Paradox of Autonomy: explaining flaws in South American security regionalism

Paradoxo da autonomia: explicando as deficiências no regionalismo de segurança sul-americano

Paradoja de la autonomía: explicando las falencias en el regionalismo de seguridad sudamericano

Víctor M. Mijares[1]

1. Ph.D. in Political Science, Universität Hamburg and German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA). Assistant Professor of Political Science, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá/Colombia. ORCID: 0000-0003-4110-7763.(iD)

Abstract

This article addresses the South American difficulties in the consolidation of regional security mechanisms, developing the explanatory model of "paradox of autonomy." This was developed through inductive and deductive criteria, based on recent history observations, in order to attain generalizable lessons from a relevant case for South American international relations, and using rational analytical approaches that allowed their construction within the framework of collective action problems. From the observation on the emergence and performance of the South American Defense Council, it was identified that the allowing conditions for a novel mechanism of regional (collective) autonomy for security, paradoxically offered opportunities for the exercise of national (individual) autonomy. The article concludes that, although the conditions for the paradox of autonomy are difficult to overcome in cases of security regionalism initiatives, there are possibilities to do so. The key would be in less ambitious institutional designs that recognize the inherent difficulties for institutional regional security cooperation in South America.

Keywords: Paradox of Autonomy. South America. International autonomy. Security regionalism.

Resumo

Este artigo aborda as dificuldades sul-americanas na consolidação de mecanismos regionais de segurança, desenvolvendo o modelo explicativo do "paradoxo da autonomia". Isso foi desenvolvido através de critérios indutivos e dedutivos, com base em observações da história recente, para obter lições generalizáveis de um caso relevante para as relações internacionais da América do Sul e o uso de abordagens analíticas racionais que permitiram sua construção no quadro de problemas de ação coletiva. A partir da observação sobre o surgimento e desempenho do Conselho de Defesa Sul-Americano, identificou-se que as condições propícias a um novo mecanismo de autonomia regional (coletiva) de segurança,

paradoxalmente ofereciam oportunidades para o exercício da autonomia nacional (individual). O artigo conclui que, embora as condições para o paradoxo da autonomia sejam difíceis de superar nos casos de iniciativas regionais de segurança, há possibilidades de fazê-lo. A chave estaria em projetos institucionais menos ambiciosos que reconheçam as dificuldades inerentes à cooperação institucional de segurança regional na Sul-América.

Palavras-chave: Paradoxo da Autonomia. América do Sul. Autonomia internacional. Regionalismo de segurança

Resumen

Este artículo aborda las dificultades sudamericanas en la consolidación de los mecanismos de seguridad regional, desarrollando el modelo explicativo de "paradoja de la autonomía". Este se desarrolló a través de criterios inductivos y deductivos, basados en observaciones de historia reciente, para obtener lecciones generalizables a partir de un caso relevante para las relaciones internacionales de América del Sur, y el uso de enfoques analíticos racionales que permitieron su construcción en el marco de los problemas de acción colectiva. A partir de la observación sobre el surgimiento y el desempeño del Consejo de Defensa Sudamericano, se identificó que las condiciones propicias para un nuevo mecanismo de autonomía regional (colectiva) para la seguridad, paradójicamente ofrecían oportunidades para el ejercicio de la autonomía nacional (individual). El artículo concluye que, aunque las condiciones para la paradoja de la autonomía son difíciles de superar en casos de iniciativas de regionalismo de seguridad, existen posibilidades de hacerlo. La clave estaría en diseños institucionales menos ambiciosos que reconozcan las dificultades inherentes para la cooperación institucional de seguridad regional en Sudamérica.

Palabras clave: Paradoja de la Autonomía. Sudamérica. Autonomía internacional. Regionalismo de seguridad.

Introduction

Inspired by the works of Juan Carlos Puig and Helio Jaguaribe, studies on international autonomy have been reconsidered given the patterns in South American foreign policy towards the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. Driven structurally by the diffusion of power and exercised by strong presidents, most of them highly motivated and ideologically aligned, the search for greater margins for action in international insertion became an imperative of foreign policy. New intra- and extra-regional alignments, as well as a new and more ambitious wave of regionalism, took place in the face of the perceived global diffusion of power and the geostrategic reorientation of the United States (US).

However, South America has had problems consolidating a security community. The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) experiment and its South American Defense Council (CDS) failed in 2018, demonstrating that the internal tensions for national autonomy were stronger than the flexible design thought for regional or collective autonomy. This could be analyzed throughout the "paradox of autonomy". It occurs in the tension between national autonomy–the freedom of decision and action that a state can enjoy in the international system –and regional autonomy– regarding organized regions.

Methodologically, this article is based on a systematic review as a research design (DENYER; TRANFIELD, 2009), in order to develop an analytical model based on the observation of the recent experience of South American security regionalism. The explanatory model of the paradox of autonomy agrees with the idea of regionalism as a tool for regional autonomy, but also challenges it in two ways. Firstly, regarding homogeneity, the paradox of autonomy is a structural model, assuming that the regional hierarchy is fundamental in the prediction of foreign policy behavior. Secondly, it contrasts the notions of "common" and "collective", while the paradox lies in the potential conflict between the notion of autonomy as a recurring objective and that of autonomy as a shared objective. It is understood that for regional powers, and secondary powers, autonomy is a key objective. Asymmetries generate stimulus for bandwagoning, and can leave aside autonomous objectives in favor of security and development. Thus, the paradox of autonomy commonly occurs at the level of secondary powers, since collective (regional) autonomy can be both a route and an obstacle for individual (national) autonomy. Thus, even considering the possibility of autonomy as a common objective, it might not be considered a collective one.

The paradox of autonomy can arise in many areas of foreign policy, but it is a particularly sensitive phenomenon when it comes to issues of defense and security in South America. An oft-forgotten aspect in the developed South American autonomist doctrine of international law is the primacy of Westphalian sovereignty. The notion of territorial integrity is central to security and defense policies, mainly for Hispanic American countries. The connection between sovereignty and security puts national autonomy before the regional. This is a common problem for South American cooperation in security, and remains a latent condition in border tensions and rivalries in the region. Hence, multilateral governance agreements on regional security are unusual, making the region far from being a security community. Thus, although forms of regionalism relating to development have shown formidable resistance, reluctance in terms of security cooperation is linked to the rigid meaning of sovereignty, leading to the paradox.

Autonomy and regionalism in South America

Some literature states that regionalism is driven by the search for autonomy as well as development objectives (BRICEÑO-RUIZ; SIMONOFF, 2015; RIVAROLA PUNTIGLIANO; BRICEÑO-RUIZ, 2013). Insofar as this literature does not specify differences between national and regional autonomy, it is possible that the complementarity between the two is taken for granted, with the potential effect of leading to imprecise conclusions regarding security regionalism. That alignment is frequent in the agendas of regional powers.

Following the ideas on South American regionalism, it is possible to identify the main driving forces behind the search for autonomy. The first of these is *development*, the most prominent argument in favor of institutionalizing regional cooperation. The combination of economic

underdevelopment and material potential has historically motivated regional cooperation. The second driving force is *democracy*, since the third wave of democratization contributed to the synchronization of political regimes in the region, motivating multi-sectoral cooperation. And the third driving force is the *balance of power*, given the changes in the distribution of power and the geostrategic reorientation of the US, security regionalism has been identified as a driving force of regionalism in a broader sense, mainly in post-hegemonic literature (BRICEÑO-RUIZ; MORALES, 2017; RIGGIROZZI; TUSSIE, 2012).

However, the paths of regionalism are not open ways in South America. The primary obstacle to the institutionalization of regional cooperation can be analyzed as a problem of collective action. Consequently, the principal obstructing forces are national strategies for international insertion, rival ideological programs, and low regional interdependence. Regarding the national strategies for international insertion, global changes in the distribution and concentration of power brought a new opening for external interactions beyond traditional relations based on proximity and culture. The rise of new powers and orders modifies regional patterns for cooperation. Thus, regions have maintained importance, but not exclusivity. Also, ideological rivalries in South America submit the region to the effects of ideological diversity and partial de-democratization. Significant differences between political regimes in the region promoted the advent of sub-regional blocs with ideological biases. Finally, there is the low intraregional interdependence, resulting from the generally high dependence on the export of raw materials, having adverse effects on national industrialization processes. The lack of economic complementarity and the technological-industrial deficit orient South American commercial interests outside the region, reducing the possibilities of interdependence and cooperation.

Between autonomy and development

In the eve of the post-Cold War period, attention was drawn to what was called a "world of regions" (KATZENSTEIN, 2015) or one of "regional orders" (LAKE; MORGAN, 2010; SOLINGEN; MALNIGHT, 2016). In Latin America, regionalism has had a long-standing agenda. The new wave of literature on autonomy is connected to the fact that in Latin America, the resilience of regionalism is directly linked to the search for autonomy and development (BRICEÑO-RUIZ; SIMONOFF, 2015). However, the literature available so far has not been concerned with defining positions of autonomy and development in an order of preference. In doing so, there are two ideal types of foreign policy strategy towards regionalism: the first when *autonomy-follows-development*, and the second, when *development-follows-autonomy*.

The first type of strategy prioritizes development as a necessary condition for autonomy. This used to be the dominant regional approach. Two schools of thought also emerged in distinct periods, which of the *developmentalists*, inspired by the "Cepalista" theory and the center/periphery diagnosis, and that of the *(neo)liberals*. On the other hand, devel-

opment through autonomy is associated with the Latin American turn to the left. However, the preference for one approach or the other has more than an ideological bias; it also has a material basis, since accelerated economic growth is capable of encouraging autonomist policies and behaviors rather than development projects. The turn to the left combined both factors, an assertive ideological package fueled by a boom in the prices of the raw materials that underpinned the quest for autonomy.

The distinction between the two focuses on the search for autonomy must be considered to better understand autonomy as a policy and as a potential paradox. In the absence of a regional hegemony, regionalism is a collective project with the typical problems of collective action. This is especially true when it comes to security regionalism. Regionalism understood under the strategy of autonomy through development, particularly in the (neo)liberal form, pursues autonomy through economic cooperation and stability agreements, avoiding regional commitments, pursuing modest goals and going one step at a time. On the contrary, the strategy of development through autonomy tends to be expansive and maximalist in its objectives. Economic cooperation comes in second place, behind political commitment.

Generally for liberal democracies, growth and development are priorities, not the expansion of their own regimes and political values (SANAHUJA, 2009; VAN KLAVEREN, 1997). The opposite is the case of hybrid and authoritarian regimes, for which autonomy is the priority within regional projects, as well as the instrumentalization of these for the diffusion and promotion of their own values and political practices (SÖDERBAUM, 2016). Considering this distinction is fundamental to address the specificity of security regionalism and the paradox of autonomy for secondary regional powers, especially when it comes to super-regional orders (super-complexes, following BUZAN and WAEVER (2003), p. 60), such as the Western Hemisphere, in which the traditional main power promotes liberal values.

Specificity of security regionalism

Few policies are capable of jeopardizing sovereignty and autonomy that much as defense policy. In a broad sense, interior security policy and foreign policy are articulated with national defense policy. This broad set of policies can be attributed to the objectives of the preservation of national grand strategy. The existential sense of defense policy is, in itself, an obstacle for supranational security mechanisms, above all when the potential partners are part of the same region or international subsystem. Security regionalism, which would contemplate the possibility of some coordination of national defense policies, lies at the base of the basic needs of states (KELLY, 2007).

Generally, security agreements indicate two widely spread schemes, collective security and/or collective defense.[2] Security regionalism could respond to one or both schemes, but within a common space, a regional security complex (BUZAN; WÆVER, 2003) within an international subsystem. To understand why the paradox of autonomy

2. Although similar, collective security and collective defense should not be confused with each other. The collective security scheme assumes the indivisibility of international security, so that any aggressive action in the international system must be deterred or punished. It is the principle that inspires the UN Security Council. While the collective defense scheme refers to the principle of military alliances, according to which the threat or attack on one of the allies will be considered as a threat or attack on all members of the alliance. NATO is the best contemporary example of it. See Robinson (2008, p. 39-41).

arises, it is necessary to consider that national security and defense is not simply another area in the range of public sectors. This is especially true in South America, which as an international subsystem, has developed in parallel a marked interest in regional autonomy and zeal for national autonomy. Two phenomena explain the specificity of security regionalism in South America, one of a global character and the other rooted in the geopolitics of the region.

The first of these phenomena is the limitation of transferring security and defense tasks to private actors. Although some South American states have had problems of territorial control and there is a tendency among some great powers to privatize security work, the transfer does not occur as in other sectors of public policy in which private actors assume core tasks. On one hand, because South American nation-state identities are linked to territorial integrity (CLAPHAM, 1999; NWEIHED, 1992; ZACHER, 2001). On the other, the geopolitical reason its link to regional and national autonomies, there is the latent presence of a superpower that never occupied any territory of the subcontinent, and the persistence of territorial tensions, which limited mutual trust, and the generation of regional cooperation mechanisms for security and defense. These conditions had a parallel effect regarding the search for autonomy in South America. This is because of it was considered that a goal as important as development must have the possibility of taking and executing political decisions without US tutelage. Also, the search for national autonomy in terms of security, due to intraregional mistrust manifested in historical territorial tensions and rivalries (DOMINGUEZ, 2003; FRANCHI *et al.*, 2017; MARES, 2001) and caution facing a potential Brazilian primacy (FLEMES; WEHNER, 2015).

These regional conditions are at the base of the problems of regional multilateral cooperation in security and defense, emphasizing the effects of the paradox of autonomy in the security regionalism.

Paradox of autonomy

The paradox of autonomy is an explanatory model with classical roots within the study of the problems of rational choice and collective action. Under power de-concentration conditions, bring opportunities for external action freedom, especially for minor and rising powers. To gain greater autonomy in a sensitive sector such as that of security and defense, the states of a region could join efforts to build an alliance or a security community, which would generate greater autonomy as a bloc. However, and as in any collective enterprise, the autonomy of each member would be adversely affected. This is when the paradox arises. Security regional cooperation mechanisms would gain space for their creation and development, but it is also possible that the incentives for cooperation distress the growing alternative relationships for individual benefit, that is to say, for national autonomy.

This is a paradox, insofar as the conditions encourage contradictory outcomes. This, in turn, leads to decision-making crossroads which become dilemmas. The basic requirement for a dilemma is the presence

of at least two courses of mutually exclusive action. False dilemmas diverge from real ones in the exclusivity-inclusivity dichotomy. Therefore, a dilemma is false when at least two of an actor's alternatives could hypothetically be taken at the same time with harmless mutual effects. The real dilemmas become problematic given the character of politics as a strategic game, which makes the intentions of the other(s) impossible, as well as ideological and material changes within a system of the interactions. Thus, uncertainty plays an important role here, as it usually does in international politics (RATHBUN, 2007). The paradox of autonomy leads to an autonomy foreign policy dilemma, in which governments face the decision of choosing between a collective good, such as regional autonomy, and an individual good, such as national autonomy.

National autonomy frequently assumes distinct forms, from the nominative and grandiloquent term of "independence", to the tactical but inelegant concept of "room to maneuver". National autonomy on the international stage presupposes independence and the absence of control by another power, and goes beyond room to maneuver insofar as it operates at abstract and complex levels of political strategy. In this sense, national autonomy is a favorable condition of opportunity and capability to mobilize resources by national elites to exploit the given conditions in the search for a better position of international insertion, preserving legitimate exclusivity in domestic affairs. These conditions have both internal and external origins. The internal ones refer to the conditions for resources extraction and mobilization (SCHWELLER, 2009; TALIAFERRO, 2006), while the external ones relate to a particular international constellation in terms of the distribution of power and effective patterns of influence.

National autonomy is associated with territorial, international and Westphalian sovereignty (KRASNER, 1999). It is conventionally related to the optimum conditions for the design and conduct of foreign policy strategies and, as an idea, can historically be traced (AYOOB, 2002). The case of regional autonomy is different, not only in scale, but also in nature. At the regional level, autonomy can be erroneously understood as a coordinated aggregation of national autonomies. To avoid that mistake, regional autonomy should be understood as the harmonization of external objectives by virtue of a shared principle and according to self-imposed regional (supranational) governance, always with the aim of developing joint abilities to better detect opportunities, coordinate the mobilization of resources and take advantage of favorable conditions for collective objectives. Regional autonomy supposes at least one of these two conditions: a global system of regional blocs in fluid interaction, and a system of great competing powers which should be mutually balanced.

Regional autonomy under the criteria of security regionalism implies a trade-off, regional security/stability in exchange for national autonomy. However, accepting such an arrangement entails some preconditions, such as the common definition of perceived external threats, and/or the establishment of regulation mechanisms to avoid costly intraregional conflicts. A significant hierarchization is another route to regional autonomy (LAKE, 2009; LAKE; MORGAN, 2010; LEMKE, 2010;

VIEIRA; ALDEN, 2011; WOHLFORTH, 1999). Theoretically, a region under the clear leadership of its central power must be able to implement a strategy of access control –diplomatic, cultural, economic and/or military–facing external powers. Most of the recent literature on emerging powers has taken for granted the possibility of some isolation of regions driven by their central powers (BURGES, 2010; FLEMES; WEHNER, 2015; MALAMUD, 2011; NOLTE, 2010; VIEIRA; ALDEN, 2011).

The study of the interaction of regional powers has principally focused on strategies of contestation and of interaction facing extra-regional powers. In theory, in a well-structured regional hierarchy, with a functional internal market and an agreement on security and collective defense, regional autonomy could thrive by restricting external influences and preserving an autonomous development model. Nevertheless, the dilemma emerges based on political frictions within the regions. The harmonization of interests is an arduous task within national elites, and even more arduous between the ruling elites of various states. International cooperation is possible when these elites succeed in aligning complementary interests, or by the external imposition of an effectively hegemonic power.

In addition to the structural capabilities relating to its periphery, a regional power must be capable of sustaining a strategy of denial of access, or at least be capable of fulfilling the function of manger of regional access facing external powers. Paradoxically, systemic conditions those are likely to foster the rise of regional powers, can also do this in the cases of secondary and minor powers, encouraging foreign policy strategies that could include the launch or strengthening of bilateral relations both inside and outside their regions. This would contain the grounds for intraregional tensions and rivalries, not only in terms of economic relations, but also in the collective management of regional security.

Theoretical grounds

The explanatory model of the paradox of autonomy is based on the theoretical developments that give it form and content. Strongly anchored to the rational theoretical framework of international politics, the model has intellectual debts, which could be summarized in six pillars: the South American theory of autonomy; the theory of sovereignty; collective action theory; the security dilemma in multipolar conditions; the security dilemma in alliances; and the model of alliance restraint.

1.Autonomy theory

The paradox of autonomy mainly lies on the South American theory of autonomy. The early emancipatory movement of Latin America, the type of colonial model of the region and the geopolitical conditions of South America are the three factors, which combine to make autonomy the original and persistent objective of the foreign policies of South American states. On one hand, the Latin American emancipation was part of a larger political and intellectual process of global reach, which combined Enlightenment principles with the decline of the pre-industrial

empires. In the newcomer states, firstly in Hispanic America then later in Brazil, this generated the necessity for an international insertion, which preserved freedom of action, both against the old metropolis and imperialism in the process of industrialization.

The Iberian colonial model was also key in the construction of an Ibero-American political identity claiming for autonomy. Unlike the almost exclusively extractivist models imposed in Asia and, above all, in Africa, by industrial empires, the preindustrial Iberian empires used a form of conquest and colonization which incorporated the new political-territorial components as integral parts of the empires themselves (BOERSNER, 1982; GUERRA, 2011). Hence, the international insertion of the new republics, and of the Brazilian empire, has been from the outset a legitimate necessity and on an equal footing in the conditions of the international concert of the nineteenth. Geopolitics also played a role in the early and persistent thirst for autonomy. The continental dimensions, the predominant coastal occupation of the South American territory, and the rise of the US in the hemisphere, generated the duality of relatively low contacts with limited continental interdependence. Additionally, boundary conflicts where there is greater contact, and reserved cooperation facing Washington, fueled by military interventions in Central America and the Caribbean basin (TEIXEIRA, 2012).

The paradox of autonomy includes in the debate the classical "decisional autonomy" (JAGUARIBE, 1979; PUIG, 1986) and the later definition of "relational autonomy" (RUSSELL; TOKATLIAN, 2002). The first form of autonomy refers to freedom of decision, but also of political action. It consists of the expansion of the external room to maneuver in the sense of aspiration for international insertion motivated by the historical and geopolitical factors already mentioned. The second form of autonomy, relational, poses cooperation between equals as a condition for its realization (RUSSELL; TOKATLIAN, 2002). It corresponds to a distinct historical moment in which the impetus for integration would have been reached after the regional democratic settlement and changes in geostrategy and the distribution of capabilities in the international system.

This debate is central to the paradox of autonomy, but it retakes it in a non-sequential historical sense, neither epistemological, nor paradigmatic –that of the transition from decisional to relational autonomy, but rather dialectical, to say, its opposition to the generation of a political dilemma. This is evident in the resistance of national autonomy in an area of high political impact for states: security and national defense policy. When this resistance coincides with the interest to coordinate security and defense policies oriented at gaining greater autonomy as a group, that is when the interest in relational autonomy is manifested, and when the paradox of autonomy is presented.

2. Westphalian sovereignty

An explanatory model of South American international relations must consider the regional propensity for a conventional conception of sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Hispanic South American states were born bound to the principle of *uti possidetis iuris*, making territorial integrity a sub-

stantial part of national identities. The historical experience of the region is not without interstate violence (MARES, 2001; MARTÍN, 2006; THIES, 2008), but it is much less severe than that of Europe, and the level of perceived external threats is substantially less (BATTAGLINO, 2012). Moreover, the region is not in the immediate military reach of great powers beyond the US. Westphalian sovereignty is a central component in understanding the paradox of autonomy. Autonomist tensions take place when governments differ in the degree of sovereign exclusivity in defense and national security policies, especially if territorial disputes persist, or if ideological aggravating factors emerge.

3. Collective action theory

The central presumption of the explanatory model of the paradox of autonomy is that it is a collective action problem. The basis of the explanation of its logical mechanisms can be found in the "tragedy of the commons" (HARDIN, 2009; OLSON, 1965; OSTROM, 2015). The tragedy is centered in the tension between individual interests and collective goods. Following instrumentally rational strategies, individuals –as well as foreign policy executives, especially those dominated by strong leaders in presidentialist regimes– can pursue and achieve their own objectives, even though they negatively affect collective aspirations and goals in the process. The paradox of autonomy confronts national autonomy and regional autonomy, establishing the resemblance to the tragedy of the commons. But the similarity is not perfect, as the tragedy of the commons assumes that the common good is of equal benefit for all individuals involved, and although it is true that regional autonomy has been a solid South American objective, it is not clear to what extent it has been a method for achieving a more valuable national autonomy.

Given that the model of the paradox of autonomy is especially designed for the sensitive sector of regional security, individual interests tend to be more resilient due to the existential nature of national security and defense. In the paradox of autonomy, the similarities between the "commons" are more ontological than operational, as governments take care of what they consider to be best for their societies and are more willing to sabotage formally shared goals. However, under conditions of international deconcentration of power, which are prone to encouraging the possibilities of national autonomy, security regionalism can be damaged, but unlike the tragedy of the commons, not necessarily destroyed as a common good. The paradox of autonomy could (re)shape the institutional design of security regionalism, partially preserving the shared objectives. And if liberal institutionalism has taught us anything, it is that, with all its limitations and without knowing with certainty to what extent, institutions are capable of moderating political behavior.

4. Security dilemma

The two main branches of structural realism, the defensive and the offensive, are distinguished by what they assume to be the primary objective of the state in international politics: maximize its security or its power. This debate has consumed years of research without having

a clearer conclusion than the affirmation that, sometimes, greater power offers security, while in other moments it stimulates threats. This is the content of the security dilemma, an explanatory model of which the paradox of autonomy is also a subsidiary. The security dilemma (HERZ, 1950; JERVIS, 1978) exposes the potentially conflictive relationship between national security and international security. It assumes that one of the principal mechanisms to strengthen national security, if not the principal one, is the strengthening and/or refining of military capabilities. This is generally recorded in increases in defense budgets and/or military exercises. The result, according to the dilemma, is that in trying to guarantee its own security, the state puts its neighbors and other potential rivals on alert to what they could see as a threat, negatively affecting international security.

The debt of the paradox of autonomy to the security dilemma is evident. The potential conflict of individual and collective interests is present, as well as the tension between unilaterality and bi- or multi-laterality. However, the differences are also clear. Firstly, the security dilemma works at a tactical-operative level of national defense. Although this has strategic implications, it does not compare to the ramifications that the model of the paradox of autonomy assumes to exist in the search for room to maneuver, national defense and the freedom of sovereign action in domestic politics, due to the already mentioned supremacy of Westphalian sovereignty. Secondly, it is even further removed from the structural realist debate between offensive and defensive realisms, insomuch as it focuses on secondary powers rather than great powers. The makes the paradox of autonomy part of peripheral realism (SCHENONI; ESCUDÉ, 2016) or subaltern realism (AYOOB, 2002). Thirdly, and as a corollary of the two previous differences, the paradox of autonomy does not result in drastic effects such as armament spirals, arms races, or war, but rather in more, or less, significant limitations in the reach of regional security institutions.

5. Security dilemma in alliances

A pillar of the model of the paradox of autonomy is the security dilemma in alliances (SNYDER, 1997). According to this, those responsible for foreign policy of allied states can experience one of two fears. Firstly, the fear of abandonment, when their allies do not follow a course of collective action facing a threat, or do not assume an active role. This behavior could be attributed to the existence of more attractive material alternatives, intergovernmental ideological empathy with the third party perceived as a threat, or to avoid tangible or ideological costs. Secondly, the fear of commitment, which arises when the commitment to balance is not aligned with one's own interests, or when it could even result in damage. As a rule, the lesser the asymmetry, the more probable the dilemma. Thus, periods when international power is deconcentrated and asymmetries tend to ease, are likely to affect the commitment within an alliance.

The security dilemma in alliances is another example of a collective action problem, in which a conflictive mechanism can be seen be-

tween distinct individual interests and the collective objective. Thus, it maintains similarity with the paradox of autonomy, but they differ in the phase in which they arise. While in the security dilemma in alliances the collective action problem appears after the creation of a reciprocal assistance agreement, threatening trust between the allies, in the paradox of autonomy the problem appears before the formalization of the agreement, threatening trust between potential partners and affecting the institutional design of the founding treaty. The difference is important because the former is an operational problem for established and operative alliances, or those with aspirations to operationality, and the second, a problem in the process of forming regional security agreements. Thus, the paradox of autonomy is an obstacle for an "operational alliance" (MIJARES, 2011; MORGENTHAU, 2005) before it has been established.

6.*Alliance restraining*

A secondary theoretical source is the alliance restraint. According to this model, some alliances may not be oriented to counterbalancing power or threats, nor be mechanisms for the pursuit of interests, but rather mechanisms of mutual or unilateral control (PRESSMAN, 2008). As foreign policy tactics, moderation alliance agreements are measures to avoid involvement in an undesired conflict due to the commitment of assistance, or to control the behavior of a potential rival who is offered cooperation. This tactic usually functions under conditions of broad asymmetry between (potential) allies, with the greater ally being provider of security, which reduces the uncertainty of the minor ally. Between states of similar hierarchical position, alliances of restraint may present operational problems, unless they are generated in a multilateral format, closer to that of collective security, as has been shown during decades of the five-power mechanism of the UN Security Council. In any case, being part of a security agreement is in itself a restriction on one's own autonomy, and can always lead to paradoxes and, at the same time, dilemmas.

The explanatory model

The main hypothesis of the paradox of autonomy is rooted in the tradition of rational choice, to a large extent shared by the (neo)liberal and (neo)realist theories of IR. However, it differs from the realist approach, centered on power, because instead of assuming the search for power (classical realism and offensive realism) or security (defensive realism), it assumes the search for freedom of action or the reduction of obstacles and external interference. In this explanatory model, actions take place at the national and regional analytical levels, but the causal condition originates at the international systemic level. Just as great powers in the international system could be motivated by pre-eminence, primacy, or even hegemony, lesser powers maintain more modest objectives, centered above all on national development and autonomy. Some tend towards a mixed search, especially emerging regional powers (NOLTE, 2010), seeking indisputable leadership in their region while improving their industrialization and

trying to create peripheral markets and security communities (ADLER; GREVE 2009). To achieve these goals, the search for power and autonomy are combined in a great national strategy. The following table presents a typology of states classified according to their status and objectives:

Chart 1 - Types of state and their expected objectives

Typology of state	Predicted objective(s)
Great powers	Global hegemony, primacy or pre-eminence
Emerging regional powers	Regional hegemony, regional autonomy and national development
Secondary regional powers (or sub-regional powers)	National autonomy and development (the order may vary). Regional autonomy in instrumental terms
Small states	National development

Source: own elaboration

The dynamics of power concentration/de-concentration in the international system tend to be less stable than those of polarity (MANSFIELD, 1993). Let's say, a multipolar order could be, at the same time, one with a high concentration of power, which would imply that, although there are many poles, these would concentrate the majority of material capabilities. Inversely, a uni- or bipolar international constellation could be far from being a hegemonic system if it is also deconcentrated, or in other words, if the gaps of power are unimportant or diminishing. An international system in de-concentration creates conditions for autonomy insofar as it undermines the material primacy of the great powers.[3] The process of compensatory economic growth facilitates the diffusion of technologies, while confronting trade and security hegemonies.

At the regional level, emerging powers could be inclined to take advantage of the improvement in their capabilities to guard their own zones, thus assuring their hegemony in international subsystems. However, they could face challenges on two fronts. Firstly, that of external powers, both established and emerging, trying to enter the region through bilateral contacts and avoiding the regional power, and secondly, that of secondary regional powers which could support the project of regional autonomy for utilitarian purposes, wanting to take advantage of the pluralist order and preserve both their national autonomy and their own development plan.

3. Regarding that, chart 2 presents an own elaboration proposal of a typology of international (sub-)systems.

Chart 2 - Interaction of Polarity/Concentration:
typology of International (Sub-)Systems

		Concentration (CON)		
		High (>.4)	Medium (.4-.3)	Low (<.3)
Polarity	Unipolar	Hegemony	Primacy	Pre-eminence
	Bipolar	Diarchy	Dyadic System	Dialogical System
	Tripolar	Triumvirate	Triadic System	Trialogical System
	Multipolar	Polyarchy	Pluricentric System	Anarchy

Source: own elaboration

Regional autonomy and national autonomies coincide harmoniously for the elites of central regional powers, but not for those of secondary powers. For the latter, regional autonomy implies a concession in free-

dom of action and the acceptance of external limitations. The paradox of autonomy takes place at the regional level under global conditions of de-concentration of power. This implies the conflict between the central regional power, which seeks to construct a bloc to guarantee regional autonomy, and for its own hegemonic role, and the secondary regional powers, which would partially support regional autonomy while this is of use for their national autonomy and own development. The dilemma is presented for the latter, as for their elites there is the possibility of a functional separation between regional autonomy and national autonomies. In other words, the elites of the secondary powers in a deconcentrated system will try to encourage *as much national autonomy as possible and regional autonomy as is necessary*, always with the aim of not empowering the central regional power beyond what is manageable.

Effects of the paradox on security regionalism

The security dilemma predicts potential contradictions between national security and defense policies, and international security, due to the possibility of provoking arms races within action-reaction rationale (JERVIS, 1978). Regional autonomy could be considered an essential national objective for a central regional power (MEARSHEIMER, 2001; NOLTE, 2010). This is particularly true in the South American international subsystem, due to the gap in capabilities of Brazil and its potential, but not effective, regional hegemony. Like other (re)emerging regional powers, Brazil had problems in making its relative power a true hegemony. Such powers experience a problem of state capacity—in the extraction and mobilization of resources—given the interaction of its physical and human dimensions, and its unequal industrial and bureaucratic development, in addition to regional counterbalancing policies from neighbors, anxious to preserve their national autonomies, whether through intra-regional cooperation or inviting external powers.

The paradox of autonomy is problematized given that the main condition, which facilitates the collective search for regional autonomy, is the same that conditions the search for national autonomy: the international power concentration pattern. For the majority of South American governments in the early 21st century, keeping the region out of the direct influence of the US was a shared interest. Brazilian regional hegemony would be unachievable if Washington played a hegemonic role in the sensitive areas of security and defense policy. The limits of regional security cooperation began to become evident with the open opposition of Uribe's Colombia to the original institutional design of the CDS, based on the special Colombia-US relationship in the defense and security sector (TICKNER, 2008).

Less obvious, but not less effective, obstacles were put forward by the secondary powers that embraced the original Brazilian project. Argentina, Chile and Venezuela supported the CDS, and assumed it as part of their political priorities. However, a security and defense agreement openly led by Brazil would have been a restriction on the objectives of the national elites. The delicate balance between regional autonomy and

national autonomies plays an important role for South American secondary powers given that national autonomy is a necessary condition for soft-balancing policies towards Brazil (FLEMES; WEHNER, 2015), and thus, keeping regional hegemony at bay while preserving freedom of action in terms of security and defense. Similarly, the idea of regional autonomy was considered in order to block and soft-balancing US global pre-eminence and its overwhelming hemispheric hegemony.

Another equally important goal for some secondary powers was to pacify border disputes and avoid militarized escalations. This is particularly true in the cases of Chile and Colombia, and more recently Peru, whose economic policy strategies demonstrate clear guidelines for opening and whose governments are liberal democracies, but who bear the weight of unresolved territorial conflicts and have a relatively high military spending as percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) (SIPRI, 2019) and important arsenals (IISS, 2019). A regional security agreement is likely to promote regional autonomy and limit the national, taking as a counterweight the reduction of border tensions, which would permit the strengthening of regional integration and redirect part of the national defense budget towards economic and social investment, for example. In this sense, the paradox of autonomy fits in with the old dilemma of opportunity cost, illustrated with the dichotomy of "guns versus butter" model of the production possibility frontier. Thus, regional autonomy could partially benefit the interests of national elites, although it could negatively affect the primary objective of secondary powers: national autonomy.

The dismemberment of UNASUR, and with it the CDS, took place in May 2018, when half of its members, including some of the most prominent, decided to participate. The changes have become factors for this regional disintegration, linked to the ideological tensions originated in the changes of government, to an extremely lax institutional design, but also to the paradoxical effect of the autonomy tensions (BARACALDO ORJUELA; CHENOU, 2018; MIJARES, 2018; MIJARES; NOLTE, 2018).

Conclusion

The development of the research agenda on the theory of autonomy must be taken through challenges. This article has referred to two of those, contributing to the encouragement of further progress. The main challenge is the conceptual definition of autonomy, to overcome the lack of agreement on what this means in the broad context of international politics, and in particular, in the study of regional security and security regionalism. The definitions of national autonomy and regional autonomy, proposed in parallel, reveal the possibility of a paradox with dilemmatic potential, undoing the Gordian knot of the debate between decisional autonomy and relational autonomy. However, while solving the conceptual problem, this shows an analytical and political problem which, until now, has not been dealt with.

Thus, the second challenge presented and confronted by this work is the problematization of the theory of autonomy. In fact, that was the

main task of the article. The first step towards a compilation and reorganization of ideas about autonomy was taken by Rivarola Puntigliano and Briceño-Ruiz (2013), connecting autonomy with regionalism and development, and relating it to ideological orientations and foreign policy strategies (GARDINI; LAMBERT, 2011). In this work, steps were taken in both directions, developing the research program on autonomy. Firstly, it proposed a distinction between national, or individual, autonomy and regional autonomy, or collective, autonomy. Secondly, it explained their potentially conflictive relationship. Therefore, the paradox of autonomy and its dilemma does not contravene current advances in the theory of autonomy; on the contrary, it expands the research agenda and increases its complexity, instrumentalizing it as a conceptual tool to understand security regionalization processes under conditions of global power deconcentration.

What the recent South American experience indicates is that the dilemma produced by the paradox of autonomy, in the case of security regionalism, is not unsolvable. The circumstantial evidence suggests that in the case of the creation of the CDS the paradox was present, being resolved through the rational and multilateral manipulation of the institutional design. The paradox that the diffusion of power encourages both national and regional autonomy was reinforced by the limits on regional leadership, an effect that could also have among its causes the de-concentration of capabilities. These lessons continue to be preliminary findings, which must be explored to establish the existence of causality. However, the relationships between the consequences and the assumed causes stand out, and this study opens a path which the research agenda can follow in the future.

References

ADLER, E.; GREVE, P. When security community meets balance of power: overlapping regional mechanisms of security governance. **Review of International Studies** , v. 35, issue S1, p. 59-84, feb. 2009.

AYOOB, M. Inequality and theorizing in international relations: the case for subaltern realism. **International Studies Review**, v. 4, n. 3, p. 27-48, fall, 2002.

BARACALDO ORJUELA, D.; CHENOU, J. M. Regionalism and presidential ideology in the current wave of Latin American integration. **International Area Studies Review,** v, 22, n. 1, p. 41-63, dez. 2018.

BATTAGLINO, J. M. The coexistence of peace and conflict in South America: toward a new conceptualization of types of peace. **Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional**, v. 55, n. 2, p. 131-151, jun./dec. 2012

BOERSNER, D. **Relaciones Internacionales de América Latina**: breve historia. México: Editorial Nueva Imagen. 1982.

BRICEÑO-RUIZ, J.; SIMONOFF, A. (eds). **Integración y cooperación regional en América Latina.** Una relectura a partir de la teoría de la autonomía. Buenos Aires: Biblos. 2015.

BRICEÑO-RUIZ, J.; MORALES, I. (eds). **Post-Hegemonic Regionalism in the Americas**: toward a Pacific–Atlantic Divide? New York: Routledge. 2017.

BURGES, S. W. Brazil as regional leader: meeting the Chávez challenge. **Current History** v. *109*, n. 724, p. *53-59*, feb. 2010

BUZAN, B.; WÆVER, O. **Regions and Powers**: the Structure of International Security. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2003.

CLAPHAM, C. Sovereignty and the Third World state. **Political Studies**, v. 47, n. 3, p. 522-537, aug. 1999.

DENYER, D; TRANFIELD, D. Producing a Systematic Review. *In:* BUCHANAN, D. A. AND BRYMAN, A. (eds). **The Sage Handbook of Organizational Research Methods.** Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2009, p. 671-689.

DOMINGUEZ, J. I. **Boundary Disputes in Latin America**. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2003.

FLEMES, D.; WEHNER, L. Drivers of Strategic Contestation: the case of South America. **International Politics**, v. 52, n. 2, p. 163-177, fev. 2015.

FRANCHI, T.; MIGON, E. X. F. G.; JIMÉNEZ VILLARREAL, R. X. Taxonomy of interstate conflicts: is South America a peaceful region? **Brazilian Political Science Review**, v. 11, n. 2, ago. 2017.

GARDINI, G. L.; LAMBERT, P. (eds). **Latin American Foreign Policies**: between Ideology and Pragmatism. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

GUERRA, F.-X. **Modernidad e independencias**: ensayos sobre las revoluciones hispánicas. Madrid: Encuentro, 2011.

HARDIN, G. The Tragedy of the Commons. **Journal of Natural Resources Policy Research**, v. 1, n. 3, p. 243-253, jul. 2009

HERZ, J. H. Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma. **World Politics**, v. *2*, n. 2, p. 157-180, jan. 1950.

IISS. The Military Balance 2019. **The International Institute for Strategic Studies**, feb. 2019. Available in: https://www.iiss.org/en/publications/military-s-balance. Accessed: 20 mar. 2019.

JAGUARIBE, H. Autonomía periférica y autonomía céntrica. **Estudios Internacionales**, v. 12, n. 46, p. 91-130, apr./jun. 1979

JERVIS, R. Cooperation under the security dilemma. **World politics**, v. 30, n. 2, p. 167-214. jan. 1978

KATZENSTEIN, P. J. **A World of Regions**: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium. Ithaca: Cornell University Pres, 2015.

KELLY, R. E. Security theory in the 'new regionalism'. **International Studies Review**, v. 9, n. 2, p. 197-229, Summer 2007

KRASNER, S. D. **Sovereignty**: Organized Hypocrisy. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

LAKE, D. A. **Hierarchy in International Relations.** Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009.

LAKE, D. A.; MORGAN, P. **Regional Orders**. Building Security in a New World. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2010.

LEMKE, D. Dimensions of Hard Power: Regional Leadership and Material Capabilities. *In:* FLEMES, D. (ed). **Regional Leadership in the Global System**: Ideas, Interests and Strategies of Regional Powers. Farnham: Ashgate, 2010.

MALAMUD, A. A leader without followers? The growing divergence between the regional and global performance of Brazilian foreign policy. **Latin American Politics and Society**, v. 53, n. 3, p, 1-24, Fall 2011

MANSFIELD, E. D. Concentration, polarity, and the distribution of power. **International Studies Quarterly**, v. 37, n. 1, p. 105-128, mar. 1993

MARES, D. R. **Violent Peace: Militarized Interstate Bargaining in Latin America**. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

MARTÍN, F. **Militarist Peace in South America**: Conditions for War and Peace. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

MEARSHEIMER, J. J. **The Tragedy of Great Power Politics.** New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2001.

MIJARES, V. M. Consejo de Defensa Suramericano: obstáculos para una alianza operativa. **Politeia**, v, 34, n. 46, p. 1-46, aug. 2011

MIJARES, V. M. Performance of the South American Defense Council under Autonomy Pressures. **Latin American Policy**, v. 9, n. 2, p. 258-281, nov. 2018

MIJARES, V. M.; NOLTE, D. Regionalismo posthegemónico en crisis. ¿Por qué la Unasur se desintegra? **Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica**, v. 18, n. 3, p. 105-112, jun. 2018

MORGENTHAU, H. J. **Politics Among Nations**. The Struggle for Power and Peace. McGraw-Hill Education: New York, 2005.

NOLTE, D. How to compare regional powers: analytical concepts and research topics. **Review of International Studies**, v. 36, n. 4, p. 881-901, nov. 2010

NWEIHED, K. G. **Frontera y límite en su marco mundial**: una aproximación a la fronterología. Caracas: Equinoccio, 1992.

OLSON, M. **Logic of Collective Action**: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965.

OSTROM, E. **Governing the Commons**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

PRESSMAN, J. **Warring friends**: alliance restraint in international politics. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.

PUIG, J. C. Integración y autonomía de América Latina en las postrimerías del siglo XX. **Integración Latinoamericana** , v. 11, n. 109, p. 40-62, jan./feb. 1986

RATHBUN, B. C. Uncertain about Uncertainty: Clarifying a Crucial Concept for International Relations Theory. *International Studies Quarterly*, v. 51, n. 3, p. 271-299, sep. 2007

RIGGIROZZI, P.; TUSSIE, D. **The Rise of Post-hegemonic Regionalism**. The Case of Latin America. New York: Springer, 2012.

RIVAROLA PUNTIGLIANO, A.; BRICEÑO-RUIZ, J. **Resilience of Regionalism in Latin America and the Caribbean**: Development and Autonomy. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

ROBINSON, P. **Dictionary of International Security**. Cambridge: Polity, 2008.

RUSSELL, R.; TOKATLIAN, J. G. De la autonomía antagónica a la autonomía relacional: una mirada teórica desde el Cono Sur. **Perfiles Latinoamericanos**, v. 10, n. 21, p. 159-194, dec. 2002

RUSSELL, R.; TOKATLIAN, J. G. América Latina y su gran estrategia: entre la aquiescencia y la autonomía. **Revista Cidob d'Afers Internacionals**, v. 104, p. 157-180, dec. 2013

SANAHUJA, J. A. Del regionalismo abierto al regionalismo post-liberal. Crisis y cambio en la integración regional en América Latina. **Anuario de la Integración Regional de América Latina y el Gran Caribe**, v. 7, p. 12-54, 2009.

SCHENONI, L. L.; ESCUDÉ, C. Peripheral Realism Revisited. **Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional**, v. 59, n. 1, e002, may. 2016

SCHWELLER, R. L. Neoclassical realism and state mobilization: expansionist ideology in the age of mass politics. *In:* LOBELL, S. E.; RIPSMAN, N. M.; TALIAFERRO, J. W. (eds). **Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy**. London: Cambridge University Press, 2009. p. 251-279.

SIPRI. Military Expenditure Database. **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute**, 15 feb. 2019. Available in: https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex. Accessed: 20 mar. 2019.

SNYDER, G. H. **Alliance Politics**. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.

SÖDERBAUM, F. **Rethinking Regionalism.** London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

SOLINGEN, E.; MALNIGHT, J. Globalization, Domestic Politics, and Regionalism. *In*: BÖRZEL, T. A.; RISSE, T. (eds). **The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. p. 64-86.

TALIAFERRO, J. W. State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State. **Security Studies**, v. 15, n. 16, p. 464-495, aug. 2006

TEIXEIRA, C. G. P. **Brazil, the United States, and the South American Subsystem**: Regional Politics and the Absent Empire. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012.

THIES, C. G. The construction of a Latin American interstate culture of rivalry. **International Interactions**, v. 34, n. 3, p. 231-257, nov. 2008

TICKNER, A. Colombia y Estados Unidos: una relación 'especial'. **Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica**, v. 8, n. 4, p. 65-72, 2008

VAN KLAVEREN, A. América Latina: hacia un regionalismo abierto. **Estudios Internacionales**, v. 30, n. 117, p. 62-78, jan./mar. 1997

VIEIRA, M. A.; ALDEN, C. India, Brazil, and South Africa (IBSA): South-South cooperation and the paradox of regional leadership. **Global Governance**, v. 17, n. 4, p. 507-528, dec. 2011

WOHLFORTH, W. C. The Stability of a Unipolar World. **International Security**, v. 24, n. 1, p. 5-41, Summer 1999

ZACHER, M. W. The territorial integrity norm: International boundaries and the use of force. **International Organization**, v. 55, n. 2, p. 215-250, spring 2001