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Theses

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**Security and defence cooperation and integration efforts in South America
in the 21st century**

Ph.D. Dissertation

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1. Identification of the research problem and relevance of the research

The disintegration of the bipolar system and the resulting global political realignment in the 1990s also brought major changes in Latin America, which affected the power positions of states and the relations between them. In particular, my research will focus on the ambitions, security cooperation, instruments and objectives of the South American region in terms of security and defence policy. In South America, the integration process has taken a quantitative rather than a qualitative direction, with a number of parallel initiatives. In addition to economic and free trade integration efforts, the states of the region have embarked on a path of cooperation in the political and security fields. In my research, I examine the success of the initiatives launched and the reasons for the failures of deeper integration.

The geographic focus of the research is South America, as it was necessary to narrow down the study of the Latin American region. My analysis is based on Buzan's theory of the regional security complex, which distinguishes between the South American and Central American security complexes, considering the latter as part of the North American system. The South has an independent policy-making power in the field of security and defence policy, the US interventions are intermittent and limited, the security challenges and threats are similar, and it is a geographically well-defined region. My analysis does not cover the territory of French Guiana (Frencho.), a former British colony, Guyana, and the former Dutch colony, Suriname, but only the relations of the New Latin¹ countries, i.e. the part of South America that belongs to Latin America. With regard to the timeframe of the dissertation, it is important to note that I will basically analyse in detail events up to the beginning of January 2022, but due to the rapid political changes globally, I will briefly discuss events up to the summer of 2022 at the end of the dissertation.

Key political events have been taking place in the countries of the South American region over the past two decades. It is difficult to draw a precise line, but the beginning of the turn to the left in South America can be linked to the election of Hugo Chávez as president of Venezuela in 1998. The *pink tide* then spread further in the 2000s, for example with the election of Lula da Silva as president in Brazil in 2002, but many other countries, such as Argentina, Uruguay and Bolivia, have also elected centre-left or left leaders. During this period, regional cooperation has also been strengthened due to sympathy between political leaders and the

¹ ZELEI Dávid: Minek nevezzelek? Egy megfoghatatlan szubkontinens nyomában, *Mediterrán Világ* 2011/2. (18), 5-14.

general 'pro-integration' stance of the left. However, balanced cooperation between South American states is also hampered by social, economic and geographical inequalities. The region's economic cooperation is hampered by low internal trade, as the states are more in competition with each other on the international market. This has been compounded by the 'conservative wave' of the early 2010s, which has created political and ideological divisions in the region. This culminated in the presidential victory of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil in 2018. Now, the previous divisions have been replaced by a renewed left turn. In the summer of 2022, the political landscape is: Argentina (Alberto Fernández) is centre-left, Chile (Gabriel Boric) is left, Bolivia (Luis Alberto Arce) is left, Colombia (Gustavo Petro) is left, Peru (Pedro Castillo) is centre-left, Venezuela (Nicolás Maduro) is left, while Brazil (Jair Bolsonaro) is right-wing and Ecuador (Guillermo Lasso) is centre-right. A major turning point in the region was the election of Gustavo Petro, formerly member of left-wing guerrilla group M-19, former mayor of Bogota and current senator, as president of Colombia. In Brazil, presidential elections will be held in the autumn in 2022, in which, in addition to the incumbent Jair Bolsonaro, former leftist president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva will be a candidate with a strong chance of winning the final election. So, while there are exceptions in the region, the pink tide, if not as strong as at the beginning of the millennium, is making a comeback in the early 2020s.

In Colombia, one of the most important security events in South America took place in the 2010s, as the government signed a peace deal with the FARC guerrilla organisation. A few years ago, Venezuela was a developing country with high hopes in the region, but it is now facing a political, economic and social crisis that is affecting the region as a whole. Argentina continues to experience cyclical waves of economic crises, and its territorial claims in Antarctica and the Falkland Islands are still part of the security discourse. In the case of Brazil, the question of hegemonic status is a major issue, as it is undoubtedly an emerging power in international terms, but its historical, cultural (non-Spanish-speaking), economical and political traditions mean that its leadership is being questioned by South American countries. In addition, the Amazon region, transnational organised crime and the situation of armed groups are critical security issues. Chile has been a reluctant participant in Latin American and South American integrations, but has been a key driver of Prosur organisation under the right-wing presidency of Sebastián Piñera. However, Chile's geography means that it continues to look to the Pacific, and ensuring uninterrupted trade is its main economic security objective. Social inequality is a major challenge for the country. The discontent has led to violent protests since 2019, which resulted in the election of 35-year-old left-wing student leader Gabriel Boric, a former protest

leader, as President of Chile in the December 2021. This bring new directions for the country. The Andean countries face a wide range of security challenges. In Bolivia, energy security, water and drug production are pressing issues, while in Ecuador, environmental degradation, corruption, illegal exploitation of natural resources, cyber-attacks on critical state infrastructure and illegal migration are considered the most important security risks. In Peru, rebel organisations and armed groups, which are increasingly linked to criminal organisations in the region, are a particular threat. Ethnic issues, present in many regions of South America, are also a challenge in Peru to balance the need to ensure the self-determination of ethnic groups with an imagined national unity. Paraguay and Uruguay are small states between two regional powers, and the dominance of Brazil and Argentina therefore determines the strategic relations and room for manoeuvre of the two countries.

Among the new types of security challenges, transnational organised crime is the most prominent in the region. The number of deaths linked to organised crime and criminal gangs in Central America and the Caribbean is among the highest in the world.² The drug trade also has a serious impact on countries' economical and political systems, because infiltrates state institutions through corruption and money laundering, deepening the structural weakness of the state, and can pose a security threat through the activities of terrorist and guerrilla organisations financed by the proceeds of drug trafficking. A common security challenge identified by the region is the protection of the environment and natural resources, both from potential external interference and in terms of environmental protection and climate change. Overall, the concept of security has become a multidimensional approach in the South American region, covering traditional security challenges, new types of threats, as well as domestic and transnational security problems.³ With a complex understanding of the concept of security, the Latin American states' approach prevails over the more fundamentally realistic, force-centred approach of the United States.

Regional cooperation is fundamentally strengthened by linguistic similarities, common historical roots and the role of religion, especially Christianity. The convergence of political leaders, ideological and often personal sympathies have also contributed to cooperation

² UNODC: ANNUAL REPORT 2014, 26.

https://www.unodc.org/documents/AnnualReport2014/Annual_Report_2014_WEB.pdf (2021.07.02.)

³ THÉRIEN, Jean-Philippe - MACE, Gordon - GAGNÉ, Stefan: The Changing Dynamics of InterAmerican Security, Latin American Policy, Volume 3, Number 2, Policy Studies Organization, 2012, 147-163., 151. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.2041-7373.2012.00067.x/abstract> (10.10.2017.)

between states.⁴ UNASUR, the region's most comprehensive integration cooperation, aims to bring together the states of the South American continent, with its 432.7 million inhabitants and 17.7 million km², to strengthen the countries of the region and promote its international role. In characterising the Southern continent, it is important to highlight that it has globally significant freshwater resources, is a regulator of global ecological balance through Amazonia, and is home to one of the largest reserves of oil and natural gas in the region, factors that could make it a major player at global level. These outstanding natural assets mean that various forms of cooperation are also aimed at exploiting and protecting their shared natural resources. Overall, supranational characteristics and the lack of a solid supranational institutional structure prevent cooperation from deepening and strengthening beyond intergovernmental cooperation. In the case of regional and sub-regional organisations in Latin America, there is a short delay between the formulation of general objectives, the drafting of basic treaties and the establishment of an institutional framework. This process is compounded by economic and political changes at regional level, such as economic crises.

For the 21st century, we can talk about an oversupply of integrations in the region.⁵ These organisations were initially formed to promote economic and trade cooperation,⁶ and then new formations have focused on political cooperation. The Organisation of American States is a historic continental cooperation organisation. The Organisation of American States (OAS) has a long history, being the oldest regional cooperation in terms of its history. Although the CSTO is a collective defence organisation in terms of its statute, its operation is nevertheless characterised by the features of a collective security community. The low level of internal commitment and the international political changes that followed the 1990s have combined to create a demand for a more autonomous policy in the countries of the region. This has led to the emergence of a number of cooperatives, such as Mercosur (South American Common Market), SICA (Central American Integration System), ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America), CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) and UNASUR (Union of South American Nations), which are more determined to represent Latin American interests. However, a major advantage of the OAS, which has also been a

⁴ Ádám ANDERLEN: National Consciousness and Continentalism in Latin America in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Kossuth, Budapest, 1989.

⁵ Béla SOLTÉSZ: Latin America: the oversupply of integrations, FORDULAT, 2011/1, 124-143, 2011, http://fordulat.net/pdf/16/F16_Soltesz.pdf (05.04.2020.)

⁶ 1960 - Latin American Free Trade Association, ALALC (Asociación Latinoamericana de Libre Comercio), 1969 - Andean Pact (Pacto Andino, PA), Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (Sistema Económico Latinoamericano y del Caribe, SELA, 1975) and Latin American Integration Association (Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración, ALADI, 1981)

disadvantage in many cases, is that the United States is a member. Without this great power, the development of the region and its security challenges are currently questionable, as some states maintain close military and economic ties with the United States, and the northern power, although distanced from the region, would like to have a permanent political, economic and military presence.

The ALBA axis is an important actor in the post-hegemonic phase of Latin American regionalism. The ALBA offered an alternative to neoliberal policies and dependence on Washington by creating an alternative integration based on oil diplomacy and with a strong ideological backing for the countries of the region. The security and defence dimension of the organisation is driven by the need for autonomous decision-making and its opposition to the US, which considers the presence of US armed forces as a threat to peace and security in the region. Today, however, the organisation is weakened and essentially dysfunctional, as Venezuela is unable to provide the financial backing for integration. Mercosur was formed on the basis of a rapprochement between two rival powers in the region, Argentina and Brazil. Mercosur goes beyond economic and trade integration, and although it is generally silent on military cooperation, the organisation cannot be understood without taking into account the regional military convergence and the analysis of the region's security and defence cannot be separated from Mercosur.

The creation of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) dates back to the ideas of Simón Bolívar, which does not seek to create integration through economic cooperation, but focuses on political relations and the harmonisation of ideological principles. When UNASUR was set up in 2008, the new organisation was expected to boost regional integration and to promote cooperation between South American countries in new areas compared with previous cooperation. Its creation was essentially determined by the convergence of the political systems of the countries of the region and the rise of the left ('pink tide'). Without a strong institutional framework, however, the contradictions caused by the political upheavals and the rise of the right in the region have caused the organisation to unravel. In addition, the management of the crisis in Venezuela caused serious divisions and sharp conflicts between member states. However, even though the organisation is on the verge of disintegration, this does not mean that cooperation between states is on the wane. It can be seen that a process of cooperation has been re-launched under new political leaders and that concerted action between Member States is explicitly taking place in several areas. Venezuela is one of the most important countries in the South American region, among other things because of its geopolitical position, its natural

resources and its raw material reserves. It has been a key player in the integration efforts of recent decades and its future will have a profound impact on the region as a whole. A prominent analysis of Venezuela also illustrates the great power interests and regional fault lines in the area of security and defence policy.

2. The research objectives and hypotheses

The aim of the research is to give more attention to the South American region, which is less discussed in professional circles in Hungary, since the security aspect of the region with great economic potential is not negligible. In addition, my aim is to contribute to the enrichment of military science by exploring and deepening the knowledge.

My research aims are:

1. To explore why South American countries, which are not without political-ideological heterogeneity, want to achieve strong joint cooperation.
2. To identify the purpose of the regional cooperation forms launched in the field of security and defence policy.
3. Assess the political, social and economic factors that hinder the integration process.
4. To explore whether and in what form a new wave of regional cooperation, including in the security and defence field, can be expected, while regional integration is currently weakening.

Reflecting on the research problem and objectives, I formulated the following hypotheses:

1. In the South American region, three major waves of integration are distinguished in the literature, and although the different types of cooperation may hinder the effective functioning of a unified sub-regional integration, political-ideological factors, the absence of a strong external threat and economic conditions are the most difficult factors for a more organised security and defence cooperation.

2. The region's main security challenges include organised crime, drug trafficking, terrorism, the activities of non-state armed organisations, migration, instability of political systems, environmental degradation and social poverty. These challenges are regional in scope and are beyond the defence capabilities of individual countries, and therefore transnational security threats can only be tackled by states acting as a united front.
3. Contributing to the stalling of regional initiatives is the reluctance of states to deepen established integration organisations, and the cyclical change in the identity of regional emerging powers that are able and willing to operate closer cooperation as drivers of integration.
4. In addition, there is a strong desire for cooperation among states, a continuous drive for comprehensive cooperation, as shown by the examples of Mercosur, ALBA, and later UNASUR and Prosur, and bilateral and multilateral forms of cooperation provide a solid basis for regional security and defence cooperation.

3. Research methodology

To test the above hypotheses, I used the following research methods:

In my research, I have drawn on the research of Latin American think tanks, especially the writings of teachers and researchers from national universities, and the papers of teachers from major American universities and research institutes on security policy and international studies in the region. The most important think tanks on the Latin American region are located at the Eötvös Loránd University, the University of Pécs, the University of Szeged and the National University of Public Service. Among the Hungarian researchers, Ádám Anderle, Ferenc Fischer, István Szilágyi, Bernadett Lehoczki, Marianna Katalin Rács, Viktória Semsey, Béla Soltész, Mónika Szente-Varga and Ágnes Szilágyi are important to mention as experts on the region. The works of the Hungarian researchers are dominated by sociological, political science, economics and history, with relatively few analyses of the security policy aspects of the region. In recent years, Dávid Vogel, György Bács Zoltán and young doctoral students such as Kitti Füzési and Gabriella Thomázy have analysed the security policy aspects of the region.

In addition to the literature published in print, I have analysed in particular the writings published electronically. With regard to foreign literature, the dissertation is based on analyses in English and Spanish by the main institutions dealing with foreign security and defence policy issues, which are the main languages of publication. I would like to mention Rut Diamín, Professor at the University of Torcuato Di Tella in Argentina, and Jorge Battaglino, Rector of the Argentine National Defence University, whom I had the pleasure of interviewing during my study visit to Buenos Aires, as well as Fábio Sánchez and Jose Antonio Sanahuja, well-known researchers in the region.

The theoretical foundations of the dissertation are provided by integration theories and regional security theories, especially Barry Buzan - Ole Wæver: *Regions and powers. The structure of international security*. Books relevant to my research are Skidmore, Thomas E. - Smith, Peter H.: *Modern Latin America*, Pia Riggirozzi - Diana Tussie: *The Rise of Post-Hegemonic Regionalism*. In addition, I would like to highlight the journals *Revista Científica General José María Córdova*, Colombia, and *Revista de Ciencia Política*, Chile, whose studies have been particularly useful in my analysis. The main research institutions whose analyses and articles are also available online are the Latin America Foundation *InSight Crime*, the South American independent news source *Colombia Reports*, and the *International Crisis Group*. In addition, the Latin American Security and Defence Network (*Red de Seguridad y Defensa de América Latina, RESDAL*), the Centre for Strategic Defence Studies (*Centro de Estudios Estratégicos de Defensa, CEED*) of the Defence Council within the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), were particularly useful in the preparation of this dissertation, and I was able to visit and interview experts from these institutions during my study visit to Argentina.

My research methodology is deductive exploratory basic research. In my research, I mainly gathered information through source research, secondary analysis of statistics, literature review and document analysis, and interviews with relevant experts from abroad and in the region. As a member of the Ludovika research group "Latin America and Hungary - Intersections" (February 2017 - February 2018), I had the opportunity to visit Buenos Aires as part of a study trip, where I was able to conduct research at the University of Defence, Resdal and CEED.

Brief description of the study carried out, chapter by chapter

In the first chapter of the dissertation, I explain the identification of the research problem and the topicality of the research, as well as the research objectives, the hypotheses, the research

methodology and the most important literature. In the second chapter of the thesis, I present the theoretical framework through two sub-chapters; the theoretical foundations of regional security and the South American regional security complex. With the end of the Cold War, the influence of global security regimes on regions has diminished, leaving regions and states freer to determine their own operations and policy directions. In this subsection, I analyse how regional security theory incorporates a regional understanding of security between the national and international levels, assuming that there are security issues that cannot be addressed at the level of the nation-state alone. In the sub-chapter, I also present a multidimensional and sectoral approach to the concept of security. In the second sub-chapter, I consider the South American regional security complex, which is a distinct system from the North American complex, as its dominant security processes are regionally interpretable and have independent policy-making power. In addition, I examine the degree of peace in South America, the main security challenges and threats, and the characteristics that have shaped cooperation between states in the post-hegemonic era, whether elements of cooperative security, collective security or collective defence are emerging in the region.

In the third chapter, I present the challenges in the security sectors in the South American region, based on a brief comparison of the strategic cultures of the states. The methodology is based on Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, followed by the Andean states (Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru), Paraguay and Uruguay, which are presented separately in subchapters. The sub-chapters will analyse the following areas; a brief general introduction of the state, its strategic culture, its current political situation, including the main developments of the second half of the twentieth century, a description and analysis of its main security and defence documents, a general description of its armed forces and the role of the armed forces, a more detailed description of a key area of security and defence, regional relations and the scope of its military mission. The second sub-chapter presents trends in defence budgets in the South American region.

The fourth chapter analyses integration initiatives in the region that have a security and defence dimension. In detail, the Organisation of American States, the Rio Treaty, ALBA, Mercosur, the Triple Frontier, Unasur, and Prosur. As a methodology for the analysis, the following common aspects of the organisations were examined; general presentation and organisational structure, brief history and 21st century relevance, security and defence nature of the organisation, vision. The fifth chapter is a case study on the strategic position of Venezuela in the South American regional security and defence system. The chapter contains five sub-

chapters, which, in addition to a general introduction to the country, analyse the presidencies of Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro, as well as the economic and foreign policy developments in the country, and possible scenarios for the coming years. The dissertation basically analyses the region in more detail until the end of January 2022, but in the spring of 2022, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict triggered significant developments in Venezuela, so the summary subsection briefly discusses current developments.

Each chapter ends with a summary sub-chapter summarising the main findings of the chapter. The last, sixth chapter contains a summary of the dissertation, a presentation of new scientific findings, a discussion of the thesis' applicability and recommendations, a list of figures, a list of publications, a list of abbreviations, and a bibliography, which I have broken down into English, Spanish and Hungarian sources for ease of reference.

4. Summary conclusions

It can be seen that there is still a need for cooperation in the region, but the question is whether public leaders will be able to correct the mistakes of previous initiatives and whether there will be the will to develop a stable organisation. At present, it does not appear that actors are moving in this direction. Unless there is a change in political thinking, stable regional organisations will continue to be hampered by the fact that presidential elections are used by governments to carry out complete internal policy U-turns, ignoring ongoing projects. A drawback is that there is currently no charismatic political leader with a regional vision who can give direction to regional cooperation. At international level, none of the organisations has been able to become a major player, except UNASUR and Mercosur's relations with the European Union. The EU has sought to help UNASUR to function as an organisation, and in the case of Mercosur, the process of a free trade agreement could help to strengthen the international image of the South American organisation. At present, South American countries are stagnating or experiencing an economic downturn, affected by the economic difficulties caused by the coronavirus epidemic. The major powers are present in the South American region with varying degrees of intensity. The role of the United States remains significant economically, militarily and politically, but it is a growing partner in the region, especially in the economic field, while China and Russia have strong relations with Venezuela.

A burning question for the development of the South American region is whether the region will be able to define itself more effectively in the future, while political polarisation is even more pronounced among the states of the region, increasing divisions. Nationalism has not disappeared in the region, but has begun to co-exist with more regional approaches, making it a challenge to find a balance between autonomy aspirations and cooperation. A key question in analysing future perspectives is whether the search for integration will remain as part of South American political identity or whether new political actors will break with this collective vision.

There are a number of commonalities between South American countries, which could be factors on the agenda for regional cooperation. For democratising countries leaving behind military dictatorships, the main objectives have become to avoid conflicts with neighbouring states that require the use of armed forces; to separate defence and homeland security; and to ensure civilian control of defence policy issues. They also seek to be involved in the life of international organisations, for example by being active members of a number of UN missions. At the regional level, the Antarctic is a major issue, with Argentina and Chile particularly interested, but also Peru, Ecuador and Brazil are present in the region. The protection of natural resources, energy security and environmental security are also issues related to the Antarctic. In addition, the Amazon, the area with the greatest biodiversity in the world, is shared by six countries: Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, which makes the protection of the area a shared responsibility.

One of the key elements of South American regional cooperation is the Argentine-Brazilian reconciliation axis, which could be a key element for the development of the whole region. Organised crime, drug trafficking and the activities of non-state armed groups, albeit with varying degrees of intensity, are still a common challenge in many countries of the region. In Colombia, the FARC guerrilla peace agreement has not lived up to expectations, although the organisation has been dismantled into smaller units, but they continue to be involved in drug trafficking and control territory, and other small rebel organisations and organised crime groups are active outside the FARC, which has not yet brought the country out of a decade of internal war. The migration from Venezuela is a humanitarian disaster in the region and a major challenge for the countries of the region. To date, the countries of the region have not been able to play an active role in promoting a solution to the protracted crisis in Venezuela, even though it is in their vital interest to see Venezuela stabilize and become an integral part of the region once again.

Energy security, the protection of natural resources, environmental issues and the management of natural disasters are all issues that are prompting the countries of the region to think together. South America is extremely rich in natural resources, such as gas and oil, but also has the potential to play a global role in the future because of its rare earths, for example Chile is the world's largest exporter of copper and second largest exporter of lithium, Paraguay is one of the world's largest exporters of electricity, and titanium and uranium fields have been discovered. South America's defence budget is low by international standards. Defence spending in the region remains low due to weak economic performance, societal challenges and the absence of significant external security threats. Most South American countries are making modest efforts to modernise their military equipment, with a diversified range of partners.

The security regime of the South American continent can be seen to be a networked system of bilateral and multilateral, continental, regional and sub-regional organisations. These organisations can still be seen more as expressions of the will of governments or heads of state. However, the security and defence policy dimensions of the various groupings complement and interact rather than compete. The Organisation of American States (OAS), for example, has a broader, multidimensional understanding of security, which is also taken as a basis by South American organisations, but which each organisation adds to or modifies its objectives according to its own profile. ALBA, for example, is the only organisation not to have transposed the democracy clause, but Mercosur, UNASUR and then PROSUR all have democracy clauses. It also shows that common objectives have been consolidated, such as the concept of the "Zona de Paz" (Zone of Peace), which, from its Cold War interpretation, has become the reference point for South American security and defence organisations, reappearing in the basic documents of each of these organisations, which is not only the absence of conflict but also the definition of a consensual way of resolving it.

The culmination of the various organisations, agreements and projects, the Defence Council was set up within UNASUR to coordinate the most significant initiatives. However, the work of the Council, which had started with great ambition and expectations, was interrupted by the disintegration of the organisation. Prosur did not take over the role of the Council, but set out similar general objectives, but with different key areas, such as a greater focus on cyber defence. It is questionable whether Mercosur intends to move forward in this area in the future and strengthen its operations in this area. Mercosur helps to avoid regional conflicts, to protect the stability of the region, especially along the axis of Argentine-Brazilian relations, and to contribute to addressing inter-regional and global security disputes in areas such as the

environment and the protection of natural resources. The importance of the organisation is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that, while other initiatives (UNASUR, ALBA) have faded or disintegrated, Mercosur continues to operate and, with the demise of the Union of South American Nations, the function of the Defence Council set up within it could in some ways be transferred to MERCOSUR, thus strengthening the security and defence aspect of the organisation.

Similar parallel organisations present a picture of integration, but in reality their field of action is low, dominated by national interests. This is also true for defence issues, as the armed forces remain active actors in political, security and defence matters, not merely followers of the political will, and issues such as the participation in military missions remain the exclusive domain of the national sphere. In terms of security and defence, elements of collective security and cooperative security alternate. As an intermediate state, Alejandro Frenkel, Rojas Aravena experts use the concept of integrative security for the region, as it goes beyond conflict prevention and seeks to build common strategies and norms, but does not reach the level of collective security.

Collective defence cooperation exists only at the level of the OAS and the basic treaties of the Rio Treaty, which the region sees as serving more to maintain US hegemony, providing it with a means to intervene in its interests in the event of external intervention in the Latin American region. However, the Rio Treaty and the Organisation of American States have served as a reference point for subsequent security and defence cooperation, for example, by influencing sub-regional organisations created to counter US hegemony. These initiatives, such as ALBA⁷ or the UNASUR Defence Council, could not replace the Rio Treaty, but at the regional level they signalled that the security environment and the system of relations between states had changed after the Cold War.

As new types of security challenges, including drug trafficking, terrorism, the fight against organised crime and the strengthening of weak democracies, are of common interest to the states of the organisation, this could be an opportunity for closer cooperation.⁸ In practice, however, there appears to be a lack of coordination in addressing security threats, and so far no unified security community has emerged, with South American countries only managing to

⁷ The exit process continued in 2012, which was also a symbolic moment in TIAR's history. The withdrawal of the ALBA countries (Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela) signalled the determination of Latin American countries to redefine inter-American relations and to go their own way.

⁸ FRYER, 1993,

soften their security and defence policy objectives along thematic lines to their own interests. South American regional security and defence cooperation is a combination of material and intellectual factors. In South America, the changes in the defence scenario over the last two decades have been caused by changes in US security policy, the resurgence of territorial and ideological disputes and the emergence of Brazil as a regional power. These are elements linked to theoretical factors, while material issues have focused on two main areas: defence and development. However, in addition to the material areas, identity and abstract ideas were more important in the establishment of regional defence cooperation than solidarity and the collective cooperative management of problems.

The state level, political will and governmental publicity remain dominant, but cooperation at the regional and sub-regional level predominates rather than at the continental level. In fact, the development and strengthening of the organisations is not hampered by a lack of political will, because it seems that whether left or right-wing political leadership comes to power, there is a will and consensus on both sides for regional cooperation. Rather, it is the lack of regional leadership, the scarcity of resources to run it, and the consequent weakness of the institutions that are a hindrance. Intergovernmental cooperation is expected to continue to work more effectively in the future along different issues and sectors, as bilateral and multilateral cooperation unencumbered by politics can provide more flexible, faster and often more effective decision-making in addressing sectoral issues. Comprehensive regional integration can only be achieved if there is the political will to develop a stable institutional structure capable of holding together broad multilateral cooperation and if governments do not use regional organisations as ad hoc policy instruments.

Venezuela has become a key common issue for all the organisations with a security and defence dimension in South America. There is a unanimous consensus in the region that they do not support external intervention, but it is now clear that the region has not been able to address the issue itself. It has not been able to play an effective role as a mediator in the domestic political stalemate, nor has it been able to develop an independent voice in international politics to resolve the Venezuelan crisis. However, Venezuela is such an important country, and has great potential at global level because of its oil reserves, other mineral resources and location, that it is not possible to establish strong, stable and effective regional cooperation without it.

5. New scientific results, usefulness of the thesis and formulation of recommendations

The summarised results of the research presented in the four broad chapters of the thesis, in the light of the hypothesis elements and the research objectives formulated, are as follows:

1. I have demonstrated that the security regime of the South American continent is a networked system of bilateral and multilateral, continental, regional and sub-regional organisations, but that the security and defence dimensions of the different organisations complement and interact rather than compete.
2. I have found that there is a consensus among the states of the region on the need for regional cooperation in the security and defence sector, but the lack of a stable regional leading power, the scarcity of resources and the resulting institutional instability are hindering factors, as in a crisis there is no chance to develop common solutions without an organised institutional system.
3. I have argued that UNASUR and the dissolution of the South American Defense Council can be seen as the end of post-hegemonic regionalism in the South American region, but the region has not returned to the traditional inter-American organizational system in the field of security and defense policy, but is striving for consolidated relations with the great powers, and the objective is to maintain the balance of power through cooperative defense cooperation within the region.
4. I have identified Venezuela as the current key issue in the South American security matrix, as the crisis in the country is a breaking point in the region's life that hinders the development and cooperation of the region, as without a strong Venezuela there is no solid South American organization.

The role of regions is growing alongside the processes of globalisation, and it is therefore particularly important to analyse the specific characteristics of the different regions and their relative position in relation to each other. The development potential of the South American region has an impact on many parts of the world through its global links, and is therefore also

of importance for the European Union. In my research, I have tried to explore the region's potential for regional cooperation and its capacity to achieve integration similar to that of the European Union. The South American region is still a developing area with great potential, which aims to become a geopolitically competitive entity on a global scale.

This dissertation contributes to a better understanding of the security and defence policy processes in the South American region, to a better understanding of the historical events that have influenced the region in the 21st century, and to a deeper analysis of the region's position in the international arena. The thesis can serve as an aid in teaching regional security studies, as it analyses the analyses of lesser-known Latin American experts in Hungary and the strategic documents of the states of the region, which can provide new insights for experts in the country.

The usefulness of the research results:

- It can be used as teaching background material for the courses of higher education institutions in the field of social sciences, the courses of the National University of Public Service in security and defence policy, international studies and the Doctoral School of Military Science.
- As I have put a lot of emphasis on the South American literature in the preparation of this dissertation, I have also contributed to the analysis of the topic and to the expansion of the Hungarian literature, and therefore my research will help to better understand the security policy processes in Latin and South America.
- My research contributes to the theoretical development of military science, as it analyses the security and defence situation in a region that is less studied in Hungarian academia.
- The results of my research can also be used in the context of the "Southern Opening" foreign policy strategy announced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

6. Author's publications on the subject

HEGEDŰS Barbara: Elherdált Lehetőség: A Dél-Amerikai Nemzetek Uniójának Végnapjai, Hadtudomány: A Magyar Hadtudományi Társaság Folyóirata 31 : 2 Pp. 41-57. , 17 P. (2021)

HEGEDŰS, Barbara: Kolumbia, a NATO első latin-amerikai partnere Honvédségi Szemle: A Magyar Honvédség Központi Folyóirata 147: 3 pp. 19-33, 15 p. (2019)

HEGEDŰS Barbara: Esély a békére - Kolumbia a békefolyamat tükrében, MEDITERRÁN VILÁG 41-42 pp. 97-114., 18 p., 2017

HEGEDŰS Barbara: Történelmi lépés Kolumbiában - a békefolyamat eredményei a FARC gerillaszervezettel, Nemzet és Biztonság: Biztonságpolitikai Szemle 2017: 5 pp. 45-60, 16 p. 2017.

HEGEDŰS Barbara: Amerikai Államok Szervezete – kollektív védelem, In: Molnár, Anna; Marsai, Viktor; Wagner, Péter (szerk.) Nemzetközi biztonsági szervezetek, Budapest, Magyarország : Dialóg Campus Kiadó, 2019, 246 p. 205-218.

HEGEDŰS Barbara: ¿Tiene un futuro la UNASUR? In Actas del XIX Congreso de la Federación Internacional de Estudios sobre América Latina y el Caribe, Szeged, SZTE, 2020.

HEGEDŰS Barbara: Venezuela, 163-182.o. in. Sente-Varga, Mónika és Bács, Zoltán György, eds. (2019) Dél-Amerika a 21. században – Társadalmi, gazdasági és politikai konfliktusok. Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó Nonprofit Kft, Budapest. ISBN 978-963-531-110-1

BÁCS Zoltán György - HEGEDŰS Barbara: Kolumbia In: Sente-Varga, Mónika; Bács, Zoltán György (szerk.) Dél-Amerika a 21. században – társadalmi, gazdasági és politikai konfliktusok, Budapest, Magyarország, Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó (2019) 194 p. pp. 93-106., 10 p.

HEGEDŰS BARBARA: A Bridge between Hungary and Argentina: László József Bíró's Life and Achievements, In: Mónika, Sente-Varga (szerk.) Latin America and Hungary Cultural Ties : América Latina y Hungría Contactos culturales, Budapest, Magyarország : Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó (2020) 212 P. PP. 161-174. , 14, ISBN: 9789635311132

7. The professional and academic career of the applicant

Barbara Hegedűs graduated from Eötvös Loránd University and Corvinus University of Budapest with a bachelor's and master's degree in international studies. She holds advanced language examinations in English and Spanish. During her university years, she became interested in Latin America when she studied Political Science at the University of Granada in Spain for six months on an Erasmus scholarship. During her university years she also participated in a two-month internship programme at the European Parliament in Brussels. She gained professional experience at the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice and at the Mayor's Office in Veszprém. She has been a local councillor since 2014 and deputy mayor of

Veszprém since 2019. From 2020, she is a member of the European Committee of the Regions, the European Parliament's consultative body.

She started the PhD studies in 2016 at the NKE Doctoral School of Defence Studies in the research area of security studies. In 2018-19 she was the President of the University Doctoral Students' Association, during which period she organized several academic conferences. From 2020 she is a member of the MHTT Security Policy Section. Between 2016-2018 she was a member of the Ludovika research group "*Latin America and Hungary - Intersections*" and participated in a study trip to Argentina with the support of the EU KÖFOP project. Due to the Covid-19 epidemic, she received the absolutorium one year later, in 2021.

Barbara Hegedűs has published nine papers (one in English and one in Spanish) in professional (*Acta Hispanica*, *Mediterranean World*) and military journals (*Nation and Security*, *Military Science*, *Defence Studies*, *Defence Review*), as well as in textbooks (*International Security Organizations*; *South America in the 21st Century*; *South America in the 21st Century*). Barbara has regularly participated in professional conferences, giving 10 presentations (two in Spanish and one in English). After obtaining her diploma, the candidate focused on her dissertation, which was successfully completed. He worked and studied heroically, having two children in addition to his doctoral studies and work. No doubt they will follow their mother's example.