainly related to different positions to both the institutionalization and the functioning of the economic and political bloc, as well as to the widening of the integration project with the admission of new member-states to MERCOSUR. An example of the opposite positions of Argentina and Brazil in relation to the acceptance of new candidates was 2006 Venezuela formal candidacy, which was followed by Bolivia. If in the first case Brazil and Paraguay were critical of the request of Chavez leadership application, for political and ideological reasons and due to the difficulties of the Caribbean country to commit itself to the economic and political reforms, in the spirit of (neo)liberal rules and values, the Argentine position was to stress the advantages that could result from the integration process followed by the full admission of Caracas. The new “trustful partner” of Buenos Aires (denomination once reserved to Brazil) has been seen as the alternative regional pole to face and limit Brazilian power rise (Russell and Tokatlian, 2011:12), in addition to being a source of energy resources.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ The Argentine support in the election was necessary for the candidate José Sayad because Argentina and Brazil are the two most significant countries in terms of capital resources (10,75% for each one) within the Inter-American Bank of Development, after the United States (that owns the 30% of the IDB capital). For the efficacy of the election, the candidate of a country needs to count on the majority of the votes and a support that represent more than half of the capital of the entire Bank. More information are available at: <http://www.valor.com.br/arquivo/469259/argentina-da-sinais-de-que-nao-apoiara-sayad-no-bid>. Accessed May 27th, 2015.

¹⁰² An interesting analysis about the role of Venezuela in the regional integration project is described in: Severo L.W. 2014. A importância estratégica da Venezuela no Mercosul. In *Mercosul a Unasul. Avanços do processo de integração*, 499-521. Ed. Gadelha R; São Paulo: Editora EDUC/Fapesp.

The strengthening of ties between Chavez and Kirchner resulted in a political coordination and in the respect of their strategies: despite each South-American country presenting a different political, economic and social model, the relationship between them corresponded to the line of thinking determined by Realism: everyone is looking for the most convenient national strategy, always in the respect of the regional identity (Cherniak, 2015). The diversity of South-America democratic models has not prevented the coordination of political action against some external threat, as in the case of the Falkland Islands, US accusation of Caracas' regime, or the Summit of the Americas and regarding the return of Cuba. In all these moments, the region has showed a strong legacy, in spite of the divergence of views among the individual states (Ibid.).

On the other hand, when it came to Bolivia's candidacy, in 2007, Buenos Aires opted for opposing, even if not publicly, Brasilia's support to the full membership (Bolivia was hesitant to adopt the Common External Tariff- TEC).¹⁰³

Secondly, another kind of divergence was related to the difficulty of MERCOSUR to overcome its political and institutional deficits, the economic stagnation and loss of vitality, mainly due to a missing disposition of Brazil to solve the problems (Bielsa, 2005- Argentine Foreign Minister).¹⁰⁴ In addition, Buenos Aires came back to pressure the neighbour and the MERCOSUR itself in order to create efficient mechanisms that would have helped the country to protect the important and strategic sectors of its economy.¹⁰⁵ As the new agenda for the regional integration process was oriented toward the revision of the institutional design and the improvement of the trade and industrial sector of the integration, Buenos Aires appears to have interpreted the strategy for the regional change as a way to implement protectionist measures toward those Brazilian exports that were threatening the national production. In doing that it was necessary to ignore the rules of the free trade and of fundamental treaty of 1991

¹⁰³ Although the same treatment was accepted in the case of the Argentina's partner, Venezuela, it was considered an obstacle to the candidacy of La Paz, negatively affecting the relationship between Argentina and Brazil and the common decision-making process. Available at: <https://portogente.com.br/noticias-do-dia/bolivia-no-mercosul-opoe-brasil-e-argentina-9131>. Accessed June 02nd, 2015.

¹⁰⁴The declaration of the Argentine Foreign Minister against the diplomatic action of Brazil is available at: <http://www.valor.com.br/arquivo/458715/chanceler-argentino-critica-acao-de-diplomacia-brasileira>. Accessed May 27th, 2015.

¹⁰⁵ Since the origins of the regional project and since the first attempts to create a free trade area among Argentina and Brazil first, to later be joined by the others, Buenos Aires has always adopted protectionist measures to save its strategic and more vulnerable sectors from the competitive participation in the liberal economic system, Particularly at the regional level, Argentina has restricted the importations from the neighbour country and has opposed the adoption of the same mechanism from Brasilia, even if that procedure was accepted on the basis of the Clause of Competitive Adaptation (CAC), introduced by the Argentine Minister Lavagna. The news are available at: <http://www.valor.com.br/arquivo/459631/empresarios-argentinos-reclamam-decomercio-com-brasil> and <http://www.valor.com.br/arquivo/466567/brasil-agora-admite-liberar-salvaguadas-para-argentina>, Accessed May 27th, 2015.

(Russell and Tokatlian, 2014:40), thereby affecting the economic development of the neighbour and paralyzing the integration project:

"With the principal members of the bloc debating about restrictions to the free trade and together with the missing of instruments able to reduce the asymmetries among the partners, any step forward an effective integration of the Southern Cone will continue to be a dream"

(Marcos Cintra, Vice-president Fundação Getulio Vargas)¹⁰⁶

The economic policies of the previous years have resulted in an inconstant political action for almost a century that contributed to debilitate Argentina and its international projection and engagement. The difficulties of Buenos Aires, in guaranteeing the economic stability of its country and the repercussions that the domestic financial crises have on its international image, aggravated an already critical scenario. Subsequently, the response coming from the president Nestor Kirchner, and his successor/wife Cristina Kirchner, was to protect the strategic and most vulnerable sectors of the Argentine economics from those threats coming from the regional and international market and to reduce the unemployment rate.¹⁰⁷ The protectionism was chosen as a political strategy to secure the domestic development and the survival of the national industries, but jeopardized the regional integration process that came to be affected by a reduction of the competitiveness and the free trade benefits. This situation eventually led to a new, more profound, stagnation of MERCOSUR in spite of the constant declarations of both Argentina and Brazil, affirming their commitment to the reactivation of the trade and the institutional mechanisms.¹⁰⁸

The signature of bilateral agreements between Argentina and extra-regional actors was achieved in order to reduce the influence from northern states and to benefit of the financial investments that this countries were directing toward the region and the domestic territory and of a broader market for the national exportations. Buenos Aires started to prefer stricter ties with other influential international players, among which the United States and China (Russell and Tokatlian, 2014:40).¹⁰⁹ At the same

¹⁰⁶ Available at: <http://www.brasil247.com/pt/247/mundo/66815/O-conflito-Brasil-Argentina.htm>. Accessed May 27th, 2015.

¹⁰⁷ Access: http://www.ieco.clarin.com/economia/proteccionismo-ICC-desocupacion-Argentina-Elizondo-abeceb-ACMEconomia_y_Regiones-importaciones_0_1333666846.html. Accessed June 21st, 2015.

¹⁰⁸ Available at: http://www.ieco.clarin.com/economia/Mercosur-Argentina-Brasil-Uruguay-Union_Europea_0_1379862303.html. Accessed June 21st, 2015.

¹⁰⁹ In 2004, when both Argentina and Brazil received the visits of China's president, Hu Jintao, the capacity of cooperation between the two major regional countries resulted to be weak. The respective bilateral treaties with China were then dominated by a "periphery unilateralism", that were mainly satisfying their national interests and offering relative gains in detrimental of the significant other. Ten years later the Argentina's Strategic Agreement with China is still in vigour and "[represents] a system that allow [Argentina] for creating mechanisms of balancing in trade exchanges [...] at the current days" exporting to China more than USD 5000 million, "the second market of our exportations, just behind the Federative Republic of Brazil", as Capitanich J. Chief of Argentine Government affirmed. Available at: <http://casarosada.gob.ar/informacion/conferencia/28375-conferencia.de.prensa-del-jefe-de-gabinete-en-casa-rosada-12-de-febrero-de-2012>. Accessed June 15th, 2015.

time Argentina's regional commitment was oriented toward a "Latin-Americanization" of its links, in order to introduce other major states (like Mexico, Chile and Venezuela)¹¹⁰ to compete and contrast the Brazilian primacy and to maintain a significant regional level of autonomy (Simonoff, 2009; Russell and Tokatlian, 2014).¹¹¹

"[...] we are building the MERCOSUR, [and] we are attempting to establish a space of all countries of South-America, Latin-America and America, to which we would like to see it being joined by a significant country, with a significant economy like Mexico".

(Nestor Kirchner, Discourse at the Clinton Global Initiative- September 27, 2007)¹¹²

For Buenos Aires, the concept of the region should have been enlarged in order to include other significant actors in that geographical space, especially in the context of the international rise of Brazil, which seemed to assume an irreversible character, resulted in a change in the perceptions and strategies of the *Casa Rosada*, vis-à-vis its historical rival.

4.2.2 The regional pragmatism of Cristina F. Kirchner (2007- 2015)

The increasing political weight of Brazil both within the region and the international multilateral forums (economically necessary, but politically inconvenient) has over-shadowed and weakened the already critical image of Buenos Aires. In a critical national context, as the one experienced by Argentina, in which the economy was debilitated and the political legitimacy and authority seemed to be weakened by the financial problems and the past governance's mistakes, the perception of the nation's declined prestige came to be generally accepted at least in the last decade. With the election of Cristina Fernandez Kirchner in 2007, Brazil returned to a more central role, becoming an "inevitable" and "indispensable" country; a necessary partner to allow for the international re-positioning of Argentina. Although both countries started to look into the same direction in favour of a common, stable and pacific South-America, the Argentine protectionism in the economic field and the strong nationalism in the political one, was posing serious obstacles and misunderstandings in their relation.

¹¹⁰ More detailed framework of the relationship between Argentina and Mexico are available at: <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/929935-los-kirchner-mucho-mas-cerca-de-mexico> and at <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/930121-kirchner-busca-en-mexico-un-socio-politico-y-comercial>. Accessed June 03rd, 2015. For the debate about the axis Buenos Aires- Caracas as a form of balancing Brazil, see Tokatlian, J.G. 2004. Un neo anti-brasileanismo?. *Revista Debate*, 2(78).

¹¹¹ Since the return to the democracy, the Argentine foreign policy have been built on the balance between the regional autonomy and the partnership with hegemony powers in order to support its international insertion. The later economic and financial problems have affected the free decision-making process of the country that has always been subjected to the recipes imposed by the international financial system. With the collapse of the new millennium, Argentina was obliged to create stronger links with Washington, despite many neighbour countries (like Brazil) have offered their assistance and were confident in Argentine capacities to pass the crisis. The recent international reallocation of Brasilia has been suspiciously seen in Buenos Aires that strategically opted for avoiding a "double dependence" with both Brasilia and Washington (Simonoff, 2009).

¹¹² Available at: <http://www.casariosada.gob.ar/discursosnk/24143-blank-70726801>. Accessed June 18th, 2015.

The political course chosen by Cristina Kirchner Fernandez has been underpinned by the older strategy of linking the big and powerful neighbour to the region toward an integration project (Russell and Tokatlian, 2011:13-14). Moreover, the creation of a strong and united regional bloc was regarded as necessary for the attendance into the world politics, which was dominated by the inter-regionalism (Kirchner Fernandez, 2007 Nov. 19). As the former presidents had declared, the use of a regional institution to open a space for a weak country on the international scene was inevitable:

"It is impossible to integrate the world if a country is not regionally integrated [...] MERCOSUR should then be strengthened in order to allow its member-states for reaching a privileged position in the global system"
(Kirchner Fernandez, 2014- the translation is of the author)¹¹³

It followed that the regional integration process could not anymore be delayed and obstacles affecting the country's access in the international arena needed to be removed. The Argentina-Brazil Strategic Association was hence conceived as important, not only conceptually but mainly functionally, for the further progress of the bilateral and regional process (Fernandez Kirchner, 2007).¹¹⁴

Since her first presidential mandate, Cristina has opted to follow the steps of her husband and continued to implement a foreign policy, that has resulted to be nationalist, protectionist and in some moments aggressive, but definitely more pragmatic than her predecessor. The major degree of pragmatism may appear in the return, as already said above, to a more stable policy toward Brasilia in order to oust the divergences and the diffidence so frequent in the past. The relationship with Brazil was now considered for Buenos Aires as the most strategic of all (Argentina, Republic of, 2015) both in terms of domestic growth and access to broader opportunity, and for the overcoming of the recent stagnation of MERCOSUR. As the President Cristina expressed during the Summit of MERCOSUR in Paraná,, in which Buenos Aires was covering the *pro-tempore* presidency of the institution, "it might never have development nor growth if it is not under an inclusive feature" (2014). To allow for the inclusion of all the countries and their national sector and populations, this integration should respect social equality (one of the main goals of the Justicialist Party)¹¹⁵ , which is represented by the respect of the same conditions for all the participants of the regional process of integration, which entails:

¹¹³ Discourse of the President of Argentina, Cristina Kirchner Fernandez at the 47th Summit of Chiefs of States and Chiefs of Governments of MERCOSUR, realized in the city of Paraná, December 18th, 2014. Available at: <http://www.casariosada.gob.ar/slider-principal/28213-es-imposible-integrarse-al-mundo-si-no-esta-integrada-la-region-afirmola-presidenta>. Accessed June 15th, 2015.

¹¹⁴ Declaration of President Cristina Fernandez Kirchner during her visit to Brazil, in which the new elected Argentine president met the Brazilian respective, Lula da Silva, in date November 19th, 2007. Available at: <http://www.casariosada.gob.ar/discursosnk/24178-blank-29697842>. Accessed June 19th, 2015.

¹¹⁵ The main discourse of the Justicialist Party, the Peronist political party to which the current Argentina's President and her predecessor have been representatives among many others, is oriented toward the reduction of the liberal orthodoxy of the previous governments and the achievement of

"[to] contemplate the asymmetries per volume, but at the same time contemplate objectively the real data [...] which is why I believe that in all this meeting we are joining as MERCOSUR, we should give priority to the pragmatism, the realism and the truth"
(Kirchner Fernandez, 2014)

The new challenge for Argentina and Brazil is to strive towards "forging a realist and positive *New Deal* between them, which is regarding the specificities of the bilateral and regional relationship" (Russell and Tokatlian, 2011:16). While the asymmetric position of Argentina *vis-à-vis* Brazil was accepted and recognized, it was nevertheless constantly reminded that integration could not be confused with subordination (Kirchner Fernandez, 2014). Among the Argentine academics, some claimed that the Brazil-Argentina asymmetry concerned exclusively the economic level in which Brazil could claim hegemony as the dominant pole in a system in which the Brazil-Argentina axis was a dominant feature (Schenoni and Actis, 2014). It was harder to argue along the same line when it came to the political and security, as well as other cooperation areas. Regarding security cooperation, Schenoni and Actis offered significant data indicating similarity between Brazil and Argentina in terms of their military resources and spending. As for the diplomatic and political area, the still strong capacity of Buenos Aires to coordinate the regional response to Brazilian acts, has been often emphasized. Indicative of this was the official narrative indicating that "Buenos Aires speaks the same language of the rest of Latin-America" (Cherniak, 2015).

Although Brazil has been able to accumulate a great amount of regional power until reaching the status of unipolar hegemony, the response coming from the neighbour countries did not seem to reflect the rational behaviour exposed in the alliance theory, distinguishing between the logics of "balancing" or "bandwagoning". By assuming the exclusive and prime role, Argentina, as Brazil's significant other that has often opposed the Brazilian regional aspirations, managed to coordinate a group of countries acting against the emerging regional unipolarism. Thus, the choice of Buenos Aires can be better conceived as a middle strategy between the two options outlined by the Neorealism: the Hedging (Salman and Geeraerts, 2013).

Argentina's cooperation and increasing interconnection in order to achieve a greater regional and international position; while at the same time preserving the national space of action and allowing for the open demonstration of divergences and the search of more relative power whenever it was possible. Frederico Merke claimed that Buenos Aires attitude was "nor balancing neither bandwagoning" the neighbour, but based on a combination of respect and recognition of the Brazilian

three main objectives: the political autonomy of the country, the economic independence and the social justice (Paradiso, 2007). This latter goal has been changed by the President Cristina Kirchner Fernandez and substituted by a new objective: the "social equality".

performance in the regional and global system, and non-acceptance of Brazil's leadership (Merke, 2013). Therefore, the strategy of the “periphery hedging” chosen by Cristina Kirchner seems to be the most suitable option to explain Argentina's course on continuation of the political convergence and common projects while, at the same time, maintaining alive and active the individual preferences and the autonomy in political, economic and diplomatic action. Argentina will play the role of the minor partner of the relationship, with the attempt to consolidate the strategic relationship and deep the integration process through the revision of MERCOSUR (Russell and Tokatlian, 2014: 38).

What appears to be a common understanding is that both Argentina and Brazil need the presence, the support and first of all the commitment with the other neighbours. If for Argentina, the relationship with the neighbour is necessary and beneficial in terms of economic, infrastructure, energy development and for guaranteeing a more influential participation of the country in the international multilateral forums, on the other hand, for Brazil, the relationship with Buenos Aires is mainly based on questions of regional security matters (Fonseca Jr., 2015). The Minister Carlos Cherniak, plenipotentiary of the Embassy of the Republic of Argentina in Rome, continued to reinforce the idea: without any agreement with Argentina, the presence of a strong Brazil in South-America might represent a regional threat (2015).

The Argentine-Brazil concert, re-established in 2003 with the political turn to left in South-America, has contributed to a visible revamp of the regional integration within the MERCOSUR (Sombra Saraiva, 2004), which has tied the regional power through common institutions that, even if weak and not much functional, may difficult any possible escapes from the bloc, while have linked the domestic problems of one states to the search for a solution of all the others (Schenoni, 2014:149). At the same time that the economic interdependence was strong and in spite of the asymmetric levels and results, the possibility reserved for the member-states to sign bilateral agreements (on economic and trade) with extra- MERCOSUR countries was in line with important objectives of the President Cristina's political party (the Justicialist Party): the economic independence and the political autonomy. The possibility for Argentina and Brazil, as well as for the other countries, not to be bound exclusively to a common regional structure has allowed them to adopt a pragmatic approach in foreign policy, in line, firstly, with their national interest, and only after the regional integration.

During the second mandate of Cristina Kirchner Fernandez at the *Casa Rosada* (2011-2015), the Argentine foreign policy was then based on a policy of less ambiguity with Brazil and with a return to a friendly discourse with her respective counterpart, Dilma Rousseff. At the same time, the variegated

set of international partners was maintained and in some cases even increased.¹¹⁶ The bilateral relationship with China was reaffirmed in its importance in the last years of Kirchner's mandate (2015), although China's proposal to sign an agreement with the whole regional bloc of MERCOSUR did not meet any common decision or regional coordination, producing independent bilateral forms of cooperation with the Asian dragon (Russell, apud. Jimenez, 2014).¹¹⁷ At the same time that the cooperation with the United States and the European Union continued to exist, the country has engaged in energetic sector cooperation with Russia and Iran.¹¹⁸

Despite all the bilateral forms of association, Argentina's action continued to be based on policies of nationalization of the domestic economics and protectionism of those strategic and weaker sectors in order to improve the national development and reach higher relative power. If the reaction of the northern partners and of the international organizations is to denounce the Argentine behaviour¹¹⁹, on the other side, the regional affected partner (Brazil) and institutions (MERCOSUR with its member-states) seemed to appeal to the mechanisms of dispute's settlement, both regionally and internationally, but what appeared to prevail was an excessive amount of tolerance and patience, in particular of Brazil, when dealing with Argentina. As Antonio Machado claimed:

“One thing is to cover the partner of tenderness, another thing is to hyper-appreciate who is finding in the MERCOSUR an antidote for its domestic problems, that the partners of the bloc have nor created neither are responsible for them”
(Machado, 2004:10).

4.3 From "leader without followers" to "reticent leader": the ambiguity of the Brazilian Regional Policy

Based on the multiple targets of Brazilian foreign policy which characterized the presidential mandates of Lula da Silva, subsequently continued with Dilma Rousseff, both the bilateral engagement and the maintaining of the relationship with the Southern representatives were essential to guarantee

¹¹⁶ The return to a pacific and inevitable bilateral rapprochement between Brazil and Argentina is available at: <http://exame.abril.com.br/economia/noticias/argentina-obstaculos-com-brasil-estao-sendo-resolvidos>. Accessed June 03rd, 2015.

¹¹⁷ About the proposal of China to negotiate with the MERCOSUR, see http://www.bbc.com/portuguese/noticias/2012/06/120627_china_mercosul_ru.shtml. Accessed June 05th, 2015. The full text of the interview of Diego Jimenez with the Argentine academic Robert Russell is available at: http://www.utdt.edu/nota_prensa.php?id_noticia_prensa=10783&id_item_menu=441. Accessed November 25th, 2015.

¹¹⁸ Further information about the cooperation between Argentina and Iran, the "food for oil" exchange and the political scandal are available at: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/americasview/2013/01/argentine-iranian-relations> and <http://www.businessinsider.com/argentina-iran-relations-2015-1>. Accessed June 03rd, 2015.

¹¹⁹ See: http://www.diariodepernambuco.com.br/app/noticia/economia/2015/01/15/internas_economia,555094/omc-obrigaargentina-a-retirar-medidas-prejudiciais-ao-comercio.shtml. Accessed June 05th, 2015.

the shift of the Brazilian aspiration in terms of international politics and regional leadership (Fonseca Jr. 2014). If during Lula da Silva's first mandate the region was supposed to act as a platform for Brazilian international projection, in the second one, it appeared to be the main obstacle to this ambition.

With the progressive socialist government, Brazil has attempted to be a regional leader and let the others accept its new implicit identity, while introducing itself as a benign power, a cooperative hegemon that would have worked for the achievement of greater regional results, by assuming the role of a paymaster. The failed recognition within the region, among those countries that could benefit from a strong neighbour, has rather been achieved internationally. The actors of the international system have recognized the strong and growing power and capacity of Brazil and have converged in the idea that it should represent the "voice of South-America" in the multilateral system and in the most critical matters of the world politics.

The ideological convergence resulted by the "*giro hacia la izquierda*" in the sub-continent at the rise of 2000s was supposed to revitalize the integration project and at the same time prepare the ground for a stable and stronger commitment of the region as a whole, and of each member-states in the international system. In the same period, the economic difficulties experienced by the South-American states and the still weak measures implemented at the regional level to overcome the impasse were mining the development of the economic project, now transformed into a political and social one too. The national solutions and protectionist policies were affecting the regional institution's health and, at the same time, reducing the aspiration of the South-American giant.

The MERCOSUR was not seen as an objective and a mechanism through which realize the main interests of foreign policy of its members (Almeida, 2004:173). South-American countries perceive that the participation in a free-trade agreements or in a regional project of economic integration may be useful for obtaining some gains, but what appears difficult to perceive was whether Brazil represented the partner with whom deeper relationships for the achievement of national goals could be developed (Pecequilo and Carmo, 2013:62). Lula da Silva's caution in not creating any type of resentment or jealousy among neighbours, while the country was looking beyond the region for the international support and recognition, was due to the necessity of a big country with large borders to secure its own survival in a region that did not attempt to hide any confrontation.¹²⁰ But at the same time, the Brazilian foreign policy itself, with its objective of reaching its economic and international goals through the integration, better said "through the affirmation" of its role within the region (Villa,

¹²⁰ Even if South-America has been cited as a pacific area in which the armed conflict seems to be a far memory, the role played by the Brazilian diplomacy and the care expressed toward the neighbours has been significant for the establishment of an area of stability and trust.

2005:17), was causing mistrust within the other regional partners about the real motives of the country behind the aspirations to assume the leadership of the regional project (Pecequillo and Carmo, 2013:62).

Brazil has been introduced as a "leader without followers", definition coined by Buzan and re-introduced into the scholarly debates by Andres Malamud (2011) in the description and analysis of the role played by Brazil in its foreign policy for the subcontinent. The difficulties faced by Brazil have resulted in affecting the political discourse and imposing an ambivalent behaviour of Brazil in the management of its politics for South-America. The supposed initial idea of Lula da Silva's first mandate to profile Brazil as occupying the regional leadership role has created ambiguity both within the policy-maker community and the academics. In fact, if sometimes the Brazilian discourse was oriented towards the creation of a unified region under its leadership, in other moments the Itamaraty claimed that it was necessary for Brazil just to assume its responsibilities towards the region, due mainly to the geopolitical differences, limiting any threat of imperialism and hegemony, but simply reminding of its "natural" prominence and commitment to assume the leading role in the sub-continent (Toledo, 2014). Brazil's Foreign Ministry had repeatedly denied any intention of exerting the regional leadership, if it was understood as Brazilian hegemony.

"Sometimes [they] ask us if Brazil wants to be a leader. We do not claim to leadership, if leadership means hegemony of any kind. But if our internal development [and] our attitudes, as you pointed out, of respecting for international law, to search for peaceful resolution of disputes, in combating all forms of discrimination, human rights and the environment [...] if these attitudes generate leadership, there is no reason to refuse it. And it would certainly be a mistake, an undue shyness"
(Menezes, 2010 apud. Amorim, 2003:77).

The ambivalence of the Brazilian official discourse has resulted in two different narratives: when the receptor has been the international community, Brazil seems to make advantages of a probable position of regional leadership that allowed the country to gain a higher legitimacy and make viable its own objectives of foreign policy. But on the other hand, the fear of creating hostilities within the neighbourhood was altering the discourse about Brazilian position and role when it will be oriented towards the region. The strategy of integration seemed to comply with a significant role in presenting the goals of the country as more objective aspirations (Toledo, 2014).

The missing of consensus around its leadership has contributed to a change in the official discourses of the president and his Ministers, which have moved from an implicit assumption to a possible refusal of the leader charge. Brazil, as Andres Malamud affirmed, "will be more able to pursue its own foreign objectives for itself, rather than be tied to expensive and highly dependent agreements

with unforeseeable partners" (2009:135). Hence, Da Silva's second mandate has been characterized by a more defensive positioning of the country in the regional matters and a more careful discourse in order to limit the prejudices and maintain the calm among the neighbours. What we have witnessed was the change of Brazilian identity in the regional context, from a "pretending leader to a fireman" (Malamud, 2009), due to its abandon of the regional project as priority of the foreign policy and becoming "reticent" to assume a regional high position (Briceño Ruiz, 2014b). At the end of the second mandate of Luis da Silva, a balance of the diplomatic action of Brazil in the region would introduce the country as moving from the strenuous looking for the leadership to an abandonment of this target.

If on one hand the quest for the leadership within the region has not been successful, it has in any case benefited Brazil's national interests. In fact, Brazil's foreign policy has adopted a "pragmatic stance based on diversified strategies to minimize dependence from a troublesome region" (CEBRI-CINDES, 2007, apud. Malamud, 2011: 19). The more global orientation of the Brazilian foreign policy at the detriment of the regional one has shown anyway that the "[...] mismatch between the regional and global recognition of Brazilian status" has increased and it was "not likely to be bridged any time soon" (Malamud, 2011:19) as well as that the sub-regional integration was still a significant goal, but not the main priority of the country's agenda of foreign policy.

Brazil, may have turned its interest outside the region, but this latter has continued to represent a fundamental part of its foreign policy. In fact, any instability within the South-American area would undermine Brasilia's projects and resize its successes. Hence, Brazil was not sparing efforts or resources to maintain the control and the peace within the region and avoid conflicts and opposition to its protagonist role. In doing that, the rapprochement with the significant regional "other" would be essential for reaching the success. Therefore, among the reasons of Brazil's caution towards the discourse about any eventual Brazilian assumption of leadership was the historical rivalry and mistrust of its neighbours, in particular if this aspiration was perceived as imperialistic pretension of the giant (Menezes, 2010 apud. Amorim, 2003). It is for this reason that the proposal of the *Itamaraty* has been oriented towards a strategy of "positive leadership" in which Brazil acted as promoter of opportunity for the region, allowing them for accessing to the domestic market of the giant, in order to guarantee the joint regional development (Toledo, 2014).

"Brazil may not be the great country and the others the small countries. Not least because there is no room for happiness, for peacefulness if we do another way to treat our neighbours and make Brazil's growth serve for them to grow"
(Lula da Silva, 2010)

Both governments of Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff have been characterized by a bilateral engagement toward Argentina that may remind a strategic return to the twentieth century's Cordiality Policy (Cervo, 2008). A interruption of this policy would not be positive for Brazil, that is why the country has avoided any type of reproach or calling attention, to Argentina and the other countries, on the MERCOSUR rules. Furthermore, a mild respect of the common integration's rule is useful and represents political advantages for the country itself, guaranteeing a major level of Brazil's autonomy and reducing the impositions coming from the commitment within a highly institutionalized project.

The position of Brazil, to give in to the demands of the smaller partners seems to be part of a regional strategy for maintaining alive the integration project, which aims to "conquer" the neighbours by accomplishing neighbours' respective interests. On the other hand, the then Brazilian Foreign Ministry argued that the concessions to the 'little brothers' would be part of those responsibilities that the country must assume, owing to Brazil's position as the major actor in the region and the one with greater resources and capacities (Garcia, 2010).

In conclusion, Brazil appears to cover its pretensions under a positive halo of solidarity, with which the country is offering its support and is engaging its resources for the welfare of the regional rest, assuming to validate the idea of a "natural prominence" of Brazil in South-America and of exerting a political influence with no leadership in its geographical proximity.

4.4 What is new for the region after Brazil's rise?

At the rise of the new millennium, the good economic results reached by the emerging power allowed Brazil to presence the international scene and make a large use of both its soft power and diplomatic skills. As we said before, the ambitious of being a global player and gaining international recognition and legitimacy was requiring the possession of a strong platform of support, that was firstly thought to be represented by the region. Then, in the first presidential speech of the left-wing government elected in 2003, Lula affirmed that the development of a stronger integration was to be reached by deepening and giving a new appearance to the already existing regional projects, among which MERCOSUR was for sure the most advanced one.¹²¹

¹²¹ The Strategic Regionalism resulted by the government's convergence between Argentina and Brazil and their new elected presidents, Nestor Kirchner and Luis Lula da Silva respectively, that have changed the orientation of the development model of their countries and of the regional projects. This new vision resulted in many meeting between the two politicians and the signature of a new Document of Buenos Aires (2003) and the Act of Copacabana (2004) that proposed new political and social objectives and a more active engagement in them, as well as a new look to the regional project of the Common Market.

Furthermore, the pragmatic, developmental and socialist vision of the 2000s ideologically converging governments in South-America was not combining with the integration model that the region had developed, until then. The exclusivity of the economic sector was to be joined by a political and social dimension of integration that between 2003 and 2006 were included, to give more propulsion to the economic growth and development, both intra and extra-regionally. In addition, the Brazilian engagement toward the region increased with the creation of a broader regional project: the UNASUR, through which the focus of integration turned from a purely commercial vision to a political integration, aiming to integrate all the twelve countries of the region in a political, social, cultural, energy and security project, under the exclusive role played by Brazil as paymaster. Exactly like the other projects by Brazil, UNASUR has been a weak regional actor, resulting in low institutionalized and inter-governmental organisms. As the institution lacked of an economic field of action, MERCOSUR came to be chosen to cover this position in order to favour Brazilian projects of infrastructure development and industrial projection.

In recent years the UNASUR has played an important role in solving the continent crises. The creation of the South American Defence Council (an initiative of the Brazilian government), has contributed to closer ties between the region's countries in the military field, and placed Brazil at the centre of the regional security agenda, *vis-à-vis* other continents, that recognize UNASUR, and then Brazil, as a channel for dialogue (Saraiva 2010). At the same time that Brazil was giving a second chance to the neighbourhood's collaboration,¹²² it has started to look outside the regional borders and has got involved in many different blocks of political, economic, social and security areas of action.

If the Brazilian (region-oriented) policies and actions implemented in last years have not helped the neighbours change their ideas and positions with respect to the leadership of the giant, it was Brazil itself to transform its attitude related to the region: aware of the difficulties and the many obstacles posed by the regional others, Brazil has chosen to increase the sphere of its engagement and to move outside the sub-regional project, in order to look for its international recognition and legitimacy within extra-regional projects of cooperation.

Of course, the response of the region to these broader and multilateral projects has not been totally positive and has contributed to increase even more the formation of strategic cooperation to counterbalance the increasing and almost unquestionable prestige of the Southern giant mostly in last

¹²² What should be considered in this period is the new participation of Brazil, related to the old significant regional partner and the minor states, in the reconfiguration of the region throughout a convergence of the national and regional interests, for the future of the sub-continent itself and of its own international status (Bizzozero, 2011).

decade. The Annex 4 (see Annex 4) attempts to show the reactions of the regional countries to the most significant moments of the international projection of the Brazilian foreign policy. A particular attention has been paid to the Argentina's responses, which represent one of the dependent variable of the present analysis. The figure separates the response of the neighbour from the one of the rest of the region to allow for the establishment of linkages about the capacity of Argentina to coordinate the regional concert, more than what Brazil was able to do. Moreover, it is represented if and how the international partners of Brazil come to support of the Brazilian pretensions, and what is the final outcome for the ambitious country.

In most of the cases the international projects of the Brazilian foreign policy have been resized by the non-existing support within the region that in many cases has acted in an opposite direction. The most significant examples of this attitude were in the Brazilian bid for the permanent seat at the United Nation Security Council, that in 2004 (exactly like in 1994) was strongly opposed by a coalition of states, named 'Uniting for Consensus'- UfC (the 1994 'Coffee Group'), in which Argentina was participating. In the 2004 bid, the reaction of the region was displaying some differences of motivation in the refusal of the Brazil's candidacy as to the previous one: Argentina was still thinking that the most likely reform for the permanent seats might have been based on the "rotation logic" of all the world countries and the same position has been defended by Colombia (another UfC member), as well as by the majority of the regional countries. On the other hand, the only country in South-America to support the Brazilian proposal of reform, was Chile, with whom Brazil has always maintained good relationship based on the historical rivalries of Santiago with its own neighbours (Argentina, Peru and Bolivia) and therefore on the geostrategic assumption and Arabic saying that "my neighbour is my enemy, but my neighbour's neighbour is my friend". The acceptance of Brazil's proposal on the part of Chile, however, soon led to a deadlock as the former was against the obtaining of the veto power for the latter. The lack of regional consensus and support has been met outside the region, even if not in a homogeneous way all around the globe. If firstly, the already great powers and UNSC permanent members (China, Russia, the United States, France and the United Kingdom) have openly opposed any reform of the institution and a loss of their power; many other countries, as Mexico, have not declared any opposition to the proposal but rather opted for a general refusal of any institutional reform, as it was more favourable to a "general democratization" of the Security Council, with the elimination of the already existing permanent seats (Amorim, 2003).

Similar dynamics were provided by the elections of the WTO's General Director, in the same year. Furthermore the opposition of Argentina and the region to the Brazilian proposal in the multilateral

forums (Doha Round and G20) has been considered a negative reaction to the bi-facial positions assumed by the giant, aspiring to gain as much as possible: both as 'first among the last' and as 'last among the firsts'.

In many other cases, in which we cannot affirm that a counterbalance of the region to Brazil has taken place, Argentina and South-America have limited their reaction to simply oppose Brazilian projects, in order to most of the time, we can claim, adopt a silent attitude of disagreement, in order to take as many advantages as they could from the Brazilian requests. An example of the first case is the 2006 divergence in positions regarding the creation of UNASUR as already seen before, which was reviewed only after a more compromise-oriented approach assumed by states emerged as a result of their opposition to the US's proposal of a Free Trade Area of the Americas. Therefore, the creation of a broader regional project was seen (from Brazil's neighbours) as a way to reduce the influence and the threats coming from the US. Moreover, a further example of counterpointing Brazil occurred in 2007, when the EU-Brazil strategic partnership was signed and the South-American country came to be considered the representative of the entire region from the regional block, creating any jealousy within South-America (Ferreira-Pereira, 2015).

The most recent events are related to the Brazilian efforts to introduce itself as a normative power, through the elaboration of the 'RwP' concept, as well as of creating a profile of a supporter of the poorest countries and a reform of Bretton Woods international financial system (through the creation of the New Development Bank of BRICS). As these targets would have been beneficial for the rest of the region too, Argentina and the others decided to maintain a neutral position in order to obtain the gains they needed, but without allowing for the increasing prestige of Brazil, that would resemble a legitimation for Brazilian regional leadership.

Furthermore, the regional response to the Brazilian leadership and its ambitious projects on the international scene and its own backyard has also come from the sub-regional experiences of cooperation created to balance the presence of Brazilian institutions and power. In 2004, the signature of an agreement of opposing the FTAA (between Cuba and Venezuela) leads to the creation of ALBA: an ideological project of integration which grouped together countries displaying a strong anti-liberal and anti-American (against the Washington Consensus) attitude and discourse. Proposed by the president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, the ALBA has been considered by many academics and politicians a project of "geopolitical resistance" (Suarez Salazar apud. Califano, 2014) and a new paradigm of integration, which would prevent the South-American countries from falling back on the Northern dependence thereby curtailing their development. The project considered the society and then the social policies as

elements of primordial importance and tended to bring together states sharing the same principles, independently from their geographical allocation: due to the origins of its member-states, the ALBA is in a strategic position between the South and the Central and Caribbean America; the Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean. It is thus covering all the happenings in the region, in a quest for more freedom of action of the sub-continent from external influences, as well as from internal and unique leaderships.

On the West coast of the sub-continent of the Americas, the Pacific Alliance (created in 2011 and including Chile, Colombia, Peru and Mexico, and the former observer- Panama and Costa Rica) declared as its unifying element “[the] common desire for substantial integrated trade liberalization with the world strongest economies, especially emerging Asian markets” (Romero, 2014). Taking once again the economic predominance in its regional project, the Alliance was designed since its inception as an exclusively area of free trade among its participants. Surprisingly, in only few years the Pacific Alliance has come close to complete trade liberalization, aiming to integrate new countries of the area around the Pacific Ocean.¹²³ For some scholars, the creation of this region was linked to the desire of limiting the role of Brazil and the supremacy of its economics, as well as the idea of including Mexico. This latter, due to its being a Caribbean country and a great ally of the United States, was considered a way to let Brazil feel uncomfortable in its attempts to cover the role of the regional leader and paymaster. Without any doubts, the liberal integration process of the Pacific Alliance has been gaining a significant comparative advantage over MERCOSUR countries, while it has focused primarily on economic development rather than on political and social matters.¹²⁴

In a similar regional context, the difficulties faced by Brazil are enormous and contribute to debilitate those integration processes that the country has been leading. Coming back to MERCOSUR, in the last years it changed its objectives in order to adapt itself and support the Brazilian rise toward the regional leadership and the international activism and participation. Nowadays, MERCOSUR is a hybrid between an incomplete Customs Union and a paralyzed form of Common Market. The many economic impasses and period of stagnation have transformed the integration a process that may appear to have lost its fuel, its enthusiasm and its attractiveness, even for its member-states. The former Uruguayan President, José Mujica, considered MERCOSUR as “moving neither backward nor forward”, which led him to propose the pursuing of alternative paths of economic integration for the individual member-states (apud. Romero, 2014). Following the same line of reasoning, the divergences

¹²³ See <http://panamapost.com/maria-teresa-romero/2014/08/21/why-the-pacific-alliance-puts-mercosur-to-shame>. Accessed April 24 th, 2015.

¹²⁴ For the comparison between the Pacific Alliance and MERCOSUR see: <http://www.economist.com/news/americas/21578056-regionfalling-behind-two-alternative-blocks-market-led-pacific-alliance-andand>. Accessed April 23rd, 2015.

of countries in reaching a common position over regional matters indeed resulted in their proceeding along individual routes (Baumann and Mussi, 2007:51).

If the new millennium brought with it the atmosphere of challenge and changes, allowing for the creation of different paradigms of regionalism within South-America, MERCOSUR nevertheless represents an interesting example, different responses and experiences emerging and evolving within the same integration project. While the smallest economies suggested the possibility for signing free trade agreements with extra-regional partners, in order to lessen their dependence on the economic, political and diplomatic dispositions of the two major countries; Argentina has opted for abandoning the previous model of integration and implementing a form of "semi-protectionist" regionalism (Bernal-Meza, 2013:631).

To conclude, in reshaping the regional structure and creating a new style and infusing more energy, Brazil has played a decisive and fundamental role, in the regional integration process, motivated by the idea that the latter will work as fence from the globalization forces that have undermined the idea of Nation-state and its typical functions, while also introducing new kinds of security threats (Jaguaribe, 2000 apud. Hage, 2013:154). At the same time, the regional integration process would represent an easier way to achieve a higher position at the international stage. The strong support and determination of Brazil in maintaining an intergovernmental and inter-presidential (Malamud, 2005) structure for MERCOSUR has furthered the possibility to make the regional cooperation more viable; at the same time that "[...] a further deepening of regionalism in Latin America (and possibly elsewhere) is not to be expected" (Malamud and Gardini, 2012: 125).

4.5 Conclusion

At the beginning of the new millennium, South-America was witnessing to a rapid process of transformation. The decline of Argentina appeared as an inevitable phenomenon affected by the rise of the neighbour, Brazil, that since the second half of the last century was gaining considerable relative power; and by the increasing economic interdependence, was strongly linking the members together that through the engagement in a project of integration in the defence and respect of the regional commitment (Russell apud. Jimenez 2014).¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Interview to Roberto Russell, realized in date November 9th, 2014. Available at: http://www.utdt.edu/nota_prensa.php?id_notas_prensa=10783&id_item_menu=441. Accessed November 25th, 2014.

During the neoliberal decade of the 1990s, the deepening of the bilateral relationship was not just a rhetorical matter, but a feature of pragmatism, adopted by both the presidents and leading to the creation of MERCOSUR. Despite the initial progresses, the regional project of integration entered, few years after its birth, in a first period of stagnation, mainly due to the difficult moment experienced by the economics and the political legitimation of those initial founder countries.¹²⁶

To the arrogant and aggressive policies of nationalization and protectionism of Buenos Aires, Brazil has almost always responded in a tolerant and cautious way, in order not to irritate and hurt the neighbour's susceptibility. This strategy seemed to be merely part of a broader regional plan of leadership of Brazil. The foreign policy of the giant appeared to have accepted the idea that for being regionally accepted as leader, it was necessary to maintain good relationships with the one that was still able to coordinate a concert of regional power. Thus, the Brazilian silent acceptance of any Argentina's attempts of not respecting the regional and international norms, by affecting in this way the regional progress and the interest of its partners, seems to have contributed to a further evolution in the bilateral relationship of the dyad. If at first the historical rivalry and mistrust was substituted by an association on the basis of a "strategic partnership", what we witness nowadays may look more likely to a form of "strategic tolerance" of both Argentina and Brazil in the relationship with the significant other.

If for Argentina the tolerant attitude derives from the definitive acceptance of its role of minor states in the region and the recognition of the Brazilian assistance, even if the country is maintaining a political and economic autonomy, for Brazil, the tolerance might be represented by the huge amount of patience that the country has demonstrated at any occasion in which Buenos Aires is opposing its action in both the bilateral, regional and international scene. The affecting and mining Brasilia's interests has been related to the Argentina's scope of being guaranteed its national needs. Buenos Aires seems to have suffered in its run to the modernization, and the implementation of nationalist policies has weakened its international and regional position, aggravated by the loss of credibility derived by the continuous economic crisis that produced cycles of instability leading to the governance in a confused and aggressive way. If internationally Argentina does not represent any more an influential country and it has lost its past prestige; at the regional level, the country is still owning an interesting capacity to agglomerate the entire region by sharing with them a common understanding language; that is why the country represent a necessary, even if not easy, partner.

Due to its not successful economic policies and above all to their characteristic of being so far from what a free market should require, Buenos Aires is slowing the development of the integration

¹²⁶ Available at: <http://oglobo.globo.com/opiniao/regras-do-mercosul-precisam-ser-revistas-16238951>. Accessed May 23rd, 2015.

project (Gonçalves, 2009). The problems of a consequent regional transmissions for any new Argentine economic collapse seems to worry the regional partners, but not because of the interdependence that the regional structure has created, which in spite of the 24 years long existence of MERCOSUR is still limited and low institutionalized. The main fear is that the presence of a nationalist country within a regional liberal institution may result in a worsening of the trade exchanges and the reception of FDI to the bloc. As it was revealed by the Uruguayan senator, Lucia Topolansky- wife of the ex-President José Mujica, “[...] When Argentina sneezes, Uruguay gets cold”, and the rest of the region get affected, but someone has just learnt how to tolerate it better than others.¹²⁷

For South-American countries, MERCOSUR has revealed to be a non-satisfactory and insufficient instrument to achieve the prefixed objectives of cooperation and development, and in creating the opportunities of international participation and strengthening of the bargain's power in the multilateralism (Onuki, 2006). The neoliberal policies adopted in the first decade were posing the economics and the welfare of the countries in the Southern backyard under serious threat, by limiting, or avoiding at all, the possibility for implementing strategic trade policies that will safeguard the sensible sectors of the periphery's national economic from the aggressive and unfair practices of the centre (Pineiro Guimaraes, 1999).

Then, the South-American twenty-first century was marked by a critical change in the idea of regionalism and domestic and regional priorities, as well as in the application of policies based on the International Relations' theories. The systemic changes and the rise of Brazil (oriented by political left-wing forces) has meant the moving toward a “Strategic Regionalism” that, as we said before, came to adopt the region and its market as an element of power and an instrument of political influence and a platform from where projecting Brazilian global aspirations. The desire of Brazil of being considered the “natural leader” of the region lead the charismatic president Lula to engage all the efforts in the promotion of a political and social MERCOSUR, in addition to the economic ones. As this Brazilian vocation was neither recognized nor accepted from the other regional partners, South-America has replied through national and regional policies and institutions aimed to balance the uncomfortable growing presence of Brazil in the regional affairs when the national interests and relative gains were significant; while in other cases the region's countries, independently if the smallest or major ones, have perceived the importance of tightening closer relationships with the southern giant and then opted for a bandwagoning strategy (Schenoni, 2014b).

¹²⁷ Available at: http://www.limesonline.com/largentina-rivede-i-fantasma-della-crisi-del-2001/57644?printpage&refresh_ce. Accessed June 21st, 2015.

On the basis of the International Relations' theories which allow to explain the foreign policy's expectations of a country when is dealing with a growing power that is geographically located close, or with whom it has some kind of relationship, the South-American foreign policy(ies) appears to be a *sui generis* case. The institution of balance of power, in the definition offered by Bull, supposes that states, owing to maintain stability of the international (in this case it will be regional) society they created, are constantly facing the situation of having to choose what reaction will be more likely for their own interests (Little, 2005 apud. Merke, 2013:4). Kenneth Waltz coined a general rule of understanding the states' reactions on the bases of their power capacities and dimension: it is common and generally accepted that small and less powerful states are going to choose bandwagoning with an emerging power, owing to take some advantages from the country's positive position; on the other side, other major countries which own enough power and material capabilities are most likely to opt for a balancing strategy aimed to guarantee their autonomy toward a growing presence in the area.

The South-American case differs from the general theories of "balance of power" when related to the rise of Brazil and the growing global aspirations of the country. Attempting to show how and why the South-American countries have not followed the main theoretical lines, we have adopted and adapted the framework of the figure and data presented by Schenoni (2014.b:147) on the basis of some already proposed and other new intervening variables, including the levels of exports and imports of South-American countries with Brazil; their role in the regional project of MERCOSUR and therefore their commitment to the integration (see Annex 5).

The regional integration process has therefore advanced, by jumping from one objective to another, without reaching any substantial conclusion in none of the fields it embraced. If some progresses occurred, the new turbulent period of MERCOSUR experiences was linked to the difficulties of the countries in converging towards a common proposal for the relaunch of the integration project. Many things are to come, but MERCOSUR represents a hopeful reality for the future of the region (Sarney, 2005). The continuous challenges that the regional process has experienced and the way states reacted to them has contributed to the emergence of the MERCOSUR as a regional actor that was dominated by the temporary necessities of the most influential member-states. The propulsive role of Brazil in moving the integration forward by focusing on new sectors resulted in a 'escape/fast run forward', without the necessary athlete possessing, i.e. a solid embodied in the harmonization of policies, the creation of a real free trade area and the achievement of a complete customs union and above all by the recognition of the other member-states of Brazil's leading role as a promoter of a solid regional cooperation.

Furthermore, the figure analyses the participation of South-American countries in the world politics and in particular within extra-regional bilateral and multilateral projects, through which they attempted to reduce Brazilian increasing power. The consideration for the cases in which those states have signed a Free Trade Agreement with the United States or with the other great emerging country (China) which in recent years has significantly increased its economic, trade and financial presence in the region, is linked to the perception of this mechanisms as a way to reduce the economic unipolarism of Brazil in the region and limit the country's attempts of assuming a leadership, which appears to be not supported.

At the same time, the participation of the countries in the Brazilian- proposed UNASUR and their commitment towards the many new schemes of regional integration (ALBA and PA) are expression of the mechanisms of 'bandwagoning for profit' and 'soft-balancing', respectively, introduced in the previous chapters. Both the strategies wish for sheltering their autonomy *vis-à-vis* Brazil, like it continues to happen in the MERCOSUR.

Since its inception, MERCOSUR is running on an unstable route filled with obstacles that its very same member-states are creating, what it is leaving behind when moving towards the next integration phase does not presents any solid basis. The current lack of interests for the integration process that Brazil has showed in last period has contributed to debilitate even more the structure and its mechanisms; MERCOSUR was a weak institution that is becoming day by day weaker. On the other side, the efforts made by Brazil in the previous decade have appeared to be in vain, both for their non-acceptance among the neighbours countries that would have benefitted from a strong regional bloc to insert actively in the international system, and because of the rapid fatigue felt by the country and the abandonment of a troubled area of diplomatic action, in order to gain more support for the realization of its global aspirations within those actors that are not scared by its "monster's appearance", but are able to look deeper and see that, after all, Brazil "does not scare anyone" (Brigagão and Seabra, 2009).

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The South-American changes occurred at the turn of the millennium were influenced both by exogenous and endogenous factors related to the region (Peña, 2013). Firstly, the rapid transformation from a unipolar to a multipolar system, caused by the emergence of powers that were once relegated to the periphery of the world, has contributed to subvert the rules of the global governance. The emerging world was, as a result, "highlighting the porosity of boundaries" and assuming a multi-centric structure based on different "spheres of authority", dominated by their own processes, rules and mechanisms (Puntigliano, 2008). This increasing fragmentation of the multilateral system, was reflected in the proliferation of transnational preferential agreements among states that "would create 'private clubs' in the international trade" (Peña, 2013:6), thereby eroding the commitment to rigid models of integration; while the regionalism itself has assumed a decentred structure (Garzón, 2015). Hence, states have freely opted for developing joint actions with extra-regional actors and promoting strategies of multiple alliances, in order to overcome the previous and not always positive regional integration experience and the ensuing submission to regional leadership (Peña, 2013:7).

The multipolarity of the 21st century's international system has negatively affected the regional institution of South-America, which was born during the open regionalism era and which have been analysed along this contribution. Having emerged in an interdependent world economy, MERCOSUR has attempted to keep being compatible with the overture of the system and avoid inward looking and protectionist measures, at the same time as it was aspiring to "become a customs union or to negotiate trade agreements with third parties together" (Garzón, 2015:27). As consequence of the political convergence among the South-American countries at the rise of the new millennium (in 2003), the regional integration project moved from being characterized by an exclusive economic dimension to the one including multiple objectives and areas (mainly political and social ones), while at the same time being part of a broader regional institution (the UNASUR) that includes new fields of engagement, ranging the security to the environment, and encompassing the political, technological and social cooperation.

Unfortunately, in a very short time the differences and diverse approaches chosen by South-American states have contributed to slow down the political convergence of the neighbourhood and to

debilitate the already weak power and influence of the region over the other systemic actors.¹²⁸ Once more the MERCOSUR entered a critical phase of stagnation, while the bilateral relationship between Brasilia and Buenos Aires started to display increasing problems, mainly because of Argentina's needs to stabilize its international and domestic economic situation. As consequence of this worsening of bilateral relations, the Brazilian attitude toward the region and the response of this latter to the regional and international pretensions of Brazil came to being negatively affected.

As this study attempted to demonstrate, the creation of a stable platform of support within Brazil's neighbourhood was thought to be the best way for the international integration of the country. However, the Brazilian global aspirations, as well as the use that the country was making of its geography and its material (economic, energy and a controlled military power) and non-material resources (diplomatic action and benevolent way of approaching other states in order to convince them to accept its position as regional paymaster (Mattli, 1999) have been seen as a threat to the South-America. In fact, the strategy of the Brazilian foreign policy was directed not to only integrate (Villa, 2005) the international system, or let Brazil participate in the multilateral mechanisms of the global governance, but above all to assume a more demanding position within the developed countries and occupy the role of mediator between them and the less developed ones.

The Brazilian foreign policy, after the turn of the millennium, have incisively restructured the North-South configuration of the international system (Vigevani and Cepaluni, 2007:290), as Brazil assumed an intermediary position, typical of its longstanding middle power tradition (Arbilla, 2000:361; Flandes and Saraiva, 2014). At the same time the building of regional integration projects, as well as the creation and active participation in international multilateral groups of states and institutions was part of the Brazilian strategy to affirm its primordial role (Villa, 2005:17), both in the region (as leader) and in the international system (as global player, and not just a global actor).¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Looking for a major autonomous actuation for its foreign policy, Brazil moves from the opportunities produced by the turn of the millennium and the systemic change of the international system to redraw and re-establish its international agenda, in which the role of MERCOSUR and the relations with Argentina appears to be reduced and substituted by new preferences and priorities, mainly oriented toward the global scene and the international new dynamics of global governance. The searching for a geographic expansion and the enlargement of the regional cooperation and integration from sub-regional schemes to regional and hemispheric one has to be linked to the strategy of searching for more political autonomy. Furthermore, the constant worry with creating and maintaining a low institutionalization within the created regional projects represents another way to guarantee a political action free from impositions coming from powerful and hegemonic states (Gardini e Lambert, 2010).

¹²⁹ The strategy of "diversification" of Brazilian foreign policy started with the presidency of Luis Lula da Silva, when Brazil started to look for its own space in the world politics, by assuming the posture of an extroverted giant, aware of its own capacities. Then, Brazil was promoting a strengthening of the bilateral and multilateral relations; was asking for a major amount of financial, trade, technology and cultural exchange among the countries and was posing all its efforts on the guarantee of the fair development of the poorest countries and above all those of the Southern hemisphere (Vigevani and Cepaluni, 2007:291).

The main objective of this contribution was to explore the linkage among the global aspiration of Brazil and the implications for the relationship with the historical partner and rival (Argentina) and the entire region (considered as conforming to MERCOSUR, due to the participation of all countries of the area to the regional project, even if through different stages of evolution and with a different kind of engagement). All along the research we attempted to find evidence of the respective link, while having ascertained that the changing orientation of Brazilian external agenda has not always been positively accepted within the region. If during the first presidential mandate (2003-2007), Lula da Silva acted carefully to maintain the region among its foreign policy's priorities, all along the second mandate (2007-2010) Brazilian foreign policy agenda underwent some changes, and South-America became just one among many fields of interests. Therefore, at first moment the difficult economic situation of Argentina (after the financial default of 2001) was seen as a justification for the implementation of protectionist measures to the intra-regional trade, the consequently well-succeeded attempts of coordinating a regional concert of states to balance and oppose Brazilian international projects, was seen as a refusal of both the major states and all the other countries to accept Brazilian leadership and increasing international position that would be considered as a threat to the regional stability and balance of power.

Owing to the historical and structural differences presented by Brazil, the acceptance within the neighbourhood has always been a difficult matter to reach and has always passed toward the acceptance and the cooperation with Argentina. However notwithstanding the attempts of political and diplomatic convergence, the Policy of Cordiality and the benevolent leadership proposed by Brasilia over the years, as well as its re-launch during Lula's first mandate, have failed.¹³⁰ Brazil has been even pressurized to satisfy the requests of its neighbour countries to avoid worsening of its position and any further negative reactions. “[N]either Argentina, or Colombia, and even less the Venezuela of Chavez would have allowed this superiority of Brazil”, considered to be detrimental to the national interests of those states in the international arena and the individual prestige of their leaders (Almeida, 2014:88).¹³¹

In our initial hypothesis we assumed the existence of a link between the increasing international power of Brazil and the decreasing support of the region, which has then reduce the commitment

¹³⁰ Brazilian government opted for a strategy of not imposing its leadership in a coercive or imperialistic way, but through the promotion of itself as a “positive leader” (Menezes, 2010), a “cooperative hegemony” (Pedersen, 2001; Russell apud. Jimenez, 2014), and by proposing a “diplomacy of generosity” (Barbosa, 2008), a “cooperative leadership” (Lima, 2012), have not helped to reach the aspiring position of regional leader.

¹³¹ Just to cite few examples, no one of those regional actors has supported the project of President Lula of constitute a Community of South-American Nations (2004) under the Brazilian leadership that was transformed by the president Chavez into a Union of South-American nations (UNASUL, 2008) with a secretary in Quito and the main scope of maintain the United States out of the regional questions.

toward the common institutions and established treaties. What represents an intriguing result of the present analysis is that the reduced international power and prestige of Argentina, during last decades, has been accompanied by its (almost non-affected) powerful political presence in the regional context. The latter, however, evolved a specific context, determined by the perceived prominence of Brasilia. Under these circumstances, Buenos Aires has been able to coordinate a regional concert in opposition to the global aspirations of the neighbour. The three governments of Kirchners (both Nestor and Cristina) have adopted all the measures at their disposal to balance and contain Brazil, especially when Brazil's rise was going to affect Buenos Aires' own interests. Furthermore, Argentina's capacity to "speak the same language of the rest of South-America" has contributed to create stronger ties with all the other capital cities of the region, with whom it has reinforced the mechanisms of reallocation of forces and interests, in order to maintain a certain degree of autonomy and independence, as well as national sovereignty, over the regional and global reforms and projects that Brazil was realizing.

IR scholars argue that, in a context of anarchy and absence of a global governance as the one represented by the international system, the response to the rise of a country to international power should result in two general kinds of conduct that indicates the states' rational strategy for the maximization of relative gains, which is related to the relative power of the actors: balancing or bandwagoning (Waltz, 1979). Thus, other regional powers, which own significant power capabilities, may see a worsening of their conditions in case of a unilateral growth of one neighbour, and hence opt for an alliance formation, either among them or with extra-regional powers, in order to guarantee their autonomy. The smaller regional countries in their turn, which have been always dependent of their larger neighbours, should see in the emerging power a protector, and thus an opportunity to achieve better outcomes, therefore choosing for a strategy of "bandwagoning" (Schenoni, 2014.b: 145).

As South-America represents a very particular case of application of the IR theory, it comes as no surprise that the application of the strategies of balancing and bandwagoning do not neatly follow the common previously described criteria, at least in the last decades. The strategy chosen by Argentina has been to oscillate between a "soft-balancing" and a "peripheral hedging". If the first option has corresponded to a rational strategy of opposing Brazilian aspirations (mainly in those fields and matters that were affecting the national interests and gains of the country), the option for a soft approach has been related to the absence of military threats and of a military hegemonic force between Brazil and Argentina (Schenoni and Actis, 2014). Thence, Buenos Aires has not considered acceptable the submission to Brazil as the regional paymaster. Due to the common economic interests and the declining of Argentina's capacities related to Brazil, any strong and coercive opposition to the emerging

power appeared to be a viable and efficient means. The only remaining viable strategy has been to undermine, frustrate and increase the costs of a unilateral action (Pape, 2005) to Brazil, as it has occurred when Buenos Aires attempted to oppose the international 'rise of Brazil' (as in the case of the UNSC, WTO, IDB analysed above).

In some other circumstances, especially during the mandate of Cristina Kirchner that appeared to be more pragmatic and less aggressive than her predecessor, Argentina's response to Brazilian projects has assumed resemblances with what Tokatlian and Russell called "peripheral hedging": an almost silent acceptance of the positions of Brazil, mainly when they were related to perceived absolute gains and common regional interests, or when they concerned particular international issues, related to democracy, Human Rights, peacekeeping international interventions among others.

In addition, by the analysis of the implication of the Brazil's global aspirations over the regional ones, and of the respective reaction of other MERCOSUR members, has allowed to reaffirm the uniqueness of the South-America for the International Relations. The respective regional dynamics escape the mainstream theories, approaches and grand theories, including the ones elaborated by the theory of alliances. To illustrate this point: Paraguay and Uruguay have not always opted for bandwagoning with Brazil, although this was arguably the most appropriate option for small countries as they are. The possibility to sign agreements with third actors, outside the regional context, allowed them for acting in an independent way, in most cases preferring alliances with Argentina and Venezuela to balance the prominence of Brazil. Moreover, Venezuela and Bolivia, the last newcomers to the regional integration block, in spite of their differences (one being considered a regional major power, another occupying the position of a small state) have in many cases displayed a similar regional behaviour. While Bolivia has on the few occasions spoken up and adopted nationalist means to protect its investments and interests¹³²; Venezuela's behaviour has alternated between the acceptance of some Brazilian projects (like it was the case of UNASUR, when the country supported Brazil's position allowing the latter to imprint a strong Southern vision to the project and avoid any US influence) and the opposition to some other Brazilian international aspirations, by assuming critical positions, often determined by adherence to a particular ideology.

Furthermore, the whole region has displayed a reaction to Brazil's global aspirations. If on the one hand, South-American countries chose to join the broader regional project of Brasilia (UNASUR), the subsequent establishment of new schemes of sub-regional integration (ALBA and PA) as well as the

¹³² For further information about the nationalization of Bolivia's industry linked to the Brazilian firm, Petrobras, see: <http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/especial/2006/nacionalizacaonabolivia/>. Accessed September 30th, 2015.

continuous search for bilateral alliances and agreements to be signed with extra-regional actors have been considered a way to reduce the prominence and the prestige of Brazil, both regionally and internationally. Nevertheless, while the coordinated opposition of the South-American countries has negatively affected the international projects of Brazil, who appeared to have assumed a silent resistance and a passive attitude to the obstacles posed by the region, the evolution and the changes of Brazilian priorities, over the years, have showed that in no case the country would have allowed the region to limit it.

While a platform of support that would strengthen Brazil's international projection has lacked within the region, it seemed to have been found outside it. Taking advantages of the image of Brazil on the international scene created and reaffirmed by the active diplomacy under the President Lula da Silva, and building upon international support lent to his international endeavors, both the President and its Ministers of Foreign Relations, have placed a special emphasis on strengthening of partnerships and strategic links with extra-regional and in most of the cases “non-hegemonic” actors (Almeida, 2014:103). Eventually, and in spite of South-America occupying a priority position in Brazil's foreign policy agenda, the regional dimension has been flanked by the active political and diplomatic participation of the country in other international fora.

The present research attempted to explore Brazil's foreign policy of the twenty-first century by focusing on its international priorities, while offering a clear presentation of all levels of partnership and relationships on the basis of both the “strategic partnership” that the country came to sign and the “policy of networks” in which it has engaged itself (Flemes and Saraiva, 2014). Through the analysis and description of the different responses of Argentina and the other members of MERCOSUR, as well as the regional reactions to the rising power of Brazil, we validated our hypothesis that the emergence of Brazil in the international system has not met the necessary support at the regional level and that the change of political agenda for South-America, in the passing from one presidential mandate to the others, has suspiciously been seen by the neighbourhood that has acted in an even less constructive way, both towards Brazil and the regional project it attempted to lead.

In learning how to deal with its condition of “middle power” with ambitious plans (typical of a “great power”), Brazil was facing the challenge of being entrapped into a difficult situation: it was neither big and powerful enough to extract from the regional integration just what it considered relevant; nor small enough to believe that giving 'its all' to the integration would be most advantageous. As a “middle power”, Brazil considered necessary working at both levels, by creating incentives for the evolution of MERCOSUR and the other regional projects, while at the same time protecting its national

interests and strategic objectives of international projection, individually and autonomously (Hage, 2013:155-156).

At the same time, we believe that the regional reaction would continue to be oriented towards balancing of any eventual increasing prestige and prominence of Brazil, in order to maintain the equilibrium among the participants and safeguarding the autonomy of action of each one. Any hegemonic and overly protagonist attitude would be subverted and substituted by the searching for a cooperative politics and performance. Furthermore, we also believe that any future worsening of the Brazilian domestic and international context, in terms of political transparency, social issue, economic and financial complications, would end up reducing the hostility of the neighbourhood towards Brazil, as the country's threat will be significantly re-evaluated and resized. A related change of the character of the cooperation has already been observed in the bilateral relation, during the mandate of Dilma Rousseff and Cristina Kirchner, towards a more significant political and diplomatic proximity. The reason behind this change was the perceived reduction of the rising power of Brazil, and its continuous presence, in spite of weakening, in the regional context, which led to several attempts of relaunching MERCOSUR last biennium, along with the apparently definitive acceptance of discarding any supra-nationalism.

What has emerged nowadays, both within MERCOSUR and the new regional projects in the last analysed period, was a "tacit understanding of the freedom of all member states to conclude strategic partnerships as well as trade agreements with whichever extra-regional state they wish" (Garzon, 2015). Once Brazil and the rest of the region managed to converge on this seminal point, the bilateral relations among Argentina and Brazil appeared more relaxed and cooperative: everyone was now allowed to look elsewhere to promote interests that were difficult to achieve regionally, without feeding jealousy and resentments. At the same time, MERCOSUR itself have become more flexible, allowing for the survival in a difficult period, even if it meant abandoning its initial objectives and the re-adaptation to the needs of its member-states and the external circumstances.

Annex 1

Historical comparison of Argentina and Brazil Foreign Policy and Bilateral Rapprochement (1980s-2015).

| | Argentina's Foreign Policy | Brazil's Foreign Policy | Brazil- Argentina relationship |
|-------|--|--|---|
| 1980s | <p><i>(1983-89)</i> Raul Alfonsín: autonomy and independence</p> | <p><i>(1985-89)</i> José Sarney: “Autonomy through distance” and “Responsible Pragmatism”</p> | <p>Bilateral political rapprochement and economic, energy, military and cultural cooperation.</p> |
| 1990s | <p><i>(1989-99)</i> Carlos Menem: “Periphery Realism” and alignment to the Washington Consensus and "carnal relations" with the US.</p> | <p><i>(1990-94)</i> Collor de Mello+ Itamar Franco: "autonomy through modernization" (neoliberal policies, engagement in new questions of the international agenda, stronger ties with the US).</p> <p><i>(1994-2002)</i> Fernando H. Cardoso: “autonomy through participation” neoliberal policies. Alignment to US and the Washington Consensus.</p> | <p>1990 Buenos Aires Act: Bi-regional integration 1991 Treaty of Asuncion (MERCOSUR) Integration project based on the parity between them.</p> |
| 2000s | <p><i>(2000-03)</i> De la Rúa- Duhalde: External dependence (due to economic crises and financial default); major regional orientation.</p> | <p><i>(2003-10)</i> Luiz I. Lula da Silva: “autonomy through diversification” (autonomy, development and</p> | <p>2000-2003: Brazilian support to Argentina's default, but stagnation of the integration process. 2003- 2006: integration as a “political project”. Protectionism of Argentina affects</p> |

| | | | |
|-------|--|---|--|
| | <p><i>(2003-06)</i></p> <p><i>Nestor Kirchner:</i></p> <p>nationalism and improvisation in an aggressive Foreign Policy; moderate pragmatism; and moderate regionalism</p> | international participation) | <p>the bilateral and regional trade.</p> <p>Brazil's lack of interest for the neighbours. Increasing imparity.</p> |
| 2010s | <p><i>(2007-14)</i></p> <p><i>Cristina F. Kirchner:</i></p> <p>nationalism and protectionism; economic and financial restrictions, high pragmatism; regional and extra-regional engagement.</p> | <p><i>(2010-14)</i></p> <p><i>Dilma Rousseff:</i></p> <p>less assertive foreign policy, but still committed to the previous agenda</p> | <p>Attempts to relaunch the bilateral relationship and then the regional project.</p> <p>Loss of agreements and understanding among the member-states (of MERCOSUR)</p> <p>Lower Brazil-Argentina convergence of interests</p> |

Source: the Author (2015).

Annex 2

The structure of Brazilian foreign policy's priorities and strategic coalitions.

| Brazil's Foreign Policy Spheres of Action | Network(s) related to Brazilian role in the circle <i>(adapted by the author on the theoretical framework of Flandes and Saraiva, 2014)</i> | Brazilian Strategic Partnership |
|---|---|---|
| Sub-regional (MERCOSUR) | <i>advocacy</i> (common economic and political project) | Argentina |
| Regional (South-America) | <i>advocacy</i> (common project based on the South-American identity); <i>mediation</i> (regional conflict resolution) | Argentina and Venezuela |
| Continental (inter-American) | <i>substitution</i> (opposing the US influence and pretensions over the backyard); <i>mediation</i> (participation in peacekeeping missions and favouring the return of Cuba in the multilateral mechanisms) | Mexico and United States |
| Hemispherical (South-South) | <i>advocacy</i> (common aspirations and shared values); <i>substitution</i> (subverting the old North-South mechanisms and models); | South-Africa |
| Multilateral (Coalitions of Emerging Powers) | <i>substitution</i> (subverting the formal institutions and mechanisms); <i>advocacy</i> (common aspirations and shared values) | India, China and South-Africa |
| Global Governance (International Organizations) | <i>mediation</i> (defending the position of the less developed countries); <i>advocacy</i> (promoting projects of good governance as well as fairer and more democratic structures, respect of Human Rights and democracy, commitment to Human security among others). | Middle East, European Union among the most significant ones |

Source: the Author (2015)

Annex 3

The evolution of the Foreign Policy's priorities (2003-2015) based on the analysis of the first Presidential discourses (Da Silva, 2003 and 2007; Rousseff, 2011 and 2015).

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <p>Lula da Silva (2003)</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. "Brazil Has to develop a project of development both national and universal" (p.7)2. "Related to the FTAA, in our understanding between MERCOSUR and EU, and in the WTO our country will fight the protectionism and will attempt to impose a fairer rules, by considering our condition of developing country" (p.9)3. "My priority in foreign policy will be the construction of a united, prosperous and politically stable South-America, based on the values of social justice and democracy. ... [it is significant] to revitalize the MERCOSUR, that has been weakened by the domestic crisis of its members and egoistic visions of integration." (p.9- 10)4. "Our commitment is with the difficult situations of the neighbours in the limit of our possibilities, but aimed to implement a concrete cooperation and a dialogue with all Latin-American countries" (p.10)5. "We are looking for a mature, respectful and reciprocal interested partnership with the United States" (p.10)6. "We will strength the cooperation with the European Union and other important developed countries, like Japan" (p.10)7. "We are deepening the relationship with developing and emerging countries, mainly with BRICS" (p.10)8. "We will reaffirm the historical links with the African continent" (p.10)9. "Brazil aims to promote and participate in multilateral organizations, especially UN, to who the preservation of international peace and security is related" (p.11) |
| <p>Lula da Silva (2007)*</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. "Brazil has got engaged in different partnerships, showing a major proximity to the developing countries, at the same time that it is maintaining strong ties with the developed ones" (p.185).2. "First of all, Brazil will look for the acceleration of the regional integration of South-America, by reinforcing the international identity of CASA (later UNASUR)" and the convergence among the different regional actors (CAN, MERCOSUR and Chile) to establish a South-American free trade area (p.187).3. "In 2006, at the IBSA Summit, many agreements were concluded for the creation of a trilateral free trade area (MERCOSUR-India- SACU)" (p.185). Thus "Brazil will continue to promote the South-South cooperation at the same time that will diversify its partnerships" (p.187). |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. "In the same year, agreements with China in the auto-limitation of importations have been signed [...] as well as a Technological cooperation with Russia was established". 5. "A special attention has been reserved to the countries of Middle East, through the implementation of free trade agreements and cultural cooperation", also the "proximity to the African continent and the ASEAN members continued to increase" (p.187). 6. "New agreements about fairer practices have been signed with the EU and Japan" as well as "the Brazil- US energy cooperation has advanced" (p.187). 7. "Since 2004, Brazil is contributing for the peace-keeping mission in Haiti and the reconstruction of the country" (p.186). 8. "In WTO, Brazil is giving continuity to the efforts (together with the members of G20) for the liberalization of agricultural trade and the end of protectionist measures" (p.186) 9. "Through the IDB, Brazil has forgiven the debts of some Latin-American countries". It has also create mechanisms to fight diseases affecting poorest and finance their development 10. "Through the Brazilian Agency of Cooperation many programmes of cooperation with African, Latin-American and Middle-East countries have been developed" (p.187) |
| <p>Dilma Rousseff (2011)</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Our foreign policy will be committed to the country's traditional values: peace, democracy, Human Rights, multilateralism and non-intervention" 2." We will continue to strength the relationship with our South-American neighbours, with our Latin-American and African brothers, and with the people of Asia and Middle East.... We will also preserve the relationship with US and EU." 3." More attention and collaboration with emerging powers" 4." We want to transform our region in a significant component of the system, therefore the relaunching of MERCOSUR and UNASUR is necessary" 5." Brazil aspires to actively participate in the multilateral institutions to promote the financial stability of the globe". 6." Our foreign policy will continue to propose and look for the reform of the global governance mechanisms, especially the UNSC" |
| <p>Dilma Rousseff (2015)</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1."Our international commitment will continue to be characterized by defence of peace, democracy, sovereignty of states, environment, Human Rights, non-intervention principle, multilateralism as well as the security and dignity of all people". 2. "We will stress the urgent need for a reform of the global governance" 3. "South-America, Latin-America and Caribbean will be a priority, in order to relaunch the regional integration projects, with no discrimination on ideological fundaments" 4."Brazil is emphasizing the relationship with Africa, Middle East and Asia" |

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|---|
| <p>5. "With the BRICS, our global strategic partners, we will advance in the cooperation in different areas, while at the same time we will establish a Bank for Development"</p> <p>6. "It is of strategic importance the relationship with the US, both in terms of economics, politics, technology and trade. The same is about European Union and Japan".</p> |
|---|

Source: the Author (2015), based and adapted on the official documents reporting the presidential speeches. The English is of the author.

Note:

*The information reported in the table and referring to Lula da Silva's speech of the second mandate are extracted from the following document: Silva da, L. 2007 Mensagem ao Congresso Nacional na abertura da primeira sessão legislativa ordinária da 53ª legislatura. Available at: <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/ex-presidentes/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva/mensagens-presidenciais/2007/view>. Accessed October 12th, 2015.

Annex 4

The reactions of Argentina and the Region to the most significant Global Aspirations of Brazil (in this thesis reported)

| | Brazil's Foreign Policy | Argentina's Reaction | Regional Reaction | International Support | Results for Brazil |
|-------|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| 1994 | UNSC permanent seat | Member of the 'Coffee Group' | Supporting Argentina's position | G4 | Temporarily abandon of the project (at least in the official discourses) |
| 2000s | Participation in the MINUSTAH | support | Contribution and support when possible | Positive reaction and recognition within the international community | Increasing its prestige as country committed to peace, democracy and Human rights |
| 2003 | Doha Round | Variable on the Brazilian behaviour | Break-up of the solidarity among the nations of the South (Brigagão and Seabra, 2009) | Brazil played the role of mediator | Ambiguous playing with good results but scarce |
| 2004 | UNSC permanent seat | Leading the "Uniting for Consensus" (ex- Coffee Group) and proposing the semi-permanent membership | Most of the country is opposing Brazil's bid. Chile is the only state supporting it. | G4 nations (Brazil, India, Germany and Japan), Middle East South-South coalition's partners. | Brazil abandons the project one more time due to the impossibility to advance with it. |
| 2005 | IDB- Inter-American Development Bank | Opposing the candidature of the Brazilian representative | Following the position of Argentina and presenting and voting for another candidate | no | Brazilian candidate is not elected |
| 2005 | WTO General Director's election | Supporting the Candidate of URUGUAY (Carlos Perez de Castillo) | Following the position of Argentina | low | The Brazilian candidate was eliminated at the first turn; and lack of coordination among the |

| | | | | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | members of MERCOSUR for the choice of a common candidate. |
| 2005 | Opposition to the U.S. promoted FTAA | Accepting Brazilian proposal in order to limit the influence of and the dependence from the US | Diverging position due to the links of some South-American states with the US. But the majority has followed Brazilian position | Initial opposition of the US. Nowadays Brazil and Argentina are thinking about a relaunching of FTAA | The FTAA was not signed. This allowed Brazil for implementing a broader regional project (UNASUR) |
| 2007 | EU-Brazil Strategic Partnership | Negative acceptance of the EU declaration of considering Brazil as the representative of the region | Not openly opposing it, but reconsidering the power forces in the region | The Partnership had negative effect over the US that were now losing primacy in its backyard | Positive policy for Brazil, based on the decision to make the EU, its strategic partner, but not its most important partner. Guarantee of the national autonomy and development |
| 2011 | RwP to the UN General Assembly | No negative response | No negative response. | No opposition to the proposal, neither projects to move it further | Loss of opportunity for Brazil of imposing its presence in the international scene and affirm itself as normative power. |
| 2015 | BRICS' New Development Bank | Silently accepted | No negative commentaries have been reported | Support coming from all those developing and less development countries, looking for a fairer and democratic international financial system | Success of Brazil, despite it is still too early to pronounce any definitive position on the side of the new born institution |

(Source: The author, 2015)

Annex 5:

The Foreign Policy of South-American Countries toward the growing prominence of Brazil: IR Theories' expectative of action, influential variables and real outcomes.

| | Argentina | Chile | Colombia | Peru | Venezuela | Bolivia | Ecuador | Paraguay | Uruguay |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Expectative of foreign policy | Balancing | Balancing | Balancing | Balancing | Balancing | Band-wagoning | Band-wagoning | Band-wagoning | Band-wagoning |
| Export to Brazil * (%) | 20,7 | 5,5 | 3,1 | 6,1 | 2,2 | 33,3 | 4,2 | 14,2 | 20,4 |
| Import from Brazil* (%) | 29,5 | 8,3 | 5,0 | 6,4 | 8,6 | 18,1 | 4,5 | 26,3 | 21,1 |
| Participation in MERCOSUR | Full | Associate | Associate | Assoc. | Full | Full | Assoc. | Full | Full |
| Political Commitment toward MERCOSUR | Founder Country. Since 2000s low | Low | Low | Low | Relative low | Recently entered | Low | Low | Low |
| Relations with USA | Trade and Security | FTA | FTA | FTA | Conflictual Relations | Low level of relations | FTA proposal | Since 2009 military cooper. Has reduced | Joint Commis. Trade & Investm. |
| Relations with China | Trade and FDI | FTA | FTA | FTA | Strong relations (FDI&trade) | FDI and Trade | FDI and monopoly of oil exports | Trade and political stable relations | Important trading partner |
| Other regional projects | UNASUR CELAC OAS | UNASUR CELAC OAS AP | UNASUR CELAC OAS AP | UNASUR CELAC OAS AP | UNASUR ALBA CELAC OAS | UNASUR ALBA CELAC OAS | UNASUR ALBA CELAC OAS | UNASUR CELAC OAS | UNASUR CELAC OAS |
| Expected reaction? | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | Yes |

(Source: the author, adapted on the example of Schenoni, 2014.b:147)

Notes:

The sequence of the listed countries is following the alphabetic order for each group of states: those considered regional major countries, and that on the basis of the IR theories should look for a political choice of 'balancing' Brazilian power, and on the other side those states represented as minor powers and with less capabilities which should opt for a strategy of 'bandwagoning' Brazil.

The data of Importation and Exportation of the countries with Brazil are the ones proposed by Schenoni, and obtained by the statistics of trade of the WTO. They represent the percentage related to the Imports/Exports from/to Brazil. of each country based on the their total amount of trade exports/imports.

With "political commitment toward MERCOSUR" we want to indicate the political engagement of the countries in the evolution of the political common mechanisms and the attempts implemented for their functioning. At the same time, it aims to indicate how the political and economic measures domestically adopted have affected the progress of the regional integration. In the case of "low" commitment it means that any effort for the relaunching of MERCOSUR has been minimum or inexistent, and most of the political action that has been undertaken, have mainly been oriented toward the achievement of relative gains and national interests, rather that the absolute and regional ones.

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