Abstract

While it is commonplace to talk about “Latin-American identity,” very few studies have sought to measure identity, determine its content, and investigate its role in the development of the region. Regional integration studies on Latin or South America tend to neglect discourses related to identity and peripheral issues of power and interest. Using a discursive approach to the study of identity, this paper demonstrates how the social construction of South American integration evolves out of communicative practices meant to forge a regional identity. Using a quali-quantitative discursive method, the research scrutinizes the speeches of South American heads of state and foreign ministers in the context of the formation and institutionalization of UNASUR (Union of South American Nations). The paper will test the hypothesis to the effect that national leaders have promoted discursive processes of social identification in the institutional construction of UNASUR as a means of legitimizing regional cooperation. Identity narratives vary from one country to the next on the basis of values. The paper first attempts to map the range of discourses on regional integration in South America since 2000. It identifies the use of competing identity constructions and related symbols and values, analyzing how these constructions relate to the institutionalization of political practices.

1. Introduction

The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) appears in recent years as a new level of regional integration in South America, together with the Southern Common Market (Mercosur), the Andean Community (CAN) and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our Americas (ALBA) - not to mention the various initiatives of bilateral cooperation within the subcontinent and the multilateral instances including other American countries, as Latin American Integration Association (LAIA), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). In this garden of forking paths that constitutes South-American multilateralism, UNASUR is created with broad political, social, economic and security objectives, aiming at the gradual convergence of other integration initiatives in the region as a means of achieving “a common future of peace and economic and social prosperity” (UNASUR Constitutive Treaty, 2008, preamble).

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The origins of UNASUR may be traced back to the First Meeting of South American Presidents, which took place in Brasilia on August 31 and September 1st 2000, at invitation of Brazilian head of state Fernando Henrique Cardoso. National leaders discussed then how to organize cooperation in the sectors of trade, infrastructure, fight against illegal drugs, information, and technology; based on the "conviction that geographic contiguity and community of values lead to the need for a common agenda of specific opportunities and challenges" (Brasilia Communiqué, September 1st 2000, §2). The same aims and principles were reiterated in Guayaquil Consensus on Integration, Security and Infrastructure for Development, a document that came up from the Second Meeting of Presidents of South America (Guayaquil, 26 and 27 July 2002) and granted special emphasis to the plan IIRSA - Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America.

On the third edition of the meeting, held on 07th and 09th December 2004 in the city of Cusco, the presidents decided to create the Community of South American Nations (CSAN), confirming the intent to form an economic bloc among twelve countries: Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, and Suriname. The Cusco Declaration (8th December 2004) issued from the summit put up in its first item that the Community was founded on "a South American identity and shared common values", aimed to the sustainable development of peoples and to the improvement of physical integration. The first purpose would be achieved by deepening convergence between Mercosur, Andean Community and Chile, followed by its evolution to higher stages of economic, social and institutional integration. Physical integration would be sought through the implementation of the Consensual Agenda 2005-2010, a program focused on 31 projects of infrastructure in South America within the frame of IIRSA.

In 2007, Venezuelan suggestion to change organization’s title to Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) was accepted, and the year after its Constitutive Treaty was signed. Nevertheless, only in August 2011 its ratification was completed by member states. Additionally, the unstable paths of others South American experiences of integration, as well as UNASUR’s particularly large purposes, have yielded hesitation about institution’s ability to act with real effectiveness, beyond discourse.

Analyzing the evolution of Mercosur, Andres Malamud discusses the contrast he identifies between increasing rhetoric of Latin American politicians and the decline of political implementations on the bloc. By scrutinizing textual contents of treaties and leaders’ speeches, the author observes that

Cognitive dissonance may be a common dysfunction in large processes of regional integration, as the current attempt to constitutionalize the EU shows. In Latin America, however, the phenomenon is reinforced by a historical propensity towards magical realism and high rhetoric (2005: 434).

This magical realism to which Malamud refers, an inclination to involve political speeches and normative instruments with a pronounced rhetoric and strong symbols, has also been identified by researchers in UNASUR discourse (ALMEIDA, 2010; MALAMUD, C., 2008), marked by the symbolic reclaim of Simón Bolívar. This does not mean, however, that this discourse does not
manner to politics. On the contrary, it may assume a valuable role on the analysis of the social construction of South American region.

Beyond topographical boundaries, a region is fashioned by links that individuals develop to a particular territory, which stem from a collective history but also from present interactions, including those intermediated by institutions. Institutions prescribe rules governing behavior and activities, as well as they “frame the discourse” (SCHMIDT, 2008: 314): they draw the frame within some sets of ideas and discursive interactions are likely to take place. In the case of a recent organization such as UNASUR, this might be worthwhile to turn to its institutionalization discourses as a means to understand organization’s purposes, focal points of cooperation and teleological conflicts.

This paper attempts to build on the discourses concerning the context of UNASUR’s construction in order to discuss the role of identities in political action, particularly in processes of institutional legitimation. Considering the historical dynamics of construction and reconstruction of political interests, it intends to analyze if the idea of a South American collective identity constitutes a focal point aimed to sustain the cooperative arrangement in South America. In this purpose, it takes the discourse as the dimension where those ideas are exchanged and exposed to the public.

Therefore, focusing on UNASUR, the paper investigates how South American identity is constructed or reproduced by certain state actors, which employ different discursive strategies to establish an identity consistent with their particular interests and goals. The implementation of neoliberal policies on the 1990s adhering to Washington consensus, followed by the rise to power of leftist leaders challenging the liberal order, may create the impression that the region is characterized by an homogeneity of historical processes and interests – and consequently, by a single integration view. In order to observe if there is a homogeneous idea of South America or whether instead there are different narratives related to South American identity, the research scrutinizes how regional identities are linked to national interests and to which values they are discursively associated.

The analysis focuses on South American identity as conceived by political leaders: it explores the dynamics elites-mass stressing identity constructions held by political elites and expressed in their public speeches. Under a minimal definition of elite as "those who take the important decisions to be taken" (MILLS, 1981: 30) – that is, decisions with large and significant consequences –, I emphasize the political group, more specifically on its members directly involved in the conduct of foreign policy: the heads of state and government and foreign ministers. Presidents are major actors in the political discourse of a country, not only given the magnitude of their actions’ consequences, but also because, unlike other elites, they are accountable to voters and thus must justify their actions and decisions (ANDERSON, 2008). Moreover, presidential diplomacy is a hallmark on contemporaneous diplomacy, and may contribute decisively to improve a country’s leadership in its external action (DANESE, 2009).

This does not mean that this paper suggests those elites would constitute the definitive historical force contributing to the formation of South American identity. Instead, it adheres to a large concept of identity which comprises
several elements influencing in its construction and reconstruction. However, research’s objective attains itself to examine how national leaders use identity arguments on UNASUR’s institutional formation.

The paper adopts a discursive institutionalist approach, grounding on the principle of taking ideas and discourses seriously while observing them within an institutional context. Discourses are considered as something beyond the linguistic expression of exogenous interests: they are contextually analyzed as means to scrutinize how interests and ideas relate in political interactions, given that “social interactions cannot be fully understood without reference to the discourses that give them meaning” (PHILLIPS and HARDY, 2002: 3).

Within the framework of discursive institutionalism, the hypothesis tested is that national leaders have proactively promoted discursive processes of social identification in the institutional construction of UNASUR, yet identity narratives have differed among countries according to the values they have been related to.

The next section discusses the concept of social identity, stressing its development in political communities, particularly transnational ones, in a discursive institutionalist framework. Then, the paper analyzes cultural, historical and social elements able to ground a South American identity, comparing this concept to the Latin American one. Finally, it presents the empirical analysis of selected speeches from South American heads of state and foreign ministers in the context of UNASUR, and advances some conclusions.

2. Social identities, politics and discursive institutionalism

The study of collective identities, regardless of the framework in which it is performed (psychological, culturalist, sociological, political), starts out from concepts of social psychology and its basic definition of social identity as the psychological link between individuals and social groups or communities they belong to (ABRAMS and HOGG, 1990, apud HERRMANN and BREWER, 2004). Additionally, unlike essentialist approaches considering identities as immutable and unified, most contemporary studies take them as dynamics and historically constructed (HALL, 2000; LARRAIN, 1994).

This psychological bond between individuals and social groups correspond to social identities’ cognitive dimension, and leads to individual’s self-definition as a part of the group. However, this link does not exist autonomously without the intermediacy of collectivity, since social identities are also “collectively shared social constructions” (RISSE-KAPPEN, 2010: 9). They have necessarily a social dimension, otherwise they would remain individual identities. The collective sharing of this social construction takes place through symbols, signs, stories, and rituals expressed directly or indirectly on the speech of group members (MARCUSSEN et al., 1999), which provide guidance for converging the interpretation of what means the identity link.

Drawing the boundaries of a community raises the question of who is in and who is out it, which leads to the definition of meanings about group status, belonging criteria and relationship with outsiders. Hence, the dynamics of social identities’ construction involves on the one hand a set of ideas and concepts to
which members can relate positively, making real imagined communities, and on the other hand, a process of differentiation from the “other”. As Stuart Hall affirms, “identities are constructed through, not outside, difference” (2000:17).

Self-definitions have, therefore, a relational feature. Hopf puts that “an individual needs her own identity in order to make sense of herself and others and needs the identities of others to make sense of them and herself” (2002: 5). This does not mean that the relation between the self and the “other” must be conflictive, but that interaction between them occurs through differentiation. Furthermore, this “other” does not need to constitute an individual or state, instead it may refer to an idea or identity.

Sociological theory, especially authors inspired by Pierre Bourdieu, provides tools to understand collective identities’ social dimension, particularly their reproduction and change. Since identities are social-historical products, their reproduction takes place through social interactions. In spite of the important role played by certain agents, such as political and charismatic leaders, in promoting social identities, their action does not guarantee the internalization of identity discourse by the social group’s members. That is among those members where identities reproduction takes place, through habits and social practices relatively unmotivated (HOPF, 2002).

Habits supply individuals with a set of possible responses to the world that they execute unintentionally (HOPF, 2010). From a discursive perspective, considering society as a social cognitive structure, that is, a socialtemporal historical site within which there is a collection of intersubjective meanings to the discursive practices of its members² (HOPF, 2002); identities correspond to discursive practices that are automatically reproduced while referring to social established meanings, lacking a conscious and routine reflection from individuals about the representations.

The dynamics of these habits and discursive practices comes close to Bourdieu’s elaborations about the habitus. Habitus is conceived by Bourdieu as a concept able to mediate the opposition between objectivism and subjectivism, between agent and structure (BOURDIEU, 2011). It refers to the interiorization of society by individuals through abilities and propensities to think, feel, and act in certain ways, which will determine the actions of those people in society – thus making habitus structured by past social configurations while structuring present actions and representations (WACQUANT, 2004).

From what has been said about cognitive and social dimensions of social identities, we may infer that they comprehend:

i) Common historical-cultural basis: individuals identify themselves with “imagined communities” (ANDERSON, 2008) that have its meaning conferred by common attributes, symbols, and values historically incorporated;

ii) Present social process: habits and social practices reproduce identities, but they are subject to change by agents’ initiative or by supervenient social conditions;

² In the absence of these collections, individuals should renegotiate meanings at each interaction they participate.
iii) Dynamics of differentiation from the “other”³.

Therefore, taking, on the one hand, identity as a background of habits and social practices, and on the other hand, agents’ ability to act over this identity, modifying it or fomenting its reproduction by present social interactions – constituting then “identity as a project” (CHECKEL and KATZENSTEIN, 2009); we may conceive the dynamics of social identities’ morphogenesis as schemed on figure 1.

Figure 1: Social Identities’ Morphogenesis

![Diagram of Social Identities’ Morphogenesis]

Source: Author’s elaboration, based on Archer (1995)

The concept of political identities refers to social identities that engender political consequences, related to an authority with decision-making power or to the claim for such authority. The political identity par excellence is thus the national one, which refers to an imagined community endowed with sovereignty (ANDERSON, 2008). Being social identities, they consist in collective believes about group’s boundaries and conditions of membership, but the set of symbols and meanings that characterizes them are also invoked in political interactions. Castiglione (2009) defines them as follows:

*Political identity is both a social and a historical construct. As a social construct, it reflects the institutional nature of the political community. As a historical construct, its emergence and consolidation is bound up with historical contingencies and with the way in which competing narratives and ideologies shape the self-perceptions of the members of the community* (2009: 29).

Because they are inserted in a context where authorities with decision-making power operate, political identities expose and reproduce themselves not only through usual social interactions, but also through institutions, rules, formal documents. In this context, political elites constitute actors particularly able to interfere with those identities by means of public speeches or political decisions.

This fact leads us to the question of the level of analysis adopted in this research. As we are scrutinizing proactive reproduction of South American identity in the context of UNASUR, states and decision makers are our prior

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³ Another element sometimes pointed out to characterize collective identities is the feeling of common destiny shared by community members (SMITH, 1992; WENDT, 1994). Nevertheless, this feature raises several questionings (What may be considered a common destiny? Does the absence of this feeling mischaracterize the identity link?), and is controversial among researchers.
focus. However, the study cannot neglect states’ societies, since decision-makers are its members and hence share their identity constructions which determine the understandings they have about themselves, about the international system and the role their countries exercise there. Jutta Weldes stresses the importance of having in mind that those agents “do not approach international politics with a blank slate onto which meanings are written as a result of interaction among states” (1996: 280).

States do have identities constructed under a historical-cultural basis through political and social process and within a dynamical relation with several “others” (other countries, other ideologies, other roles in international society). Actually, identity matter is on the core of nation-states’ formation, which was based not only on the principles of territorial and political sovereignty, but also on the idea of a community formed by identification bonds between individuals. Anderson (2008) shows that the creation of nationalism in the late of the eighteenth century was a result of a complex intersection of different historical forces, brought up spontaneously at first, but then conducted in a discursive process of merging between nation and established government, often despite popular national movements. As Hall explains,

Les discours sur la nation ne reflètent pas, comme nous sommes conduits à le supposer, un Etat déjà unifié et achevé. Leur propos est plutôt de forger ou de construire une forme unifiée d’identification, en dehors des nombreuses différences de classe, de genre, de région, de religion et de localité qui, en réalité, divisent la nation. Pour y parvenir, ces discours doivent ancrer profondément la culture soi-disant libre de l’État ‘civil’ dans un mélange dense de significations, de traditions et de valeurs culturelles qui sont censées représenter la nation. C’est seulement dans la culture et la représentation que l’identification à cette ‘communauté imaginée’ peut être construite (2007: 315).

Furthermore, the historical evolution of nation-state rendered it a powerful agent of identification, to the extent that it holds material and symbolical resources to impose categories, classification schemes and ways of social interpretation to which bureaucrats, doctors, teachers and others may necessarily refer and that non-state actors may follow (BRUBAKER and COOPER, 2000).

Admitting that states do have identities, could they transcend national identities and assume at the same time a transnational identity? When states decide to take part on processes of political and economic integration, they are choosing to a certain extent to unite their destinies with others states’ ones, what yields a minimum identification among those parts. Particularly, elites leading political integration may encourage this identification during institutional construction: as Hermann and Brewer observe, grounded on Haas and Mitrany, “Efforts to move people’s thinking and identities beyond the nation-state drove a substantial portion of the post-war effort to build international institutions in Europe” (2004: 1).

But how the existence of a transnational identity could favor regional integration initiatives? Why bother to foment it? Two central arguments can be addressed: i) identity may enhance political integration when absorbed in its institutional dynamics (a question developed further on section 2.2); ii) the question of organization’s legitimacy in view of society.
Encouraging identification processes within transnational initiatives allows the mobilization of loyalties among citizens, that is, feelings of support to the organization and of obligation to its rules. These feelings, in turn, could contribute to the organization’s legitimacy:

*Identification with a political order is seen as a source of diffuse support and, thus, of legitimacy. The higher the sense of loyalty toward a political community among citizens, the more they are prepared to accept inconvenient decisions and policies of their governments, that is, to pay a price for their identity* (RISSE, 2004: 270).

Regional initiatives face legitimacy challenges which are different from nation-states’ ones. First, being political orders settled beyond state boundaries, they challenge the traditional concept of territorial sovereignty (MALAMUD and SOUSA, 2007). Moreover, economic integration’s important dimension of technical efficiency; intricate internal mechanisms of legitimation for executive bodies; the multilevel governance making less clear to identify the actor responsible for some decision; all those features characterize an organization whose purposes differ from nation-state’s ones, assuming consequently different roles in view of citizens.

To that extent, citizens’ identification to the regional political order may be extremely valuable to its legitimacy, understood as a “normative belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed” (HURD, 1999: 381). Legitimacy corresponds to an individual’s perception about an institution which affects his willingness to follow rules, assume obligations, and contextualize his behavior in a structure where he recognizes the existence of that institution, constructing hence his preferences within this worldview. This perception is favored when citizens feel linked to the organization through identity ties, what facilitates harmonizing the new political order’s discourse to set of meanings already classified as legitimate by individuals. Therefore, “common identity and the idea of community are seen as providing diffuse support that can sustain institutions even when these institutions are not able to provide immediate utilitarian payoffs” (HERRMANN and BREWER, 2004: 03).

After World War II, a ravaged Europe sought to overcome the legacy of totalitarianism and rivalry between its members by conceiving the union among them as a means to a durable peace. Hence the purpose of rejecting the nationalism associated to fascist movements was at the very center of European integration initiative, so that the architects of European Communities undertook an active effort to conceive institutional designs and practices which could encourage an identity construction transcending nation-state.

Indeed, for neofunctionalist strategy, interstate cooperation in series of functional questions would enhance integration because it would propagate to new sectors through spill-over mechanism. This spill-over would promote the development of identities, at first shared among bureaucratic elites, and then expanded to the rest of population (HERRMANN and BREWER, 2004). Accordingly, Ernst Haas suggested that regional institutions were able to contribute to the formation of a sense of community:

*Political integration is the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties.*
expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states (2004: 16).

Surveys conducted by European Commission (Eurobarometer) show that European identity is appropriated by most part of the citizens: 54% of respondents all over European Union in 2006 answered they understand themselves as European additionally to their own nationalities “often” or “sometimes” – contrary to 43% who “never” assume that identity. In 1990, before the Maastricht Treaty, most citizens affirmed never assume the transnational identity (51%), what points to the efficiency of EU to encourage identifications.

In their empirical study on the subject, Hooghe and Marks (2005) demonstrate that those who incorporate Europe in their sense of identity are more likely to support European Union than those adhering exclusively to national identities, which shows the connection between transnational collective identity and regional organization's legitimacy. Furthermore, the authors sustain the hypothesis that an exclusive identification to the nation-state is more powerful in explaining opposition to European integration than economic calculations of costs and benefits.

Bruter (2004) draws a differentiation between a culture-based identity (grounded on social similarities as history, ethnicity, and symbols) and a civic-based one (citizens identify to a particular political structure), and suggests that a culture-based identity may respond to a large amount of citizens' identification to Europe. In this sense, this may be valuable to examine European Commission’s initiative in partnership with Portuguese government called “Preparar o Futuro da União Europeia”. It comprises pedagogical projects about European affairs’ to be developed among students and teachers in Portuguese schools. We may observe that the material elaborated inside this initiative explains an European identity grounded, on the one hand, on similar historical paths, Christian roots, multiculturalism, and democratic values, and on the other hand, on European citizenship and the rights related to it. In this case, the discursive practice seeks to link cultural to civic base, which suggests a strategy to bond both meanings.

Those arguments entail the conclusion that European Union constitutes an active discursive agent with a leading role in terms of influencing the definition of what means to belong to Europe. EU is currently inserted in normative and cognitive structures of European countries, being intensely present in their political, social and economic discourses (LAFFAN, 2004).

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4 2006 was the last year where this question about identity perception figured on Eurobarometer's surveys.

5 The question posed by Eurobarometer: “Do you ever think of yourself as not only (nationality) but also European? Does this happen often, sometimes or never?” (EUROPEAN COMISSION, 2011)


Thus, although European idea and its identity lay roots in a large historical-cultural heritage, nowadays they are permeated inevitably with the regional institution.

3. Identities, institutions, and discourses

Rational choice approaches are likely to deny or neglect identities’ role on the study of international politics, or to limit their importance to the strategic use of identity argument by self-interested states. In the last case, identity is analyzed as a rhetorical tool aimed to serve to material interests of certain actors: “instrumental social constructions developed by elites in their struggle for political power insofar as they rationalize and legitimize the instrumental and material ‘taken-for-granted’ preferences of actors” (MARCUSSEN et al., 1999: 616).

To rational choice scholars, agents are rational and motivated by the logic of consequentiality, according to which: interests are prior to interaction and exogenous; decision-makers calculate the consequences of their actions; and coordinated action is reached through bargain that depend on actors’ previous capacities. In this context, language would be employed to pursue instrumental interests. Besides, the impact of institutions over identities is seen as institutions’ self-interest in their quest for legitimacy (SCHIMMELFENNIG, 2007).

On the other hand, historic and sociologic-based approaches tend to observe the relationship between identities, interests, and institutions with broader lenses. Besides the logic of consequentiality, they identify two other dynamics ruling the interaction of the three elements: the logic of appropriateness and the everyday logics.

The logic of appropriateness would act by defining certain models of action, behavior, and organization as appropriate, legitimate, right, or even natural (MARCH and OLSEN, 2004). The concept is based on the idea that actors seek to follow norms and rules that correspond to their political identities because they absorb the institutions’ ethos, practices, and expectations. Insofar as identities, institutions, and circumstances change; the logic of appropriateness also develop and modify.

Wendt (1999), for instance, argue that actors’ social identities may generate collective interests as a result of the individual’s identification with the “other’s” destiny, when the “other” starts to be seen as a cognitive extension of the self. This would represent the influence of the logic of appropriateness, since individuals would appropriate the “other’s” interests as their own.

For some other scholars, besides logics of consequentiality and appropriateness which try to explain human action in terms of a strategic or value calculus, the everyday logics may also be found on social practices. Spontaneous and non-reflexive, everyday logics is composed by habits and social practices that respond to a significant amount of social representations or social actions performed by individuals. For Hopf, “social cognitive structures are stable because of the many everyday social practices that reproduce them, not because agents have an interest in the reproduced product” (HOPF, 2002: 292). This does not mean that everyday logics might be the only one to rule
social action, but that it acts together with logics of consequentiality and appropriateness – and that in some situations, everyday logics is likely to predominate, particularly in long-term relations of cooperation or conflict (Hopf, 2010).

Admitting the existence of the everyday logics is not to argument for the absence of interests in social action. Individuals, such as states, act in behalf of their self-interests, but those interests are not exogenous. On the contrary, they correspond to historical constructions. As put in Weber’s construction (apud Swidler, 1986), interests are the motor of action, but ideas define the ends agents try to reach and the means they apply in this purpose.

In this sense, there is not one exclusive possibility of economic interest, as well as states’ interest may not be objectively identifiable without looking at contextual and historical conditions. In Wendt’s words, “Five hundred British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the US than five North Korean ones because of the shared understandings that underpin them” (1999: 255).

Identities affect, then, the individual’s perception about his possibilities of action. The symbolic framework, myths, rituals, and social practices that compose the identity of a society or group create ways of organizing experience and parameters for evaluate reality (Swidler, 1986). Thus they shape the worldviews of group members, affect their understandings of political and material conditions, and influence on how they represent their interests and the problems to be solved (Abdelal et al., 2009).

This does not mean that identities cannot be used in an instrumental, strategic way, in order to legitimize policies motivated by material interests. However, even the instrumental use of identity has its efficiency depending on the consensualness of the identity evoked (Rosamond, 1999), so that social actors or other states may be convinced that identification is valid or natural. Besides, identity constructions interiorized by decision-makers affect the definition of what interests they perceive as their own, and influence the choice of the identity argument as a way able to reach them. Therefore, identities and interests are ultimately linked to everyday or appropriateness logic even when ruled priory by a logic of consequentiality.

But in this context, why do institutions matter? This paper adopts a discursive institutionalist framework, that is to say it seeks to observe the relation between institutions and actors’ behavior, emphasizing the discourses that ground institutions, reproduce them in daily practices, deliberations and decision-making, and enable them to communicate to the public. New-institutionalism has been concerned with complex effects of institutionalization, particularly with institutions ability to coordinate actors’ expectations and to generate shared systems of ideas, affecting thus political norms, values, and choices (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993; Rosamond, 1999).

Within discursive institutionalism, institutions are seen as structures that affect what agents think, talk and do; as well as constructs of agents who design and shape them. About the discursive dimension, Schmidt points out that

Discourse serves not just to represent ideas but also to exchange them through interactive processes of a) coordination among policy actors in policy and program construction and b) communication
between political actors and the public in the presentation, deliberation, and legitimation of those ideas, against a background of overarching philosophies (2008: 321-322).

So, in supranational institutions, discourse encompasses communication between states, their political coordination, communication in view of the public, and, I might add to Schmidt’s formulation, institution’s set of norms: treaties, agreements, protocols, decisions, and declarations that ground and guide its actions. Norms comprehend a set of signs and symbols whose impact transcend their instrumentality: they have a special ability to incorporate and reinforce meanings, given its character of prescriptive direction and its formal and routine application.

Each institution therefore has its own discursive systems, which present regularities of objects, statements, concepts, subject choices. This is based on the shared meanings found in that specific social-historical locus, which comes close to the concept of “social stock of knowledge” from Berger and Luckmann (1993: 40) and to Foucault’s “discursive formation” (2008: 164).

About the dynamics between institutions and identities, researchers after Ernst Haas have made efforts to demonstrate that international institutions are able to create feelings of community transcending the nation-state. For Haas (2004), institutions are meant to equilibrate and reconcile divergent interests of national governments, political parties, and interest groups within a new regional political community by realigning loyalties to the supranational level.

Hall and Taylor (2001) point out that this functionalist approach is excessively intentionalist, since it is likely to assume that the institutional building process is fully aware of its goals and conducted by actors that perceive clearly the effects of the institutions they are creating. The authors stress that “although there is undoubtedly a purposive element to institutional creation, such analysis often entail theoretic assumptions about the prescience of historical actors and their capacity to control the course of events” (2001: 952).

In a functionalist framework, institutions change the political structure, and may eventually alter the way individuals perceive the group in terms of the creation of a sense of community as a result of the shared experiences and social norms they provide. They may as well enhance interdependence and information flux among actors, which may reinforce mutual confidence.

Besides those effects, scholars more constructivist-oriented consider institutional environment as a causal variable that, under certain circumstances, may have transformative effects over actor’s basic properties, including how they see themselves and how they conceptualize their interests (LEWIS, 2007). Accordingly, Herrmann and Brewer stress that

[...] there is likely to be a reciprocal process of mutual construction in which states, often based on national identities, create international institutions that, over time, lead to an evolution in identities that affects both the interests of the states and the affiliation felt for the international institution (2004:13).

But how does these dynamic between institutions, identities, and interests take place? The answer may reside in interaction mechanisms between everyday logics, strategic behavior, and socio-psychological processes of norm internalization. Three mechanisms are usually identified by scholars: socialization, persuasion, and mimesis.
Checkel defines socialization as the “process of inducting actors into the norms and rules of a given community” (2007: 187). To Checkel, norm internalization by agents yields its continuous compliance because it leads to the replacement of the logic of consequentiality by appropriateness one. In this sense, collective identities would become consensual since actors internalize and naturalize them, following thus their range of social practices. As a result, identities would tend to get integrated to institutions and states’ domestic structures.

Schimmelfennig defines international socialization as “the process that is directed toward a state’s internalization of the constitutive beliefs and practices institutionalized in its international environment” (2000: 111-112), emphasizing that it follows in fact the logic of consequentiality, which comprises strategic calculation of costs and benefits. Socializing agents employ socialization as a strategy to enhance institutions’ legitimacy and to facilitate cooperation, security, and economic exchanges through common norms.

Neither Checkel (2007) nor Schimmelfennig (2000) observe the socialization mechanism through the lenses of everyday logic, that is, the socialization of social practices by their repetition and by the power of habits. Both authors neglect thus the power of institutions, as social discursive structures, to establish a range of meanings, orientations, practices, and actions to which agents adhere automatically, without performing a strategic or normative calculation. This approach harmonizes to Berger and Luckmann’s sociological concept of socialization, corresponding to “the comprehensive and consistent induction of an individual into the objective world of a society or a sector of it” (1993: 150).

Persuasion is not an alternative mechanism to socialization, but complements it emphasizing agents’ proactive role on identity building by the means of convincing (RISSE, 2004). Unlike the conception of language as a tool to exchange information between self-interested actors, the mechanism is based on the idea that “arguments and attempts at persuasion – “talkin”, in popular parlance – may change the most basic properties of agents” (CHECKEL, 2007: 336). In a context where social rational agents would present arguments in order to try to persuade and convince each other, their interests would be opened to redefinitions.

In its turn, mimesis constitute a process of socialization through which individuals in a first moment copy behavior norms of the group, including its discursive practices, in order to circulate in a new environment (JOHNSTON, 2007). This differs from strategic calculation because it does not imply a utilitarian reflection about costs and benefits, but it also distinguishes from normative socialization since there is no interiorization of norms according to a value statement about its legitimacy. It is an adaptation to a new environment: “it is rather a satisficing first step designed simply to be able to participate in the group by following its most basic rules, even before the actor has a clear sense of what its interests might be that need maximizing” (JOHNSTON, 2007: 5329).

By the means of mimesis, an actor gets involved in procedures, behaviors, and discourses typical of the social environment which constrain his acts inside the institution. Those correspond to the first moments of adaptation to a discursive formation and its practices. Then, behavior mimesis may lead to
the internalization of those practices due to its repetition, generating actions moved by everyday logic.

To sum up, institutions are locus of social and discursive practices that shape the representations actors make about themselves, about the others, and about the world. This results from institutions’ character of discursive formation that socializes while sedimenting a set of discursive practices and meanings; as well as from agents proactive action socializing, persuading, or performing mimesis. When regional institutions affect the state’s self-understanding in the international scene, they contribute to modify state’s own identity. The figure 2 summarizes the whole process.

**Figure 2: Regional institutions and social identities’ evolution**

![Diagram](source)

Source: Author’s elaboration.

### 3. Constructing South America and South-American Identities

This has already been pointed out that an institution is characterized by its own discursive body, with regularities of statements and terminology, which comes close to Foucault’s conception of discursive formation. Indeed, UNASUR’s discursive body (whose components here examined are specified below) is characterized by a general tendency to refer to “South-American people” instead of “nations”, “societies” or “citizens”; and to employ a mutual treatment of “brothers” to countries and presidents, as well as to use emotional terms as “affection” and “love”. It is also marked by describing regional integration stressing all of its goals, like in the passage “espacio común en las distintas áreas, político, económico, social, cultura, energético, ambiental y de infraestructura de la región” (LUGO, Oct. 29 2011). Regularity may also be observed in mentioning identity arguments and terms, usually being linked to “common values”, “common future”, and “peace”. In order to examine those features, an empiric textual analysis is performed next.

#### 3.1 Operationalizing research method

Aiming at testing the hypothesis that national leaders in South-America proactively make use of identity arguments in UNASUR institutional building, the content analysis (CA) technique has been employed, particularly a computer-assisted text analysis using Yoshikoder\(^8\) 0.6.3, a multilanguage tool.

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software of CA developed by the Identity Project of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs (Harvard University). By the means of the software, a dictionary has been elaborated in order to scrutinize the selected documents, obtaining the words’ frequency and observing key-words-in-context9.

This content analysis has been done on a quali-quantitative approach, insofar as the discourse was analytically inserted in its social-historical context, and linguistic mechanisms of naturalization of the discourse (BOURDIEU, 2011; HOPF, 2002) were scrutinized.

In view of the objective of analyzing South-American identity building by national political elites within the context of UNASUR, the following documents were selected to be examined:

i) Declarations of intents and principles, consensus, and formal collective declarations reporting the results of the first Meetings of South-American Heads of State (2000, 2002, 2004, 2005 e 2006); UNASUR Constitutive Treaty (2008) and formal collective declarations issued from UNASUR’s Ordinary and Extraordinary Summits of Heads of State and Government (Text Group 1);

ii) Speeches from heads of state and foreign ministers uttered in UNASUR’s meetings or in the South-American Presidents’ meetings that preceded it, from 2000 to 2011 (Text Group 2).

Text group 1 refers to the normative basis of UNASUR, reified on declarations which have been ruling its institutional development, on its constitutive treaty, and on collective presidential declarations reporting Ordinary or Extraordinary Summits. In all three cases, the analysis was restricted to declarations concerning general political guidelines, central projects, basic institutional design, or reporting their outcomes. Declarations about specific subjects, for instance the one about the Falkland Islands (Dec. 09th 2006), and those issued from particular committees or instituting specific organs have not been examined.

The declarations were chosen in spite of the Council of Heads of State’s decisions given the broader character of its determinations, which relates to UNASUR’s purposes and guidelines, while decisions tend to address specific questions. The Council of Foreign Ministers’ declarations were not examined either, to the extent that they are hierarchically inferior and tied to the Council of Heads of State’s ones. Thus, Text Group 1 encompasses the thirteen documents listed on Table 3.

Table 3: Selected Norms and Declarations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Norm or Declaration</th>
<th>Date of Signing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Brasilia Communiqué Sets out the Meetings of South-American Presidents, establishes the purpose of regional integration, and list its guiding principles.</td>
<td>September 1 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Guayaquil Consensus on Integration, Security and Infrastructure for</td>
<td>July 27 2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 The results of content analysis have been controlled by the observation of the words in their context to avoid spurious results: for example, analyzing the word “development” has disregarded occurrences such as “the development of projects”.


### Development

*Signed at the II Meeting of South-American Presidents.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declaration</th>
<th>Signed At</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Declaration on the South-American Zone of Peace</td>
<td>July 27 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Declares South-America as a Zone of Peace and Cooperation.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cuzco Declaration on the Community of South-American Nations</td>
<td>December 8 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Signed at the III Meeting of South-American Presidents, decides to create the CSAN.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ayacucho Declaration</td>
<td>December 9 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Reaffirms the principles of South-American integration and convenes conferences in order to institutionalize it.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Reaffirms principles, objectives, and institutional design of CSAN.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Cochabamba Declaration</td>
<td>December 9 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Signed at the II Meeting of Heads of State of CSAN. Reaffirms organizations’ principles and purposes, and establishes the Strategic Plan of Deepening South-American Integration.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Margarita Declaration – Building Energetic Integration on the South</td>
<td>April 17 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Signed on the I Energetic Summit of CSAN, establishes the guidelines of regional energetic integration.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. UNASUR Constitutive Treaty</td>
<td>May 23 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Institutes the Union of South-American Nations.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Quito Declaration</td>
<td>August 10 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Declaration from the Council of Heads of State and Government on the occasion of its III Ordinary Meeting&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Los Cardales Declaration</td>
<td>May 4 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Balânco de desenvolvimentos institucionais por ocasião de Reunião Extraordinária de Chefas e Chefes de Estado e Governo.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Georgetown Declaration</td>
<td>November 26 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Declaration from the Council of Heads of State and Government on the occasion of its IV Ordinary Meeting&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Lima Declaration on Inequality</td>
<td>July 28 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Declaration from the Council of Heads of State and Government asserting inequality reduction as a guideline and announcing the future elaboration of an Agenda of Social Priority Actions.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On Text Group 2, Guyana and Suriname were not analyzed, despite being members of UNASUR: first, performing a CA requires proficiency of the researcher on the language under examination, which I do not have for Dutch. Second, comparing Latin languages really close to each other (Portuguese and Spanish) to languages with German or Anglo-Saxon roots would bring to the research a linguistic complexity unwelcome to its viability.

Speeches on Text Group 2 comprehend those uttered by presidents or foreign ministers at: meetings of South-American presidents previous to UNASUR; ordinary and extraordinary meetings of UNASUR’s Council of Heads of State and Government and the Council of Foreign Ministers; occasions where South America act as an international actor (summits between South America and Africa or Arab Countries); committees or other UNASUR organs.

The sample used is, a priori, the total number of speeches publically pronounced and available in instances of official release. However, availability
is extremely irregular among countries, so that there are cases such as Brazil, which provides all its foreign policy speeches, and others like Bolivia, that does not give access to any speech. In this context, Youtube\textsuperscript{10} virtual tool was supplementary used, when there was no official release. Part of the speeches was available on written format, but others needed to be transcribed.

Therefore, the universe of speeches concerning UNASUR examined is distributed as expressed on Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Number of speeches of heads of state or foreign ministers analyzed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country/Year</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NC: There are no cases among available foreign policy speeches.
NA: There is no speech available on foreign policy.

3.2. South-American Identity: which one, how, whose?

a. The discursive appeal to South-American identity

Among the norms and declarations underlying UNASUR, seven\textsuperscript{11} refer expressly to “South-American identity”\textsuperscript{12} and/or “region identity”\textsuperscript{13}. The Cochabamba Declaration (2006) is the one that counts more mentions, six in total. Brasília Communiqué (2000) and UNASUR Treaty (2008) refer three times each, pointing out to a cultural identity related to geographical proximity and common values. Guayaquil Consensus (2002) stresses that “é vontade da Améica do Sul, fiel ao mandato de seus Libertadores e à sua identidade como região com história comum e herança cultural compartilhada, construir de maneira coordenada um espaço integrado” (item 5).

History is a frequent element in Text Group 1. The expressions “shared history”\textsuperscript{14} or “common history”\textsuperscript{15} appear six times, and mentions to states’

\textsuperscript{12} “Identidade sul-americana”, “identidad suramericana”, “identidad sudamericana”.
\textsuperscript{13} “Identidade da região”, “identidad de la región”.
\textsuperscript{14} “História compartilhada”, “historia compartida”.
independence processes occur 21 times. Simón Bolívar is mentioned in four different documents, and José de San Martín, General Antônio José de Sucre, and the Amphictyonic Congress of Panama also count references.

There are as well four occurrences of the attribute “sisters” related to South-American nations, one of “American Homeland”, and three of “common cultural heritage”. “South-American citizenship” is mentioned seven times. The expressions “our peoples”, “South-American peoples” or “people from South-American” are used 22 times, pointing at a collectivization of national subjects.

This identity terminology is employed both in constructions related to the past, as a historical-cultural basis of legitimation of regional integration, and in other constructions related to the future, materializing identity as a project. Cochabamba Declaration (2006), for example, puts that “nuestra integración se asienta en [...] la valorización de una identidad cultural sudamericana con participación de actores locales y regionales” (item 3), and inserts regional identity in its Strategic Plan on Deepening South-American Integration, establishing that

La Comisión de Altos Funcionarios se abocará al estudio de los elementos de un Acuerdo Constitutivo que conduzca a la afirmación, en el plano internacional, de una verdadera identidad y ciudadanía sudamericana, fundada en los valores comunes de respeto a la democracia y a todos derechos humanos y en la construcción de un futuro común de paz y prosperidad económica y social (paragraph A, item 7).

In a teleological perspective, likewise, the use of “integration” associated to the attribute “cultural” is 12 times repeated, and “integration of the peoples” is also found: thus, it is stressed the wide scope of the regional institution, which extends beyond economic integration.

This must be stressed that Text Group 1 is formed by UNASUR’s normative benchmarks, providing guidelines to institutional building and to organization’s action. Including collective identity in their textual body, whether as historical and cultural background, whether as a political project, indicates the importance this argument acquires in the context examined, employed as a means to legitimize regional integration through naturalizing it as “South-American will” (Guayaquil Consensus, 2002, item 5). Furthermore, the frequent mention of historical symbols suggests the intention of endowing formal instruments with emotional elements, which demonstrates the quest to a support based not necessarily in rational calculations.

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15 “História comum”, “historia común”.
16 “Irmãs”, “hermanas”.
17 “Patria americana”, “patría americana”.
18 “Herença cultural comum” or “patrimônio cultural comum”; “herencia cultural común” or “patrimonio cultural común”.
19 “Cidadania sul-americana”, “ciudadanía sudamericana/suramericana”.
21 “Integração cultural”, “espaço cultural integrado”; “agenda cultural sul-americana”.
22 “vontade da América do Sul”.
Additionally, even the declarations affirmed before not to mention explicitly “South-American identity” refer to the latter by the means of other terms (except Margarita Declaration from 2007): Ayacucho Declaration (2004) names Bolívar, the common history, and the independence movements; Declarations of Quito (2009), Los Cardales (2010) and Lima (2011) mention the independence movements and the common future; and Georgetown Declaration (2010) employs the idea of “fellow nations”.

Within Text Group 2, that is, among Heads of States’ and foreign ministers’ speeches, a remarkable heterogeneity in the use of identity argument may be found, as Table 5 shows. While Brazil emphasizes the concept of identity itself and the idea of common history and culture; Venezuela stresses the independence movements and the characters there involved, such as Simón Bolívar, San Martín, General Abreu e Lima, and several others. Ecuador and Colombia are extreme cases: Ecuador counts almost 100% more mentions than Venezuela, the country with second more mentions; and Colombia refers to the terms poorly, so that it may be affirmed that it does not make use of identity arguments.

Table 5: Frequency of identity terms by country on Text Group 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South-American/Regional Identity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simón Bolívar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common history</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Culture</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellow nation (nación hermana)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence movements</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great/South-American Homeland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our peoples</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Although there is no reference to “nación hermana” among Bolivian speeches, the adjective “brother” is used 13 times to refer to South-American presidents.

Another element that outstands on UNASUR’s discourses is a narrative of a common future. Ayacucho Declaration (2004, preamble) talks about the “verification” of a common future, a future that would be characterized by “fecunda e pacífica convivência e de permanente cooperação e bem-estar” (Guayaquil Consensus, 2002, item 3). On Cusco Declaration (2004), the common future is described as the citizens’ wish, interpreted by leaders who decided to create the CSAN accordingly: “interpretando as aspirações e anseios de seus povos a favor da integração, unidade e construção de um futuro comum, decidimos formar a Comunidade Sul-americana de Nações”

23 "Nações irmãs", “naciones hermanas”.
24 In proportional terms regarding the total number of words of the speeches, Venezuela has a total proportion of 0.0051 and Ecuador, 0.0071.
(2004, preamble). In Text Group 2, the common future narrative is regularly found among countries – exception made to Bolivia and Colombia.

In this way, identity argument is a tool to build a bridge between past, present and future, a bridge that is materialized on UNASUR. A cyclical narrative is made: present is the axis surrounded by past and future narratives, but the present itself is historicized, and the future is seen as a natural consequence of the present. In this sense, Tabaré Vázquez\textsuperscript{25} affirms:

\begin{quote}
Más allá de la ubicación geográfica respecto a la línea equinoccial de cada uno de los países aquí presentes, todos pertenecemos a ese Sur, cuya historia no ha contado con el favor de los dioses. Pero el Sur también es presente y futuro; nosotros somos parte de este presente y el futuro será lo que nosotros y nuestros contemporáneos seamos capaces de hacer, sin modelos ni recetas (Set. 26 2009).
\end{quote}

This narrative suggest thus the effort to naturalize political decisions as inevitable outcomes of an historical path, encouraging an identification based not only on a common past, but also on destinies’ union.

\textbf{b. A South-American identity that projects itself all over Latin America}

Brasilia Communiqué (2000, item 11), draw a South-American identity among “\textit{países que dividem uma mesma vizinhança imediata}”\textsuperscript{26}, which would tend to deepen the “\textit{laços bilaterais e multilaterais com as outras nações da América Latina e Caribe, do continente e do mundo}”. Therefore, “\textit{articular a América do Sul significa, portanto, fortalecer a América Latina e o Caribe}” (Brasilia Communiqué, item 9), so that South-American integration would keep its compromise with Latin American integration.

All references to Latin America are made under those terms in Text Group 1, where there is no mention to a “Latin-America identity”. “Peoples” are always characterized as South-American, not Latin. This demonstrates the carefullness existent within these institutional textual practices, conceived under technic precision and reflection, to reserve identity feature to South America. In national leaders’ speeches, however, the same is not observed.

Brazil follows the guidelines of UNASUR’s norms about Latin America. Both presidents Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002), Lula da Silva (2003-2010) and Dilma Rousseff (2011-), as well as foreign minister Celso Amorim (2003-2010), make use of South America as the active subject, considering Latin America an integration level that would be encouraged as a consequence of UNASUR. Latin-American identity is seen as differing from South-American one, and coexisting with the latter: for example, Lula da Silva affirmed: “\textit{Vejo o mundo com olhar múltiplo: brasileiro, sul-americano, latino-americano e caribenho}” (Nov. 04 2004)\textsuperscript{27}.

Uruguay, Paraguay and Peru effectuate a clear distinction between South America and Latin America as different subjects of integration, assimilating the first concept to UNASUR and even explaining the strategic purpose of restraining integration to the South cone:

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{25} Uruguayan president from 2005 to 2010.
\item \textsuperscript{26} “… countries that share an immediate neighborhood” (author’s translation).
\item \textsuperscript{27} Bibliographic references of discourses examined in the CA may be found on Appendix 1. Those from speeches supplementary analyzed (such as pronouncements made in other instances of integration) are referred in footnotes.
\end{footnotes}
Nosotros somos responsables de la decisión que toma nuestro pequeño país, y hemos decidido priorizar América del Sur para que ésta pueda intentar darse una representación continental, que sin comprometer la soberanía de cada uno de los países, le pueda decir al mundo: ‘aquí estamos, somos, luchamos por intereses y tradiciones que son en común’ [...] (MUJICA, May 04 2010).

However, if in Peru’s discursive body the identity argument is used in the context of South America but not to Latin America, Uruguay and Paraguay employ the same identity narrative, with similar symbols and terminology, to both levels of integration.

Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, and Bolivia do not build a clear differentiation between South America and Latin America in the context of UNASUR, although each country present particular evolutions on terms usage which are analyzed on section 3.3.

Colombia is an especial case: it basically makes no use of identity argument in the context of South-American integration, but it does so in Latin-American level. There is no confusion between both levels in Colombian discourses. Yet, both of them stress the importance of South-American integration to spread to Latin America. For Uribe28, “la verdad es que Suramérica no puede pensar en unos linderos al interior de la unión suramericana, sino que tiene que buscar la unión con todo el continente29”.

Venezuela has a peculiar attitude. It usually makes the distinction between Latin and South America. However, influenced by Bolívar, who had never used the concept of Latinoamérica, Chávez30 tends progressively to make use of Suramérica to refer to the entire subcontinent under the Grande River:

Una vez estábamos hablando de Suramérica, no sé dónde, de la Unión Sudamericana, hace años, y alguien, creo que fue un mexicano se paró y preguntó: ¿y México? Y yo también le respondí: México también es parte de Suramérica, el Sur es un concepto mucho más que geográfico, es histórico, antropológico. El Sur, somos el Sur y aquí estamos (Dek. 02 2011).

Talking about a South-American identity on a historical and cultural basis while dissociating it completely from Latin-American one constitutes an artificial construction, difficult to be sustained in situations more spontaneous than norms and declaration technically reflected and elaborated. However, identities may also be grounded on shared civic values, which may be able to underlie a more accentuated differentiation between both levels. Moreover, social identities morphogenesis is affected by present social processes, consequently institutions of regional integration such as UNASUR may act over them, consolidating some meanings and reinventing others.

28 Álvaro Uribe, Colombian president from 2002 to 2010.
30 Hugo Chávez, Venezuelan president from 1999 to now.
5.3 Regional discourse by country: patterns of socialization and neobolivarianism

From Argentina, only presidents Nestor Kirchner’s and Cristina Kirchner’s speeches are available, from 2003 to 2011. Within the entire set of Nestor Kirchner speeches on regional foreign policy (2003-2007), we may verify an emphasis on Latin America concept, evoked as the collective “us”.

After Cristina Férnandez de Kirchner (2007-), we may note more intense mentions to South America. Indeed, her first speech here analyzed begins stating “La América del Sur, nombre de mujer, la América tiene nombre de mujer” (KIRCHNER, Dec. 09 2007). Although “Latin America” keeps being mentioned in her interventions, we may observe that the indistinction verified in Nestor Kirchner term diminishes progressively with Cristina: the proportion of references to Latinoamérica$^{31}$ decreases from 0,0035 to 0,0007; while to Suramérica grows from 0,0004 to 0,0024. This could suggest that presidential change is the reason for the difference. Yet we may verify that 62,5% of all references made by Cristina Kirchner to Latin America are found in her first speech, in a total of her seven speeches analyzed on Text Group 2. The usage of Suramérica increases progressively, as well as identity symbols and terminology.

The rising employ of identity argument and the consolidation of the identification to South America in spite of Latin one do not seem to be properly explained by consequentiality logic. Explaining this way would assume a modification of Argentinian interests regarding regional integration from Nestor to Cristina Kirchner, and during the latter’s term. The everyday logic mechanism manifested in processes of socialization and mimesis in the context of UNASUR’s discursive formation seems to explain better this narrative changes.

Brazil builds a clear and coherent identification to South America in the context of integration institutions, and points out to its autonomous existence as an actor distinct from Latin America. To Lula da Silva, “as gerações futuras de brasileiros terão o espanhol como segunda língua, assim como terão a América do Sul como nossa segunda pátria” (Set. 29 2005).

We may verify a tendency among Brazilian leaders to link a historical-cultural basis to a civic one, based on shared values, in the collective identity’s content. We may also note that Brazil makes explicit in its speeches the presence of consequentiality logic in South-American integration’s identity project. For instance, foreign minister Celso Amorim (2003-2010) once affirmed that

Eu me sinto muito ibero-americano, com uma avó espanhola e um avô português, mas sou também muito sul-americano e não tenho nenhuma dificuldade em dizer ao mundo que a América do Sul tem a sua personalidade. Por isso quando surgiu a ideia, entre outras, de se realizar uma reunião com os países árabes, que teve um grande êxito, decidimos fazer com a América do Sul, pois vimos a necessidade de desenvolver a consciência da América do Sul (Nov. 24 2006).

Regarding Uruguayan foreign policy speeches, we may verify during the analyzed period (2005-2011) a significant emphasis on relations with South-

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$^{31}$ Calculated over the total number of words.
American countries, especially on UNASUR and Mercosur levels. Uruguay performs a consistent identity narrative, developed likewise by Tabaré Vázquez (2005-2010) and José Mujica (2010-), making use of historical arguments but more often grounding on a civic content, which is presented as a requirement for integration and a guideline to its development. In this sense, Vázquez affirms:

Quiero expresar en primer lugar nuestro total acuerdo en cuanto a que Sudamérica tiene que ser una tierra de paz, y no sólo una tierra de paz, sino también una tierra de libertad, una tierra de soberanía de cada uno de sus integrantes, una tierra de democracia (Ago. 28 2009).

Paraguay (analyzed speeches from 2007 to 2011) employs an identity construction close to Uruguayan one. Chile also follows the same lines, and it outstands in Chilean speeches the special attention conferred to UNASUR, the first integration regional bloc to which the country participates. In this context, Michelle Bachelet’s pronouncements tend to stress the shared values and challenges, proposing a political identification on that basis.

Mi país concurre con entusiasmo a esta Unión Sudamericana de Naciones, porque como aquí se ha dicho con mucha claridad, no sólo es indispensable en términos de los desafíos comunes que tenemos y la posibilidad de seguir avanzando en respuestas comunes, sino también porque es, a nuestro juicio, un gigantesco catalizador para el desarrollo, porque nos otorga la oportunidad de tener una voz fuerte y una voz clara ante este mundo del Siglo XXI (BACHELET, May 23 2008).

Not only this civic-based identification is maintained on Sebastián Piñera’s (2010-) speeches, but there is also an increase on historical-cultural arguments. For example, Piñera puts that

Pocos continentes en el mundo se pueden sentir tan agradecidos y orgullosos de lo que Dios nos dio: un pueblo homogéneo, trabajador, empeñoso; un territorio vasto y generoso; una historia que nos une y, por sobre todo, un futuro que tiene que permitir sacar lo mejor de cada uno de nosotros (May 04 2010).

This is an interesting finding if we observe the political parties from which both presidents came: Michelle Bachelet was elected by Chilean Socialist Party, which is placed on the centre-left of the country’s political spectrum, and Sebastián Piñera, by National Renovation, a centre-right party. In the same way, we may observe a continuity on identity argumentation from Fernando Henrique Cardoso32 (Party of Brazilian Social Democracy, centre-right) e Lula da Silva (Workers’ Party, leftish), in Brazil, and from Nicanor Duarte Frutos33 (Colorado Party, centre-right) e Fernando Lugo (Patriotic Alliance for Change, left-wing), no Paraguay.

32 “Não foi sempre assim e agora é cada vez mais fácil dar-nos conta de que, efetivamente, quando Bolívar e San Martín aqui se encontraram, há 180 anos, tinham um sonho que não era somente um sonho. Levavam em seus corações uma utopia que não era somente uma utopia, que tinha uma base na geografia, tinha uma base na história Ibérica, tinha base na mestiçagem desta história Ibérica nas serras da América, tinha base na vontade grandiosa de construir algo que fosse capaz de ir mais longe do que o instante presente. E chegamos a esse mais longe” (CARDOSO, July 26 2002).

33 “[...] el Banco del Sur nos abre el camino a la liberación política y al fin de la dominación cultural, impuesta desde los manejos de los recursos financieros, desde sectores que nada tienen que ver con nuestra historia y con nuestros anhelos” (FRUTOS, Dez. 09 2007).
In the case of Peru, president Ollanta Humala Tasso (2011-), member of Peruan Nationalist Party, stressed on his inauguration speech that

*Ratifico mi compromiso de desarrollar una política exterior multilateral de cara a nuestra región que tanto ha cambiado en la última década. La integración en el marco de UNASUR y la Comunidad Andina de Naciones será la línea principal de acción. [...] Nuestra región es inmensa y rica en recursos pero también en historia y en culturas comunes. Yo les quiero recordar que nuestra independencia fue un proceso regional, donde todos nos hermanamos para lograr nuestra libertad y soberanía. La heroica gesta de nuestros próceres como el general don José de San Martín y el libertador Simón Bolívar, siempre conscientes de la urgencia de la unión de los pueblos de América, fueron los precursores del impulso integrador del presente. ‘Seguramente, escribía Bolívar, la unión es la que nos falta para completar la obra de nuestra regeneración’. Este es aún objetivo pendiente para todos los pueblos de América*34.

Although we did not count with any speech of Humala in UNASUR’s context, the passage above suggests a stronger use of identity symbols than his predecessors. Alan García Pérez (2006-2011), Alejandro Toledo (2001-2006) e Alberto Fujimori35 (1990-2000) kept a regular identity discourse, grounded mostly on shared values but not neglecting historical arguments.

In its turn, Bolivia goes from a discourse stressing common values of Hugo Bánzer (president from 1997 to 2001), to a discursive body substantially marked by historical and cultural arguments, employed by Evo Morales.

Ecuador, with president Rafael Correa (2007-), has featured the largest usage of identity argument among all South-American countries. Historical symbols, terms of identification (“brothers”, “Great Homeland”), mentions of historical characters, references to a natural destiny, all those elements are present in each of Correa’s speeches. He also tends to bond South-America to Latin-America, stressing the identity link that connects them. In Correa’s opinion,

*Siempre recordamos, no me cansaré de decir: mientras los países europeos tendrán que explicar a sus hijos por qué se unieron 27 países con cultura, lengua, religión, sistemas políticos diferentes, nosotros tendremos que explicarles a los nuestros por qué nos demoramos tanto (Mar. 11 2011).*

Concerning Colombia, although Álvaro Uribe’s speeches are available to the public, there are only a small number of interventions in the frame of UNASUR or Latin America. Regarding regional integration, Andean Community seems to receive a greater attention, as well as the SICA, Central America Integration System – particularly focusing on the Plan Panamá-Puebla of physical integration on Central America. Indeed, Colombian speeches pronounced in the context of UNASUR shows the purpose of a broader integration effort encompassing the whole Latin America, in which Colombia, as

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35 “El sentido común, una verdadera toma de conciencia de nuestra identidad regional y una auténtica visión de futuro, nos conducen a una lógica distinta para resolver nuestros problemas, no como interlocutores aislados y débiles, sino con la fortaleza que otorga la unidad (FUJIMORI, 01 set. 2000)*.
a result of its geographic location, would assume the intermediation role between Center and South: “para que Colombia pueda, como miembro que se ha venido integrando paulatinamente al Plan Panamá – Puebla, cumplir la tarea de vincular esa bella Centroamérica con Suramérica”. Hence, Uribe argues that

Veo a Suramérica sumamente desconectada con Centroamérica. Colombia ha tenido todo el interés de participar en el Plan Panamá-Puebla. Nosotros no podemos pensar en que haya allá un proyecto de infraestructura y que América del Sur esté totalmente ausente. Tenemos que trabajar allí el tema de integrarnos en transmisión de energía, integrarnos en gas (Nov. 04 2004).

Venezuela, influenced likewise by its geographic location, tends to emphasize the need to expand the regional integration to Central America and Caribe, which would actually make part of Sudamérica. Emotional, historical and identity appeals characterize Venezuelan discourse, in both South and Latin America integration levels:

Nosotros tenemos un compromiso con nuestros pueblos, con nuestra historia, con nuestras tragedias, con nuestro amor, y por encima de todo, con el futuro de esos pueblos que crecen trepidantes entre tanto dolor y tantas amenazas. [...] Hace falta audacia, hace falta aquello que decía San Martín: “Seamos libres, lo demás no importa nada”; hace falta aquello que decía Simón Bolívar desde Caracas en 1812: “Echemos el miedo a la espalda y salvemos esta Patria”; hace falta un poquito de eso, decía Neruda: “Patria, naciste de los leñadores, de hijos sin bautizar, de carpinteros, de los que dieron como un ave extraña una gota de sangre voladora, y hoy nacerás de nuevo duramente desde donde el traidor y el carcelero te creen para siempre sumergida, hoy nacerás del pueblo como entonces (May 10 2005).

Therefore, we observe a homogeneous base on the use of identity argument by South-American countries in the context of UNASUR’s institutionalization – except Colombia. Yet, the several usages present some differences in each state that can be explained by different perspectives on integration, although all of them based on one single wish of autonomy.

Content analysis showed different views of integration grounded not on national leaders’ political parties, but on countries’ perceptions about their national interests, their international roles, and about their South-American neighbors.

Perceptions of national interests regarding South-American countries are affected by each country’s national identity toward the region. Identities that are accompanied by an autonomous regional identity or, at least, that are regionalized: an individual may think of himself as “Brazilian” and “South-American”, or he may only feel he is “Brazilian”, the national idea itself encompasses the attribute of belonging to South America. In this sense, from

the five speeches analyzed pronounced on the occasion of the First Meeting of South-American Presidents (2000), three of them make use of identity arguments: those from Brazil, Peru and Bolivia. This finding suggests the existence of a previous collective identity, background of national decision-makers, enhanced by the routine, intense, and spontaneous usage of identity arguments on UNASUR’s institutional context.

Additionally, the discourses analyzed reveal the existence of a collective identity as a project, even inserted in the institution’s normative basis. We may thus observe the use of identity arguments under the logic of consequentiality, clearly expressed by Brazil; logic of appropriateness, identified particularly on discourses from Ecuador, Venezuela, and Bolivia, and everyday logic, suggested by the progressive use of a same terminology and text structure by several countries. This discursive homogenization over time, marked by gradual distinction between South America and Latin America, as well as by the use of similar enouncements and terms, points to the action of UNASUR as a discursive formation that, by the means of repetition and normative institutionalization of this discourse, shapes the range of meanings and signifiers of national decision-makers.

4. Conclusions

The theoretical framework adopted in this paper grounds on the view that identities matter: i) to legitimate state action and gather citizens’ support; ii) to foment a “spirit of the region” in the society, presenting the regional level as an alternative to be considered on preference’s formation, and consequently deepening economic and cultural integration; iii) to define what is politically possible within the regional institution, since actors define the purposes they will pursue in foreign policy based on their own identities.

Assuming the relevance of social identities on foreign policy-making does not mean to neglect power relations or rational interests. Interests constitute the motor of political action, but those interests are shaped by shared meanings, including the ones provided by identity representations.

So, in the case of South America, the objective of autonomy underlying integration effort represents a rational interest, but it is not exogenously given: it is rather a historical construction, issued from successive conjunctures of economic and political dependence, and related to dynamics of identity building and differentiation of the “other”.

In this context, this paper has tested the hypothesis that South-American national leaders proactively promote discursive practices of social identification within UNASUR construction, although identity narratives differ among the countries.

This has been indeed observed that the discursive formation of the Union of South-American Nations encompasses features that strengthen the collective identity construction. This may be identified in: i) the use of identity terminology leading to settle the “we” in contrast to the “others”: references to “fellow nations”, “South-American family”, “Great Homeland”; ii) the search for the international projection of collective identity, related to UNASUR role of representing the interests of its members internationally; iii) the content
dimension: based on historical experiences and shared cultural elements, particularly appealing to independence movements' symbols; iv) the normative dimension: appealing to shared values as guidelines and purposes of regional integration; v) the occurrence of a cyclical narrative which involves past, present, and future.

The content analysis has showed that strategic-motivated actors use the identity argument to create a sense of belonging to South America able to legitimize the region as a political space. Nevertheless, consequentiality logic is not the only one to fundament states' action reinforcing identities as a regional project. Appropriateness logic has also been found in the speeches analyzed, especially the ones from Equator and Venezuela, which tend to support integration as a natural and correct consequence of a South-American identity.

Besides, everyday logic also responds to part of states' behavior. In an initial stage, it has been found on different countries' tendency to refer to collective identity since their first speeches, demonstrating the pre-existence of identity conceptions endowed with shared meanings and perceptions. This everyday logic, founded on background identity, is thus relevant to define what is politically possible inside the regional institution. In a second stage, habits and discursive practices consolidated by repetition in UNASUR's institutional frame tend to spread among countries, reinforcing the share of meanings.

However, as Berger and Luckmann states (1993), there is no perfect socialization process, so that the internalization of objective reality is composed by meanings that may always be subjectively contested, specially the more artificial they are. Furthermore, the lenses through which a country understands itself and thus builds its interests are provided by several internal and external conditionings. In this sense, initiatives of regional integration such as UNASUR do not impose themselves over other subjective realities and identifications, particularly national ones, instead they act as a discursive formation of mediation between national interests and regional identity discourse – in the case here studied the South-American one.

Bibliography


Norms and Declarations


APPENDIX 1: List of speeches analyzed on Text Group 2 by country (in Portuguese)

ARGENTINA
2004
18/10/2004 (América Latina): Discurso do chanceler Rafael Antonio Bielsa. XIII Conselho de Ministros da ALADI.
2005
10/05/2005: Palavras do Presidente Néstor Kirchner na Cúpula América do Sul – Países Árabes.
2007
09/12/2007: Discurso da Presidente eleita Cristina Kirchner na Assinatura da Ata Fundacional do Banco do Sul.
2008
17/12/2008 (América Latina): Discurso da Presidente Cristina Kirchner na Cúpula da América Latina e Caribe.
2009
31/03/2009: Discurso da Presidente Cristina Kirchner na II Cúpula de Presidentes da América do Sul – Países Árabes.
10/08/ 2009: Intervenção de Cristina Kirchner na Cúpula da UNASUL.
26/09/2009: Intervenção da Presidente Cristina Kirchner na II Cúpula América do Sul-Afri
ca, Ilha de Margarita, Venezuela.
2010
2011
27/05/2011: Palavras da Presidente no ato de recepção dos integrantes do Conselho de Segurança da UNASUL.
BOLÍVIA
2000
2006

2007

2009


2010

BRASIL
2000

2002

2004


2005


2006


2008


2009


2010


2011


CHILE

2008


2009


2010

2011

COLOMBIA
2000

2006

2007

2009

2010

EQUADOR
2000

2007

2009
10/08/2009: Discurso em cerimônia de passagem da Presidência pro tempore da UNASUL. Quito, Equador.

2009


2010
14/06/2010: Discurso do Presidente Rafael Correa na Cúpula de Parlamentos da UNASUL. Quito, Equador.


2011


PARAGUAI
2007


2008


2009


2010
22/02/10 (América Latina): Discurso do Presidente Fernando Lugo na Cúpula do Rio. Cancún, México.


2011
29/10/2011: Discurso do Presidente Fernando Lugo na abertura da reunião da UNASUL.


02/12/2011 (América Latina): Discurso do Presidente Fernando Lugo na Cúpula de Chefes de Estado da CELAC.


PERU
2000


2004
2005
10/05/2005: Discurso do Presidente da República, Alejandro Toledo, na inauguração da Cúpula de Chefes de Estado e de Governo da América do Sul - Países Árabes.

2009

URUGUAI
2005
10/05/05: Exposição do Presidente Tabaré Vázquez na Cúpula América do Sul e Países Árabes realizada em Brasília.

2006
08/12/06: Chegada do Presidente Tabaré Vázquez e Comitiva na cidade de Cochabamba, Bolívia, para participar da II Cúpula Sul-americana de Nações.

2007

2009

2010
04/05/2010: Discurso do Presidente da República, José Mujica, na Cúpula da UNASUL.

2011
03/12/2011 (América Latina): Discurso do Presidente da República, José Mujica, na Cúpula da CELAC, na Venezuela.

VENEZUELA
2002

2003

2005

2007

2008

2009

2011