

# The effect of populist governments on intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR

Master's Thesis

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of populist governments on intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR from 1991 to 2019. To begin, literature is reviewed regarding MERCOSUR's competences, acquis of cooperation, governance and decision-making, and the effect of populism in the bloc. The review uncovers that the acquis of cooperation within MERCOSUR is mainly economic and trade-centered, but that it also includes democratic protocols. Also, the bloc is primarily driven forward by the collective will of the presidents in power, and is not supranational but exclusively intergovernmental in nature by design and since inception. After, this study references experiences of populist governments within the European Union ("EU") as a frame of reference for MERCOSUR because the EU is the oldest and most successful intergovernmental and supranational bloc. The literature review discovered: 1) three features of populism – drawing a divide between two allegedly antagonistic sections of a country's population, hyper-nationalism, and protectionism; 2) three modulating mechanisms – emphasizing the salience of foreign policy issues, scapegoating the EU (or MERCOSUR, in this study), and influencing debate surrounding issues by controlling the narrative; and, 3) the effect of populist governments of stonewalling intergovernmental cooperation within the EU. This study then proceeded to design research by determining all eligible governments of MERCOSUR for analysis and terms that may uncover evidence of populism and of modulating mechanisms. Regarding the dependent variable, a decrease in decisions issued by the Common Market Council – comprised of member state presidents and high-ranking officials – is defined as 'stonewalling' of intergovernmental cooperation. This study then applied the research design to empirical evidence for analysis by searching for specific terms that either confirmed or rejected if each government, as led by a president, was populist and used the two modulating mechanisms. Not all three mechanisms were studied due to feasibility. Five very-populist governments were found after analysis and not all used modulating mechanisms. Subsequently, analysis of the dependent variable, intergovernmental cooperation, through analysis of CMC decisions, was completed. Ultimately this single case study found that: CMC decisions tended to decrease after the election of the first very-populist government in 2002 and throughout the time period all other four were in power; CMC decisions were severely unstable while many very-populist governments were in power from 2013 to 2016; and, CMC decisions surprisingly increased when many very-populist governments that utilized one mechanism were in power simultaneously. Thus, in half (2/4) of the analyses of the dependent variable, very-populist governments negatively affected intergovernmental cooperation.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND INITIALISMS

Acronym	Spanish	English
ALALC	La Asociación Latinoamericana de Libre Comercio	Latin American Free Trade Association
ALADI	La Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración	Latin American Integration Association
CAN	La Comunidad Andina	Andean Community
CCM	La Comisión de Comercio del MERCOSUR	MERCOSUR Trade Commission
CCT	El Comité de Cooperación Técnica	Committee of Technical Cooperation
CIA	n/a	Central Intelligence Agency
CMC CPC	El Consejo del Mercado Común La Comisión Parlamentaria Conjunta	Common Market Council Joint Parliamentary Commission
EU FCES	Unión Europea El Foro Consultivo Económico-Social	European Union The Economic-Social Advisory Forum
GCI	Grupo de Cooperación Internacional	Group of International Cooperation
GMC	Grupo Mercado Común	Common Market Group
MAC	Mecanismo de Adaptación Competitiva	Competitive Adaptation Mechanism
MERCOSUR	Mercado Común del Sur	The Southern Common Market
PARLASUR	Parlamento del MERCOSUR	Parliament of MERCOSUR
SAM	Secretaria Administrativa del MERCOSUR	MERCOSUR Administrative Secretariat
TA	Tratado de Asunción	Treaty of Asuncion
TFEU	Tratado De Funcionamiento De La Unión Europea	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

TICD	Tratado de Integración Cooperación y Desarrollo	Treaty of Integration Cooperation and Development
UNGA	Asamblea General de las Naciones Unida	United Nations General Assembly
USA	Estados Unidos de América	United States of America
USHUAIA I	Protocolo de Ushuaia Sobre Compromiso Democrático en el MERCOSUR, La Republica de Bolivia y la Republica de Chile	Ushuaia Protocol on Democratic Commitment in MERCOSUR, the Republic of Bolivia and the Republic of Chile
USHUAIA II	Protocolo de Montevideo Sobre Compromiso con la Democracia en el MERCOSUR	The Montevideo Protocol on Commitment to Democracy in MERCOSUR
VPG	n/a	Very Populist Government

# 1. Introduction

After military governments of Argentina and Brazil toppled, the new democratized governments in both countries made intergovernmental cooperation possible (Becsei & Molnár, 2013). Argentina and Brazil signed the Iguazú Declaration in 1985, which is the, “immediate antecedent for the creation of [the Common Market of the South] MERCOSUR” (Becsei & Molnár, 2013). The Iguazú Declaration between both countries proclaimed the desire to: eliminate economic, political, and military rivalry; open gradual and reciprocal trade; develop industry and technology; and, set an aspirational goal of a common market between both countries in the southern cone of the South American continent. From 1985 to 1990 Argentina and Brazil experienced a deepening of relations reflected in the Alvorada Declaration in 1988 – which “implicated” Uruguay in the intergovernmental cooperation efforts – and the Treaty of Integration Cooperation and Development (“TICD”) (Becsei & Molnár, 2013). Further, in 1990 the final antecedent of MERCOSUR was effectuated: “Buenos Aires Declaration”. This declaration fast-tracked to 1995 the implementation of a single market. Paraguay, Uruguay, and Chile were then invited to form part of the Buenos Aires Declaration; although Chile’s internal political matters prevented the country from participating. Finally, in 1991 the Treaty of Asunción (“TA”) was signed among Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay. Thus, MERCOSUR was negotiated after a prolonged period of cooperation between Argentina and Brazil and aims to sustain economic intergovernmental cooperation among member states.

Previous and/or simultaneously ongoing efforts of South American and Latin American efforts of intergovernmental cooperation have failed or are not achieving remarkable results of sustained intergovernmental cooperation. MERCOSUR is remarkable, though, because it has successfully weathered political storms – such as the accession and subsequent suspension of Venezuela and the temporary suspension of Paraguay. Also, it has a parliamentary organ to represent Union citizens. For this reason, MERCOSUR’s prolonged period of sustained intergovernmental cooperation among member states is revelatory in nature because data regarding sustained cooperation in South America, in recent history, is newly accessible.

Fundamentally, the continued functioning of MERCOSUR lies in the executive nature of the organization (Malamud, 2004). MERCOSUR’s institutional structure confirms this. MERCOSUR’s presidents have not delegated substantive responsibilities in line with the principal-agent relationship to MERCOSUR since the bloc does not have a supranational organ. Further the directly parliamentary organ does not enjoy legislative policy-making or decision-making privileges. Additionally, the executive nature of MERCOSUR requires presidents and/or

executive leaders of member-states, by and through the Common Market Council (“CMC”), to be engaged in and be willing to continue the process of intergovernmental cooperation.

There have been issues in presenting a common position; specifically, during the turn of the millennium that brought left-leaning governments into power (Bartesaghi & Pereira, 2016). Bermúdez Torres (2011) found that automatic alignments did not immediately generate despite the southern cone of South America ushering in left-leaning governments. This may mean governments did not more efficiently generate joint positions through intergovernmental cooperation despite similar polarized left leaning governments in power. This is interesting, and worth exploring because intuitively alignment of ideologies should facilitate cooperation. Accordingly, this study believes that populism may have something to do with this.

Oliver Dabène (2012) offers a timeline of sequences of politization, de-politization, and re-politization in regard to member state views about intergovernmental cooperation. He argues that sequence is affected by different governments during the existence of MERCOSUR. Dabène (2012) offers notable historical events like the election of “new presidents like Argentine Carlos Menem, Uruguayan Luis Alberto Lacalle... Brazilian Fernando Collor, who all took office between December 1989 and March 1990, [and] had a trade-centered conception of regional integration,” and the “so-called turn to the left, embodied by the election of Lula to the Brazilian presidency in 2002, [which] brought to power new leaders deeply committed to the deepening of integration (Dabène, 2012).” Dabène (2012) offers historical evidence regarding the effects of new governments among MERCOSUR countries but does not offer empirical evidence regarding the effects of populism on intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR. Further, there exists a quantitative, not qualitative, study – discussed in the literature review section of this thesis – that investigates the effects of populist exchange policies and their effect on MERCOSUR economic integration policies.

Thus, MERCOSUR is an intergovernmental organization that aims to achieve intergovernmental cooperation between member state governments. The TA was initially negotiated between the executive branches of Argentina and Brazil, and subsequently endeavored accessions of Paraguay, Uruguay and accession and suspension of Venezuela. Additionally, MERCOSUR is dependent on executive leaders of member states since supranational and directly elected organs are not yet trusted with more responsibilities. Finally, the bloc has cycled through sequences of politization, de-politization, and re-politization in regard to the views of member states about intergovernmental cooperation. Though, it is not yet clear what the effects of populist governments on intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR are.

Political correspondents and analysts offer diverging reasons in regard to the difficulty of intergovernmental cooperation in South America regarding why so many previous iterations, i.e. UNASUR, have failed. Dr Ignacio Bartesaghi, states the change of governments within member-states has had an effect on South American efforts of intergovernmental cooperation (CNN en Español, 2019). The question is: is it solely the change of governments? This thesis contends that the effect of populist governments on South American intergovernmental cooperation efforts may have an effect and is worth studying. Accordingly, this study will attempt to empirically investigate the effect of populist governments on intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR.

## 1.1 Purpose of study and research question

### 1.1.1 Purpose of study

The purpose of this qualitative thesis is to study intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR from 1991 to 2019 as a remarkable iteration of regional intergovernmental organizations in South America, despite populist governments sometimes being in power.

### 1.1.2 Research question

**What is the effect of populist governments on intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR?**

### 1.1.3 Relevant sub-questions

To best answer the research question, the following relevant sub-questions must be answered:

1. What is the existing knowledge regarding the acquis of cooperation in MERCOSUR?
2. What is known about the effect of populist governments on intergovernmental cooperation in MERCOSUR?
3. What has the effect of populist governments been on intergovernmental cooperation in the European Union (“EU”)? The EU is used as a point of reference.
4. What is the expected outcome, the setting of study, and what are the units of measurement?

## 1.2 Approach

### 1.2.1 Answer of sub questions

This study will answer Sub-questions 1, 2, and 3 by completing an accounting of existing literature, or a literature review. Sub-question 3 refers to this study's theoretical framework which will identify existing knowledge of the effect populism on intergovernmental cooperation in the EU to then derive expectations for MERCOSUR that may answer the research question. Sub-question 4 is empirical. The expected outcome is offered in Section 2.8 and the setting of study and units of measurement will be answered in Chapter 3 which will design research and explain methodology.

### 1.2.2 Single-case selection

This study is interested in the continued functioning of MERCOSUR's existence from 1991 to 2019 as the single case that will be researched because the bloc shows promise in helping integrate South America. Further justification of selecting a single-case study will be offered in Chapter 3.

### 1.2.3 Dependent and independent variables

Dependent and independent variables will be derived from the theoretical framework in Chapter 2. Briefly, the dependent variable for this thesis will be intergovernmental cooperation as measured pursuant to the research design and methodology in Chapter 3. Expectations regarding the effect of populism on intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR will be formulated using the theoretical framework.

## 1.3 Social relevance

This study aims to be socially relevant. According to Lehnert, et. al., (2017): "socially relevant research furthers the understanding of social and political phenomena" (Lehnert, et. al., 2017: 27). Further, socially relevant research focuses on matters people or social scientists care about or may care about.

The study of MERCOSUR's continued functioning in spite of the potential effects of populist governments directly affects the stability and effectiveness of trade within a bloc of 295 million humans. Should this empirical study not be undertaken, the explanatory leverage is weakened regarding forecasts of intergovernmental cooperation between member states upon the election of new populist governments. Further, should this empirical study not be conducted, the ability to predict MERCOSUR's potential to help integrate South America is diminished.

## 1.4 Scientific relevance

This study also aims to be scientifically relevant. According to Lenhert, et. al., (2017): “a theoretically relevant contribution increases the analytic leverage political scientists have at their disposal when describing and explaining political phenomena.

Empirical measurement regarding the continued functioning of MERCOSUR, as the political phenomena, in spite of the potential effects of iterations of new-governments in member-state governments is important to know because said measurement may increase explanatory and analytical leverage regarding the functioning of regional cooperation among Latin American countries in the North American and South American continents and “may increase our empirical knowledge about social phenomena... eventually leading either to theoretical refinement or empirical rejection” (Lenhert, et. al., 2017: 24).

## 1.5 Thesis framework

The framework of this thesis will be as follows: Chapter 2 will complete a literature review regarding the relevant sub-questions and offer a theoretical framework to then derive viable expectations with appropriate dependent and independent variables. Chapter 3 will design research and methods. Chapters 4 through 9 will apply the research design to empirical evidence for analysis. Specifically, Chapters 4 through 8 will investigate member state governments from 1991 to 2019 to determine if they are populist. Chapter 9 will analyze the dependent variable – or the effect of populist governments on intergovernmental cooperation – and comment on findings. Finally, Chapter 10 will offer a conclusion to the research. References and appendices will also be attached for review.

## 2. Literature review

The purpose of the literature review is to provide an accounting of the state of the literature regarding intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR. Sub-questions 1 to 3 in Section 1.1.3 guide this chapter since this chapter investigates background information regarding MERCOSUR's, competences, acquis of cooperation, institutional structure, governance, decision and policy-making. A theoretical framework based on experiences of populist governments affecting populist intergovernmental cooperation in the EU is also offered in the final subsection. Expectations are then derived from the theoretical framework that investigates the effects of populist governments on intergovernmental cooperation within the EU.

### 2.1 MERCOSUR competences

To begin, MERCOSUR's competences were granted by the Treaty of Asunción ("TA") Chapter I, Purposes, Principles, and Instruments, Article I. The article offers the following policies in regard to the establishment of a common market:

"The free movement of goods, services and factors of production between countries...The establishment of a common external tariff and the adoption of a common trade policy in relation to third States or groups of States... The co-ordination of macroeconomic and sectoral policies between the States Parties in the areas of foreign trade, agriculture, industry, fiscal and monetary matters...The commitment by States Parties to harmonize their legislation in the relevant areas in order to strengthen the integration process."

Thus, the following sections investigate the manner in which member state governments have organized MERCOSUR to ensure that policies intended to establish a common market are effectuated.

### 2.2 Acquis of cooperation of MERCOSUR

MERCOSUR's acquis of cooperation is evident in accession protocols. To be granted accession into MERCOSUR, the following are relevant: Common Market Council Decision Regulation of Article 20 of the Asuncion Treaty MERCOSUR/CMC/DEC. N 28/05 ("MERCOSUR/CMC/DEC. N 28/05"); and, democratic commitment protocols (Franca Filho, et. al, 2010: 417)

MERCOSUR/CMC/DEC. N 28/05 specifies accession protocol pursuant to the TA Article 20. Potential member states must: I) adhere to the TA, to the Ouro Preto Protocol, and the Olivos Protocol for the Resolution of Controversies within MERCOSUR; II) adopt a common external



tariff; III) adhere to the Economic Complementation Agreement No. 18 and its additional protocols regarding economic liberalization; IV) adopt MERCOSUR's normative aspects, including norms regarding the process of accession; V) adopt international instruments celebrated within the MERCOSUR acquis; VI) incorporate treaties celebrated within the MERCOSUR acquis between third states or among groups of states, as well as participate in the external negotiations with due course (Consejo del Mercado Común, 2005).

Additionally most, if not all, potential MERCOSUR member states within the ALADI are signatory parties to either or both of the MERCOSUR democratic commitment protocols such as the 1) Ushuaia Protocol on Democratic Commitment in MERCOSUR, the Republic of Bolivia and the Republic of Chile ("Ushuaia I"); and, 2) The Montevideo Protocol on Commitment to Democracy in Mercosur ("Ushuaia II").

Both MERCOSUR/CMC/DEC. N 28/05 and the democratic commitment protocols are in line with Dabène's (2012: 42) sequences of politicization, depoliticization, and re-politicization within MERCOSUR regarding both trade and democracy – explored in detail in Section 2.5. Thus, the acquis of cooperation within MERCOSUR is mainly economic and trade-centered, but also includes democratic protocols.

### 2.3 Institutional structure of MERCOSUR

The TA created provisional organizational organs in MERCOSUR. Namely, the Common Market Council ("CMC") and the Common Market Group ("GMC") were both created by Chapter Two, Article 9. In Article 18 of the TA, the member states entered and continued further institutional design to a future date no later than December 31, 1994, and to occur, per the TA, before the creation of a single market.

The Ouro Preto Protocol was agreed to on December 17, 1994, and entered into force in 1995. It brought a legal personality that enables MERCOSUR to effectuate its purpose and most importantly a permanent institutional structure. The permanent institutional structure included, and continues to include, the following intergovernmental organs: the CMC; the GMC; and, the MERCOSUR Trade Commission ("CCM"). The other intergovernmental actor created by the Ouro Preto Protocol was the Joint Parliamentary Commission ("CPC") which consisted of representatives of member state parliaments. Though, in 2005 the institutional structure changed in that the Parliament of MERCOSUR ("PARLASUR") was legally established; once the Parliament of MERCOSUR began functioning in 2007, it replaced the CPC. Other non-intergovernmental supplementary organs were created by the Protocol Preto and continue to exist

– such as The Economic-Social Advisory Forum (“FCES”); and the MERCOSUR Administrative Secretariat (“SAM”) – but are outside the scope of this study and will not be explored.

Additionally, Article 2 of the Ouro Preto Protocol, states that only the CMC, the CMG, and the CCM wield decision-making power. Accordingly, the following section will explore governance, decision-making, and policy making in regard to these decision-making intergovernmental organs as well as comment on the Parliament’s role. A comparison to EU organs is offered in Appendix 2.

## 2.4 Governance, decision-making, and policy-making in MERCOSUR

The CMC is the MERCOSUR’s highest organ. Its powers are mainly, “political direction and decision-making” (United Nations, 2003). It may be roughly compared to the European Council of the European Union, which politically steers the EU. Membership in the CMC is composed of “Ministers of Foreign Relations and the Ministers of Economy (or Ministers of equal rank)”; additionally, it is the bloc’s “supreme and representative organ” with “powers of supervision, policy formulation, control and negotiation” (United Nations, 2003). Notably, its powers are intergovernmental and **not** supranational. Decisions are issued by this organ are made in the presence of all members, are binding, and are adopted by consensus.

MERCOSUR’s executive organ is the GMC, which shares similarities and stark differences with European Commission of the European Union (“Commission”). Like the Commission, the GMC possesses agenda-setting powers since it may “[draw] up a program of work” and “[propose] draft decisions for adoption by the CMC” (United Nations, 2003). Additionally, the CMG [approves] the budget for MERCOSUR (United Nations, 2003). Unlike the Commission, Membership in the CMG is composed of Ministries of Foreign Relations, the Ministries of Economy and the central banks and members are appointed by member state governments – so, notably it is **not** supranational in nature. Resolutions issued by this intergovernmental organ are made in the presence of all members, are binding, and are adopted by consensus.

The CCM is MERCOSUR’s third and final intergovernmental organ. A comparable organ in the EU does not exist, though it does have some characteristics comparable to the Court of Justice of the European Union since dispute settlement is part of the CCM’s responsibilities. It “plays the role of first instance in the dispute settlement system” (United Nations, 2003). Additionally, the CCM is a subordinate organ that reports to the GMC – it is mainly tasked with the bloc’s trade policy. Importantly, this organ is **also** intergovernmental. Directives and proposals are issued by the CCM; although, only directives are binding on all member states.

PARLASUR, as previously mentioned, came into existence in 2005; although, it did not start functioning until 2007. Initially, parliamentarians were elected to PARLASUR by respective member state parliaments; although, MERCOSUR planned that by 2020 all 18 parliamentarians per member state would be directly elected to their positions by constituencies (Parlamento del MERCOSUR). The responsibilities of Parlasur include: issuing opinions regarding legislation initiated by the above-referenced intergovernmental organs; proposing legislation; issuing declarations; issuing recommendations; issuing administrative dispositions; and, requesting opinions from the PCR. Notably, Parlasur does not possess agenda-setting powers, nor is it officially part of the legislative policy-making or decision-making process.

In essence, and most succinctly put, “national governments are the only driving force of Mercosur integration” (Mecham, 2003). As opposed to the EU Commission advocating for the interests of the Union, MERCOSUR does not possess a supranational organ. The presidents of each respective member state must willingly cooperate in an intergovernmental manner within MERCOSUR, or as Malamud (2004) states, “the joint political will of the national presidents is what has kept Mercosur going.”

## 2.5 Populist governments within MERCOSUR

In this subsection, the closest literature to the scope of this thesis – Dabène’s (2012) chapter in the United Nations University’s *The Rise of Post-hegemonic Regionalism* regarding MERCOSUR’s sequences of politization, depolitization, and re-politization – is studied. Literature that measures any possible effect of populist governments on intergovernmental cooperation in MERCOSUR and, literature that, through notable events and limited sporadic paragraphs, exposes cleavages in intergovernmental cooperation among member states and hint populist governments may be to blame will also be studied.

To begin with, politization is when “actors consider economic integration as an instrument to reach political goals...” and when “key political actors [share] a conception of common interests, institution building to embody common interests, and possible participation of non-state actors” Dabène (2012: 42). Depolitization happens when, “the important actors lose interest in the integration process (Dabène, 2012: 44).” Further, re-politization happens during “the construction of a new project and a new conception of common interests in a given region (2012: 45)” Further, politization is more often than not sufficient to ensure integration doesn’t collapse during depolitization but insufficient to ensure that setbacks do not happen (Dabène, 2012: 44).

In MERCOSUR, there have been five sequences consisting of two sets of depolitization and re-politization. Politization from 1985 to 1990 happened when the presidents of Argentina

and Brazil, the former coming off a brutal dictatorship and the later in transition from, were highly committed to integration and intended for the representation of MERCOSUR to be democracy (Dabène, 2012: 52). The institutionalization, or policy coordination among the countries, was in the form of protocols. Depoliticization from 1991-1996 happened as democracy was no longer a concern for the member countries and as newly elected presidents – like President Menem of Argentina, President Lacalle of Uruguay, and President Collor of Brazil – equated regional integration to trade. The institutionalization, or policy coordination among the countries, was in the form of institutional modesty, since MERCOSUR’s founding treaties made no mention of ‘democracy’ and “considers economic integration as an end, not as a device to defend democracy...” (Dabène, 2012: 53). Most notably for this thesis, the Paraguayan coup-attempt on April 22, 1996, forced MERCOSUR’s presidents to re-politicize from 1996 to 1998 by re-intending for the representation of MERCOSUR to be democracy. Institutionalization, was the Ushuaia Protocol on Democratic Commitment that was signed on July 24, 1998 (Dabène, 2012: 53). Here, the direct link between intergovernmental cooperation and democracy was offered within Article 1 of the protocol when they expressly condition democratic institutions as essential for processes of integration among the parties. Having allegedly solved the crisis at hand, the bloc returned to its trade-centered mandate from 1998-2001. It was not until two devastating events – Brazil’s unilateral devaluation and Argentina’s major depression – sparked the final, as reported by Dabène, sequence of re-politization from 2002 to 2008. The turn to the left of 2002 allegedly “brought to power new leaders deeply committed to the deepening of integration” (Dabène, 2012: 54). It is important to note here that re-politization was not directly linked with the previous re-politization of democracy. In this re-politization sequence, presidents intended for the representation of MERCOSUR to be stability. Institutionalization was the creation of a parliamentary body, a judicial body, and its enforcement of its first redistributive policy, MERCOSUR’s Fund of Structural Convergence (“FOCEM”). Internal clashes happened between the bureaucrats in the Technical Assistance Sector (“SAT”) and diplomats working within the MERCOSUR Administrative Secretariat, or SAM. Bureaucrats pushed for the parliament to have decision-making capabilities (Dabène, 2012: 54), and diplomats pushed back. Ultimately, the parliament was not granted decision-making capabilities. What is important to note is that the sequences of politicization, depoliticization, and re-politicization exemplify will of presidents regarding intergovernmental cooperation and hint at the possible effects of populist governments, such as the clashes between the SAT and the diplomats appointed by quasi-populist governments during that time – namely, former-president President Kirchner – but do not empirically test the effects of populist governments on intergovernmental cooperation.

Turning to literature that has measured any possible effect of populist governments on intergovernmental cooperation, Ferreira's (2003: 2) study briefly measured, quantitatively, macroeconomic policy disparities and if "disparities also reflect populism and the resulting lack of political will and mutual commitment with the regional goals." He did so by studying Brazil's exchange policies and their effect on MERCOSUR's economic integration process (Ferreira, 2003: 2). Ferreira found that diverging tax, monetary, and exchange policies are major impediments to integration but he did not specifically offer findings in regard to effects of populist governments and their effect on intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR (Ferreira, 2003: 17).

More often than not, notable events that expose cleavage in intergovernmental cooperation have to do with Venezuela. This thesis offers experiences of Venezuela in another South American trade bloc. Accordingly, in the early 2000s, Venezuela was emboldened to use contentious rhetoric by deriving leverage from its oil holdings (Levinsky & Roberts, 2003: 224; Gratius, & Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior, 2007: 6-7). Contentious demeanor was directed by Venezuela at the Andean Community, of which Venezuela was a member since 1973, and was followed by Venezuela expressing interest in joining MERCOSUR (Gratius, & Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior, 2007: 7; Rodríguez-Larreta, 2008: 73). Venezuela also effectuated alternatives to MERCOSUR's regional cooperation efforts while expressing interest in joining the bloc. Namely, Venezuela formed an alliance with President Morales of Bolivia and Fidel Castro of Cuba in the latter half of the 00s dubbed "the alliance of good" which was grounded on three principles: "1) nationalist anti-imperialism; 2) greater state intervention in the economy; and, 3) explicit rejection of neoliberal economic policies" (Gratius, & Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior, 2007: 6-7). Essentially, and after analyzing the aforementioned literature, this thesis concludes that Venezuela's populist governments, while attempting to join MERCOSUR, attempted to lead alternative regional cooperation methods that may be interpreted as undermining policy coordination within MERCOSUR.

In addition to the contentious history regarding intergovernmental cooperation Venezuela's populist government under Chavez brings, MERCOSUR expressed concern with Venezuela's addition to the bloc due to the MERCOSUR's democratic clause and due to drastic ideological differences regarding trade and a free press (Gratius, 2007: 5; Rodríguez-Larreta, 2008: 73). To begin, a populist member state government in MERCOSUR, such as that of Chavez or his successor, Maduro, would, arguably, hinder the democratic clause rendering questioning its effectivity. Additionally, Venezuela would not commit to signing free trade agreements

liberalizing trade even before formally being granted full membership – which not only clearly communicates the nation’s protectionist policies that are incompatible with MERCOSUR (Gratius, 2007: 5), but also exemplifies Venezuela’s uncooperative behavior regarding policy coordination within MERCOSUR again prior to accession.

Fast forward to 2012, the Venezuela accession saga had not ceased. In the same year, the temporary expulsion of Paraguay in 2012 from MERCOSUR pursuant to the Ushuaia Protocol following the constitutional impeachment and removal from office of President Fernando Lugo is very interesting. Analysts have theorized that the suspension of Paraguay in response to said constitutional and sovereign event was politically motivated: Paraguay’s center-right government had long opposed admission of populist Venezuela into the bloc and, following the removal of President Lugo, Brazil’s populist government of President Rousseff felt compelled to suspend Paraguay, and bypass its probable veto of accession, to ram admission of Venezuela (Felter eTAl., 2019; *The Economist*, 2012). Instead of engaging with fellow member states to reach negotiation within treaty competences, Brazil burned bridges, broke trust, and chose to muzzle a voting member.

The literature review also uncovered sporadic paragraphs that hint that member states’ populist governments may be to blame for faltering intergovernmental cooperation due to discrepancies of policies. As a more recent example of the effect of populist governments on intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR, Nogués (2017: 3) alleges that populist governments in Argentina and Brazil uniformly and arbitrarily, with exposure to being captured by private actors, managed trade flows, i.e., approved specific import and export tariffs in accordance with free trade agreements uniformly and arbitrarily. Further, according to (Roberts & Levitsky, 2011: 359) the Vazquez government of Uruguay, which was allegedly somewhat populist, pressed for a flexible MERCOSUR which would allow it the benefits of the bloc and the ability to effectuate free trade agreements unilaterally with third countries in search of new markets. To conclude, by paraphrasing Rodríguez-Larreta (2008: 70), in the face of ghastly conflicting ideologies, regional intergovernmental cooperation efforts that were already undergoing cycles of de-politization and re-politization are more likely than not affected.

## 2.6 Populist governments within the EU – theoretical framework

Having investigated MERCOSUR’s background, this subsection briefly turns to the EU as the theoretical framework – because it is the oldest and most successful intergovernmental and supranational bloc – to define populism, define intergovernmental cooperation, investigate the

link between populist governments and intergovernmental cooperation, and identify specific cases of populist governments affecting intergovernmental cooperation within the EU.

Populism is difficult to define because many scientific definitions have been offered making it difficult to offer “general characteristics” (Canovan, 1981: 243) and because populism takes on many forms and may manifest in any party of any political color. In the midst of a multitude of definitions, and to concretely define populism, this thesis relies on the common themes, or core elements, of populism as identified by scholars because these core elements are thought to have an effect on foreign policy. According to scholars’ definitions, the core elements of populism are a binary framework that pools society into two allegedly antagonistic groups of “the people” and “the elite” (Ágh, 2019: 154; Algan, et. al., 2017: 311; 2, 2019; Balfour, 2017: 56; Balfour, et. al., 2016; Chryssogelos 2010: 269; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012: 73; Rovira Kaltwasser, et. al., 2017: 399; Reungoat, 2010: 293). This framework seeks to draw a divide in the population of a given state by appealing to “the people”. Further, populist governments are governments in power that apply the aforementioned skeleton binary framework that pools society into two antagonistic groups of “the people” and “the elite,” while also, in line with Stengel, et. al.’s (2019), simultaneously disseminate hyper-nationalist and protectionist rhetoric, which poses a threat to European integration (Stengel, et. al., 2019: 4).

Cooperation is defined as “actors adjust[ing] their behavior to the actual or anticipated preferences of others, through a process of policy coordination” (Keohane, 1984: 51). Further, Keohane (1984) asserts that, “intergovernmental cooperation takes place when the policies actually followed by one government are regarded by its partners as facilitating realization of their own objectives, as the result of a process of policy coordination” (Keohane, 1984: 52). Having background knowledge regarding EU Policy-making, and with due regard for the definitions of both cooperation and intergovernmental cooperation, this thesis defines intergovernmental cooperation in the EU as policies coordinated: 1) among member states within the two main intergovernmental actors of the EU; and, 2) between the intergovernmental legislative actor and supranational legislative actor of the EU regarding potential legislative acts to be adopted in accordance with competencies of the Union as conferred by Articles 3-6 of the European Union Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (“TFEU”).

Upon review of the literature, the following mechanisms, as indirectly theorized by scholars, were utilized by populist governments to modulate intergovernmental cooperation: 1) scapegoating the EU for national policy issues (Ágh, 2019: 155; Balfour, 2017: 57; Cadier, 2019; Reungoat, 2010: 308; 160; Verbeek & Zaslove, 2015: 543); 2) emphasizing the salience of foreign policy issues and their link to domestic policy (Balfour, et. al., 2016: 16; Chryssogelos, 2010: 268;

Chrysogelos, 2016: 9; Reungoat, 2010: 309; Verbeek & Zaslove, 2015: 526; Varga & Buzogány, 2020: 2); and, 3) influencing the debate surrounding issues important to populists by controlling the narrative (Balfour, 2017: 58 - 59; Balfour, et. al., 2016: 14).

Specifically, scapegoating the EU for national policy issues is a common theme among the literature reviewed. Ágh (2019:155) asserts that the EU in and of itself has not traditionally been a concern for populists. Though, populists are motivated to exploit the EU to strengthen their power back home by exploiting the assignment of responsibilities to the EU and essentially scapegoating the EU for allegedly impeding member states the ability to exercise national sovereignty to solve policy issues (Ágh, 2019: 155). Further, Balfour (2015) asserts that populist governments frame EU as benefiting from globalization and as the culprit of misfortune at the expense of the people or “at the expense of those left behind” (Balfour, 2017: 57). This is, presumptively, to further drive a divide between allegedly antagonistic sections of the population. Cadier (2019) further asserts that once populist leaders rise to power they are in threat of losing their populist appeal of being anti-elite and for-the-people, being that they themselves are the ruling elite after coming to power, so these populist leaders, “claim to fight enemies operating from the shadows... abroad.” These claims are, presumptively, to stay in power. Reungoat (2010: 308) further asserts that regarding the EU’s competencies in immigration matters, France’s far-right populist party, the FN, framed the EU as an opponent or even a threat to control over immigration policy. Verbeek & Zaslove (2015: 543) further assert that radical right populist parties condition their anti-EU rhetoric on what, “[the party] perceives the EU to be able to do for ‘the people’.” Essentially, parties may scapegoat the EU at their discretion and for their benefit.

Regarding the second mechanism, literature suggested that populist governments emphasize the salience of foreign policy issues and their link to domestic policy. Balfour’s (2016: 16) book *Europe’s Troublemakers* comments on the changing nature of the relationship between domestic politics and international politics. This changing relationship provides populists with plenty of opportunities to exploit the link between foreign policy and domestic policy visions. Chrysogelos (2010: 268) comments that domestic visions of policy now find expression in foreign policy and are reflected back into domestic policy. Chrysogelos (2010) states that populist EU populist parties’ discourse of “realpolitik” and “material interests in international politics” aligns with Russia and is at odds with the EU (Chrysogelos, 2010: 273). This discourse is the domestic vision of policy that rejects the west in favor of a multipolar world of “sovereign” nation states fighting for their interests “unhindered” by “institutional commitments” (Chrysogelos, 2010: 273). Populist parties from both sides of the political spectrum take a positive approach to Russia within the EU because of this natural affinity between populist parties’ domestic vision of policy and the



implications of publicly supporting Russia. Further, Chryssogelos, (2016: 9) also specifically offers comments by a foreign policy-maker wherein an EU diplomat acknowledges that foreign policy has been known to be a low salience issue; although, “the rise of populists has an impact on [diplomats’] work.” Reungoat (2010: 309) comments on the findings from her study that European [EU] issues have been translated into the party platforms of member state parties. Verbeek & Zaslove (2015: 526) comment on the international relations field’s pitfalls of acknowledging the effects of radicalized right-wing populist parties due to the field’s failure to foresee the possible effects of foreign policy on domestic policy. For example, shifts in production patterns due to foreign policy have very real domestic consequences (Verbeek & Zaslove, 2015: 529). The aforementioned authors essentially argue for a reckoning in the IR field of acknowledging the transformation of foreign policy into domestic policy. Varga & Buzogány (2020: 2) acknowledge that most studies have either implicitly or explicitly identified that opportunist populist parties use foreign policy to strategize domestic policies.

Regarding the third mechanism, the literature reviewed also presented the aforementioned pattern: populist governments influence the debate surrounding issues important to them by controlling the narrative. Belfour (2017: 58 - 59) contends that populists gain space in some media, such as social media etc., by using it as a megaphone for populist causes. Belfour, et. al. (2016: 14) asserts that populists are successful in distorting the debates and “influencing mainstream public opinion in the process.”

Additionally, the following common effect of, or the main relationship between, populist governments on EU intergovernmental cooperation, as indirectly theorized by scholars, was identified upon review of the literature regarding trade, accession, and intergovernmental decision-making and structure: populist governments stonewalled intergovernmental cooperation. To begin, Verbeek & Zaslove (2015) briefly linked former-Prime Minister Berlusconi’s populist coalition government to the failure of ratification of the EU’s constitutional treaty when “The LN [or populist party in the coalition government] voted against [the constitutional treaty] in the Italian Parliament.” So, Italy’s populist government stonewalled intergovernmental cooperation regarding decision-making and structure that had taken place among member states within the European Council. This thesis considers this example as stonewalling because the constitutional treaty – the policy coordinated on an intergovernmental basis – did fail. Though, the Lisbon Treaty – an alternate quasi-constitutional treaty – was ultimately successfully ratified in 2007. In Hungary, the populist government in power of Prime Minister Orbán effectuated a policy of “Eastern Opening” that undermined the Commission’s effort for trade negotiation on behalf of the bloc by seeking alternatives via unilateral FTAs and emphasizing the Prime Minister’s desire to wane

Hungary off of trade from the west. Both actions not only weakened European unity but also exemplified a populist government that stonewalled trade policies – or the mandate issued by the European Council and the agreement negotiated by the supranational entity or the Commission (Balfour, et. al., 2016: 34; Varga & Buzogány, 2020: 13). The following paragraph explores another example a populist government not only stonewalling but ultimately severing intergovernmental cooperation in the EU.

BREXIT is a case in point of populist governments negatively affecting intergovernmental cooperation. Before investigating Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s populist government, the backstory is important: the call for a BREXIT referendum led by UKIP – a populist party. UKIP is identified as populist because in its 2015 party manifesto it explicitly exploited an alleged divide between both “the liberal metropolitan elite” of the UK and the “pan-European bureaucratic elite” of Brussels as having no regard for “the people” or UKIP’s supporters that revered in celebrating “Britishness” and that wanted what was best for the UK (UKIP, 2015: 61, 70). Hyper-nationalism floods the manifesto with its many titles such as “Taking pride in Britain” and “Reinvigorating British culture and values” (UKIP, 2015: 61) Further protectionist rhetoric is just as prevalent in the manifesto with subheadings such as, “What is clearly unsafe is the UK’s over-dependence on imports from politically unstable countries...” and “[UKIP] will also prepare for the possibility of disease outbreaks (including those) caused by imports” (UKIP, 2015: 39). Most notably, the call for a referendum within the manifesto is clear: “UKIP believes British citizens should have an in/out referendum on our membership of the EU as soon as possible. Our question of choice will be.. and “we confirm our intention to leave the EU with an ‘out’ vote in a national referendum” (UKIP, 2015: 71).

Having established the populist nature of the party, we turn to the how the current right-wing populist government rose to power. UKIP “dangled” to the British people the idea of a referendum to decide the fate of the UK’s membership in the EU, or, more clearly, emphasized the link between foreign policy and domestic policy. By February 2015, British media reported former-Prime Minister’s hand being forced in regard to the referendum, the Guardian stated: “a forced hand is not the same as a good idea. Cameron sees that a referendum is inevitable” (Behr, 2015). The result of the referendum is now known: it resulted in the English people choosing to leave the EU and in the resignation of former-Prime Minister David Cameron – notably not a populist. The new leader, former-Prime Minister Theresa May – notably not a populist – embarrassingly failed to pass three “divorce deals” because the result of her negotiations, or policy coordination initiatives, with the EU neither satisfied the populist “leave” bloc of the parliament nor the “remain” bloc of the parliament.

A divorce deal was ultimately passed by parliament which was led by Prime Minister Boris Johnson – notably, a populist leader that rose to power to effectuate the nationalist and protectionist agenda of BREXIT who was also backed by a newly-elected majority in the parliament to effectuate the prime minister’s agenda. The effect of populism on intergovernmental cooperation was that: the UK’s populist government, led by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, severed the policy-coordinating relationship on January 31, 2020, with the EU because, having a “leave” mandate, the UK allegedly was not able to adjust their behavior to coordinate policy with the intergovernmental and supranational cooperation effort, the European Union, which allegedly did not facilitate the realization of the UK’s objectives.

## 2.7 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter uncovered that the *acquis* of cooperation within MERCOSUR is mainly economic and trade-centered but also includes democratic protocols. Also, executives propel the bloc, and the bloc does not possess a supranational organ by design and since inception.

In addition to the cycles of politization, de-politization, and re-politization regarding trade and democratization, the literature offers specific events that expose cleavages in intergovernmental cooperation, I contend, due to populist governments. Sporadic paragraphs hinted that member states’ populist governments may be to blame for cleavages in intergovernmental cooperation – such as the pre-accession issues Venezuela faced mostly due to its uncooperative policy coordination behavior within MERCOSUR and Brazil’s leadership, guided by a populist government, that opted to temporarily suspend a member in order to ram through admission of another member instead of engage in policy coordination among all members. Assorted paragraphs were identified wherein member states, in the face of ghastly conflicting ideologies, affected regional intergovernmental cooperation. Thus, there does not yet exist extensive knowledge about the effects of populism on intergovernmental cooperation in MERCOSUR.

The theoretical framework: 1) defined populist governments as those in power that apply the aforementioned skeleton binary framework that pools society into two antagonistic groups of “the people” and “the elite,” while, in line with Stengel’s (2019) assertion, simultaneously disseminate hyper-nationalist and protectionist rhetoric which may pose a threat to integration; 2) defined intergovernmental cooperation as when policies are coordinated among member states within the two main intergovernmental actors of the EU and between the intergovernmental legislative actor and supranational legislative actor of the EU regarding potential legislative acts to be adopted in accordance with competencies of the Union as conferred by Articles 3-6 of the

TFEU; 3) explored effects of populism on intergovernmental cooperation and found that populist governments stonewall intergovernmental cooperation, and, in BREXIT's case sever intergovernmental cooperation; and, 4) explored the case in point of BREXIT.

## 2.8 Expectations

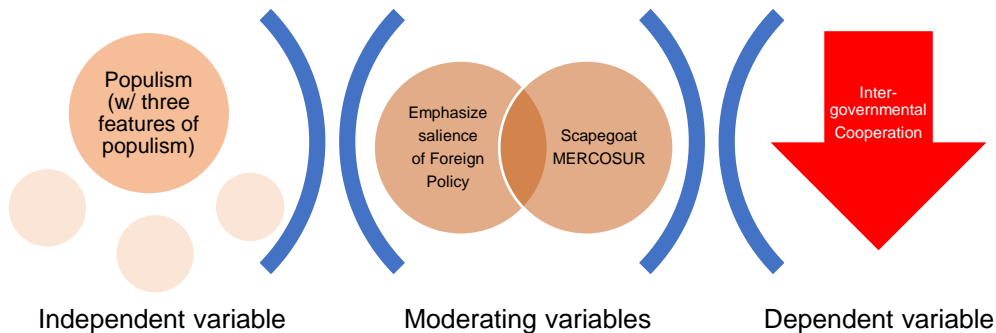
Thus, with regard to the theoretical framework, the following expectation is formulated to help answer the research question:

*E<sub>1</sub>: The presence of very-populist member state governments in power, that may<sup>1</sup> utilize at least one – of the two<sup>2</sup> – modulating mechanisms, stonewall intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR.*

## 2.9 Flow chart

Figure 1.

*Expected relationship*



Source: own analysis.

<sup>1</sup> Modulating mechanisms are not compulsory for analysis of a government to proceed.

<sup>2</sup> This study only operationalizes two of three mechanisms. Justification is offered in Section 3.3.

### 3. Research design and methodology

This chapter focuses on empirical matters. The following will justify the selection of the single case model, distinguish variables, offer operationalization, indicators, and measurement of the variables, comment on data collection and analysis, and assess validity and reliability.

#### 3.1 Single case selection justification

There are five rationales offered by Yin (2009) for selecting a single-case study for qualitative research as an appropriate design: 1) case would be critical in testing a well formulated theory; 2) case is unique or extreme; 3) the converse of two, the case is representative or typical; 4) the case is revelatory in that it is newly accessible; 5) studying the case at “two or more different points in time... to specify how certain conditions change over time, and the desired time intervals would presumably reflect the anticipated stages at which the changes would reveal themselves” (Yin, 2009: 47-50). Only four of the five rationale apply to this thesis’ selection of MERCOSUR’s existence from 1991-present.

The selection of MERCOSUR from 1991 to 2019 satisfies rationale one because the mere existence of MERCOSUR tests well formulated theories regarding populism, cooperation, and the effects of populism on foreign relations as theorized by scholars investigating populism in the EU. Further, being that previous and/or simultaneously ongoing South American and Latin American efforts of intergovernmental cooperation have failed to or are currently not producing remarkable results of sustained intergovernmental cooperation, MERCOSUR is unique in that it has successfully weathered political storms. For this reason, the study of MERCOSUR’s prolonged period of sustained intergovernmental cooperation in South America among member states is revelatory in nature because it is newly accessible. Additionally, study of MERCOSUR from 1991 to 2019, in different points in time, regarding the effect of populism on intergovernmental cooperation within the bloc may confirm the previously formulated expectation.

#### 3.2 Variables

Pursuant to the expectation formulated in Chapter 2, the following variables may be distinguished:

- Independent variables: the independent variable under study is populist governments. Populist governments, in line with the definition of populism derived from the theoretical framework: are those that apply binary framework that pools society into two antagonistic groups of “the people” and “the elite” (Agh, 2019;

Algan, et. al., 2017; Cadier, 2019; Balfour, 2017; Balfour, et. al., 2016; Chrysogelos 2010; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012: 73; Rovira Kaltwasser, et. al., 2017, 399; Reungoat, 2010: 293). Accordingly, populist governments are governments led by a populist president that apply the aforementioned skeleton binary framework that pools society into two antagonistic groups of “the people” and “the elite,” and, in line with Stengel (2019), simultaneously disseminate hyper-nationalist and protectionist rhetoric.

- **Dependent variable:** the dependent variable under study is intergovernmental cooperation. Intergovernmental cooperation is guided by Keohane’s (1984) widely accepted definition of cooperation – “intergovernmental cooperation takes place when the policies actually followed by one government are regarded by its partners as facilitating realization of their own objectives, as the result of a process of policy coordination.” For MERCOSUR this will mean policy coordination within MERCOSUR among member states within the main intergovernmental actor the CMC regarding potential legislative acts to be adopted in accordance with competencies of the Union as conferred by Article 1 of the Treaty of Asunción (“TA”), and the various protocols – or the MERCOSUR acquis.
- **Moderating variables:** populist governments may utilize the following mechanisms, which were previously identified by this thesis as core elements from collective theorizing by scholars that made it difficult for intergovernmental cooperation actors to coordinate policy in the EU: 1) scapegoating MERCOSUR for national policy issues; and, 2) emphasizing the salience of foreign policy issues and their link to domestic policy.
- **Confounding variables:** other variables that can be expected to affect intergovernmental cooperation include the following: pandemics, natural disasters, severe economic crisis, and, war.

### 3.3 Operationalization, indicators, and measurement

To effectively conduct empirical analysis, this section offers operationalization of the above referenced variables through indicators for the time period of study from 1991 to 2019. An

explanation of the relationship between the indicators and of the measurement of these features follows.

The independent variable under study is populist governments. Governments are defined as presidents of each respective country because they are more relevant in deciding intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR. Accordingly, the unit of analysis for each country is the rhetoric of the president in power. Terms in presidential speeches, or commentary regarding these speeches, that may uncover evidence of populist governments are the following – please note a translation of the exact words used is offered in Appendix 1: “the people” (Salinero Rates, 2015: 26) and any specific industry identifier, with regard to each member state and their respective industries, such as “miners” “oil-riggers” “lumberjacks” etc. Further, the following words will indicate that societies are pooled into two antagonistic groups of people – please note a translation of the exact words used is offered in Appendix 1: “anti- people” “the others” “oligarchy” “elite,” and “foreigners,” “traitors” (Knight, 1998: 229). In addition to operationalizing populist governments with the aforementioned terms, the context of the words is important. When the context speaks of the “the people” or any specific industry identifier as 1) “the people as a nation”; 2) the people as an ethnic group; and, the people as a common people or the silent majority” (Canovan, 1999: 5; Salinero Rates, 2015: 26-27) this thesis will consider the aforementioned terms and context as rhetoric by populist governments drawing a divide between two or more antagonistic sections of the population.

Additionally, empirical evidence of hyper-nationalist rhetoric will be specific to each member state. generally, this study will investigate the prevalence of “nation... as an entity superior to others which demands protection and attention” (Davidson, 2006: 43). The aforementioned definition guiding this thesis is of ‘ultranationalist’ which was used in lieu of a non-academically credible definition of hyper-nationalism. Hyper-nationalist terms may include: racial context-specific rhetoric regarding the superiority of each member state (Nester, 1990: 339). Additionally, having background knowledge of Latin American politics, this thesis theorizes that term ‘revolution’ may uncover relevant empirical evidence because the term is common in presidential addresses. Protectionist rhetoric suggests more protection from trade is necessary and/or that the purchase of only national products should be undertaken by the population.

The dependent variable intergovernmental cooperation will be indicated by the amount of decisions issued throughout the period of existence of MERCOSUR from 1991 to 2019 by the bloc’s highest organ, the Consejo del Mercado Común (“CMC”) – which consists of presidents of each member state. Decisions are policy coordination through intergovernmental cooperation within bloc competencies. Using decisions issued by the CMC is justified because the literature

review in Chapter 2 uncovered that at its core MERCOSUR is an intergovernmental cooperation effort, without a supranational entity, that is driven primarily by presidents of member states. The unit of analysis for the dependent variable will be measured the number of CMC decisions issued per year. The same value will be allotted to each decision because the matters that the CMC decides on, with the CMC being the highest organ, are more often than not related to similar matters of “political direction and decision-making” (United Nations, 2003). Stonewalling in MERCOSUR will mean that number of decisions falls.

The first moderating variable, or mechanism, is expected to be populist governments scapegoating MERCOSUR for national policy issues. It will be indicated by rhetoric that shifts blame on the part of a member state to MERCOSUR. Some sources may be: party platforms, of the populist governments specifically under investigation, and national newspaper articles to uncover statements that may attempt to shift the blame for national policy issues to the MERCOSUR. The second mechanism, is expected to be populist governments that emphasize the salience of foreign policy and their link to domestic policy, which will be indicated by either investigating the amount of times, if any, populist governments called referendums on foreign policy issues or the amount of time populist governments emphasized the salience of foreign policy within an intergovernmental cooperation effort, MERCOSUR, and its link to domestic policy. It will be difficult to operationalize mechanism three, or populist governments influencing debate, due to both time constraints and due to overburdensome coding. Specifically, it is unfeasible to code **all** public policy that presidents emphasize and to, from this, in the allotted time, effectively **measure** the influence of presidential rhetoric on public debate. Thus, only the first two mechanisms and not the third mechanism are operationalized in this study.

This thesis expects the relationship between the independent variable, the moderating variables, and the dependent variable from the period of study of 1991 to 2019 to be the following: the presence of a populist government in power, as previously defined, that may utilize one of the two aforementioned mechanisms, or moderating variables, and may mean stonewalling of intergovernmental cooperation – or, a decrease in Common Market Council (“CMC”) decisions issued yearly.



Table 1.

Table of variables

Variable	Features	Terms	Type of document	Source
Populist government	1. Pooling antagonistic groups of the member state population:	The people; against the people; oligarchy; the elite; bourgeoisie; specific industry identifier i.e. miners, lumberjacks, oil riggers, soy workers, etc.; and a divide framing aforementioned groups as antagonistic such as: hate, oppress, limit	Speeches by heads of state of member states, media commentary of the same speeches, videos of speeches; and, party platforms	New York Times, Washington Post, The Economist, Ultima Hora, and El Pais (all relevant for all five countries); Abc.py (Paraguay); Abc.uy (Uruguay); Telesur (Venezuela); La Nacion (Argentina); Folha de S.Paulo (Brazil); El Cronista (Argentina); Presidential libraries (all five countries); Youtube
	2. Hyper-nationalist rhetoric: rhetoric regarding “nation... as an entity superior to others which demands protection and attention” (Davidson, 2006: 43)	Pure; racial; superior; revolution; nation-specific identifiers, i.e. Argentinians, Brazilians, etc. and ‘pride’ within the same speech in a tone asserting superiority	See above.	See above.

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	3. Protectionist rhetoric: rhetoric suggesting more protection from trade is necessary and/or that the purchase of only national products should be undertaken by the population of a member state	protect; support; impose; impose tariff; limit; reduce; non-tariff barrier; executive order	See above.	See above.
Mechanism one	Rhetoric scapegoating MERCOSUR for national policy issues	Blame, limit, flexible, reduce, break-free, rid of, leave the bloc, sever relations, minimum	See above.	See above.
Mechanism two	Rhetoric emphasize the salience of foreign policy issues and their link to domestic policy	Referendums; neoliberal; United State of America; imperialism; Malvina islands	See above.	See above.
Intergovernmental cooperation	Number of decisions issued	n/a	CMC decisions	MERCOSUR register

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### 3.4 Data collection

Yin (2009) offers six types of data sources of evidence commonly used for case studies: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts (Yin, 2009: 101). Notably, the later three generally do not apply to this thesis. Further, interviews could in potentially provide information regarding intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR; although, realistically, it would be very difficult to secure interviews with civil servants working for the bloc and with civil servants working for member-states that also participate in MERCOSUR decision-making.

Thus, documentation and archival records will be of the utmost importance for this thesis. Archival records may be accessed, for example, on MERCOSUR's official archive where issued decisions are available. Further, newspaper articles from national and international mediums as well as multimedia documents, such as videos, will be very important for this thesis. A systemic collection of empirical data will begin with determining whether each government is populist and continue to the presence of mechanisms using many online document retrieval platforms and the aforementioned terms.

### 3.5 Data analysis

Yin (2009: 110) offers three general strategies for analyzing evidence collected for case study: 1) relying on theoretical propositions; 2) setting up a framework based on rival explanations; and, 3) developing case descriptions. The latter two and three do not apply to this research. This study will rely on theoretical propositions, which were offered in the preceding literature review about the experiences of populist government on intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR. This was done because, after offering the theoretical framework, specific data was identified as important and other as not. Finally, a time-series analysis will be used to analyze the independent, populist governments, and dependent variable, intergovernmental cooperation, because, as Yin (2009) points out, "in time series, there may only be a single dependent or independent variable" (Yin, 2009: 144).

Put into practice, I will begin with member state membership by time period. Importantly, all member states with full membership – or those that have been granted accession pursuant to CMC Regulation of Article 20 of the Treaty of Asuncion, MERCOSUR/CMC/DEC. N 28/05 and pursuant to democratic commitment protocols – can influence CMC decisions. Accordingly,

Chapters 4 to 8 will investigate the heads of state of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay from 1991 to 2019 and the head of state of Venezuela from 2012 to 2017.

Appendix 3 depicts the presidents of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela throughout each member state's period of full-membership within MERCOSUR. Each president depicted interacted for more than one year with MERCOSUR throughout their period of full-membership. Three governments of Argentina from 2001 to 2002 were provisional in nature and will not be studied because their mandates lasted less than a combined 14 days and were narrow in scope. In Paraguay, President Raul Cubas Grau's government lasted less than one year and President Federico Franco's government did not interact at all with MERCOSUR due to its suspension from the bloc, so it will not be studied. This leaves 27-member state governments that have the potential, pursuant to the expectation offered in Chapter 2 of this thesis, to be populist – as defined by this thesis – and to stonewall intergovernmental cooperation. These 27 governments also have the opportunity to, in addition to being populist, stonewall intergovernmental cooperation through the use of the two modulating mechanisms of scapegoating MERCOSUR for national policy issues and emphasizing the salience of foreign policy issues and their link to domestic policy

In practice, I will analyze by initially identifying whether heads of state are populist. This will be done by probing in each government for the three features of populism derived from the literature review. All three features of populism must be present (i.e. a confirmation of 'yes' for each) for this study to deem a member state government a Very Populist Governments ("VPG") and for analysis to proceed. If the heads of state do not have any features of populism (or 'no' for all the features) analysis of mechanisms will not proceed (as depicted by the '-' sign). If any government has only one or two of the three features, that government will be deemed quasi-populist and I will offer justification of why it is, but analysis will not proceed. For VPGs, I will continue to identify the presence of the two modulating mechanisms. Absence of mechanisms will not strike analysis of the effect of VPGs on intergovernmental cooperation, pursuant to my expectation. Following the EU experience, this thesis also expects that the presence of VPGs that utilize the two aforementioned modulating mechanisms may also reduce intergovernmental cooperation. Thus, I must establish whether the modulating mechanisms are present.

In practice, I started by pre-researching news mediums and governmental institutions that archived presidential speeches for each of the five countries. News mediums or governmental institutions were deemed reliable if they provided commentary and/or full text of presidential speeches of each head of state. I started with the first government of each country in early-1990 to familiarize myself with the news mediums and governmental institutions that stored relevant

data for presidential rhetoric – this made subsequent governments easier to complete because I knew where to look. For example, pre-research uncovered ‘La Nacion’ and ‘El Cronista’ in Argentina, which I used for all Argentine governments, in addition to the governmental institution that archived speeches. If you can imagine, I did, as much as possible, consult the sources deemed relevant for each country – see Table 2, for each topic. Thus, it took some time to aggregate relevant presidential rhetoric or commentary for each government to then manually code the rhetoric using Table 2 in order to either confirm or reject the if the three features of populism – i.e. drawing a divide, hyper-nationalism, and protectionism – were present. If all three features were present, I proceeded to aggregate relevant presidential rhetoric or commentary and to code for the two mechanisms using Table 2.

Specifically, with regard to Brazil, documents are in Portuguese. I do not speak, read, or write this language. Luckily, I will use deepl which offers literal as well as colloquial translation of documents. This software was previously lauded for its superiority over other online translators and for its machine learning capabilities (Coldwey & Lardinois, 2017).

### 3.6 Validity and reliability

Yin (2009) notes that when assessing the quality of research design the following four concepts should be explicitly addressed: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability (Yin, 2009). This section will endeavor to justify the quality of the research.

#### 3.6.1 Construct validity

According to Yin (2009, 40) construct validity mean correctly operationalizing concepts that are under study. The researcher should: 1) “define ... change in terms of specific concepts; and, 2) identify operational measures that match the concepts” (Yin, 2009: 42). Accordingly, this thesis defined the specific concepts of populist governments, the two mechanisms under study, and intergovernmental cooperation pursuant to the theories observed by scholars investigating the effects of populist governments on intergovernmental cooperation in the EU. Additionally, the chosen operationalization for each variable matches the concepts being measured.

#### 3.6.2 Internal validity

With regard to internal validity, research designs should clear the following four “hurdles”: 1) is there a credible causal mechanism connecting (x) and (y)?; 2) can we rule out that (y) could cause

(x)?; 3) Do (x) and (y) co-vary?; and, 4) do we control for confounding variables (z)? (Kellstedt & Whitten, 2009).

This thesis uses experiences within the EU, the bloc which inspired MERCOSUR, to lay the theoretical framework for the possible mechanisms that may connect (x) and (y). Seven authors have investigated populism and its effect in the EU and whose theories are used to define populism. Populism harmful to cooperation is then identified by Stengel's (2019) assertion that populisms that combine populist demands with hyper-nationalism and protectionism may be harmful to EU integration. Further, cooperation, and intergovernmental cooperation specifically, are defined according to Keohane (1984) to lay a clear foundation of what intergovernmental cooperation specifically means in in the EU and for this thesis. To investigate a direct link, or causality, this thesis turns to the experiences of harmful populist governments in power and their effect on intergovernmental cooperation within the EU. More than four authors directly commented on the link between populist governments and intergovernmental cooperation in the EU and, this thesis finds a pattern within their collective findings: the effect is that is that populist governments stonewall intergovernmental cooperation, or, in some cases, completely sever intergovernmental cooperation. From the aforementioned theoretical framework, this thesis derives three credible mechanisms that connect one expectation of the relationship between (x) and (y).

Notably, upon literature review, intergovernmental cooperation (y) is not explicitly found to cause populist governments (x). One mechanism that populist governments use is scapegoating the EU, or the intergovernmental and supranational effort, for national policy issues. From the literature review it is not immediately clear, nor was it been stated, that intergovernmental cooperation efforts have explicitly caused populist governments.

Further, in regard to (x) and (y) co-varying, there are periods during which populist governments were present and absent in MERCOSUR and intergovernmental cooperation as, as measured by CMC decisions, varied. Thus, both (x) and (y) very clearly co-vary throughout the period of time under review, or throughout the existence of MERCOSUR from 1991 to 2019.

Finally, confounding variables were not explicitly mentioned; although, There may still be other factors that have an effect more or less on intergovernmental cooperation from 1991 to 2019 such as economic crisis, pandemics, natural disasters, war, etc.; although, MERCOSUR began intergovernmental collaboration with neighboring member states after the Falkland's War with the United Kingdom, and, to date, there have not been any formal wars among or between any of the members. There do exist internal conflicts in Paraguay such as the Insurgency in Paraguay that is ongoing.

### 3.6.3 External validity

External validity deals with the generalizability of the results of this study to other cases (Yin, 2009: 43). It is true that single case studies, such as this thesis, are notoriously criticized for having “poor basis for generalizing” (Yin, 2009: 43); although, the same critics usually use survey research background knowledge to comment on case studies. As Yin (2009: 43) points out “survey research relies on statistical generalization, whereas case studies... rely on analytical generalization.” Thus, in the case of this research, this thesis relies on scholars’ theories regarding the effects of populism on intergovernmental cooperation in another regional bloc, the EU, and applied the aforementioned theories to the single case of MERCOSUR, another regional bloc. The findings of this research may be applicable to other regional blocs.

### 3.6.4 Reliability

Reliability concerns methodology the researcher uses to document procedures and operational steps taken in the case study as to allow future researchers to, if they follow said documentation and operationalization, arrive at the same result (Yin, 2009: 45). Thus, in addition to making sure each operational step taken is clearly described in each substantive section, documentation that may increase reliability will be made available for review in the appendix.

## 4. Analysis of Argentina

This chapter will focus on Argentina's following six heads of state and their corresponding governments: 1) Carlos Saúl Menem; 2) Fernando de la Rúa; 3) Eduardo Duhalde; 4) Nestor Kirchner; 5) Christina Fernandez – Kirchner; and, 6) Mauricio Macri.

### 4.1 Carlos Saúl Menem (1989 – 1999)

To begin, prior to his election as President of Argentina, Carlos Saúl Menem was expected to remain in the traditions of orthodox Peronism (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013: 2). A tendency to be ultra-nationalist was part of those traditions (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013: 2). Peronism was also characteristic of a quest for social justice in a society ruled by elites (New York Times, 1989). Menem's platform was largely aimed at the poor and the working class of Argentina – in sharp contrast with the reformist inner fraction of the reformist Peronists to appeal to middle class and white-collar voters. The platform was also “dominated by nationalist populist themes”; namely, “offering tax incentives and protectionist policies” and tightly controlled foreign direct investment; and, “nationalization of trade to hinder the ability of businessmen to evade foreign exchange controls” (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013: 3).

Once in power, President Menem did an about-face. His government implemented the Washington Consensus of: trade liberalization; “fiscal discipline; financial liberalization; a fixed exchange rate; labor market liberalization; foreign investment; privatization; deregulation; and the enforcement of property rights” (Szusterman, 2000: 200). Argentina was economically transformed under the “neoliberal” government of a president thought to be populist. When asked during an interview with analysts in March 1994 about the reason as to why he so abruptly did an about-face in regard to his campaign platform, President Menem smiled and said, “because if I announce what I am going to do, no one would vote for me” (García Sanz, 2013: 526). Further analysis of this government is not continued because of the aforementioned empirical evidence. Additionally, only Table 3 has two rows before-and-after power because of the radically dynamic nature of President Menem's government.



Table 2.

*Menem government*

Temporal Nature	Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
Before power	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-
After power	No	No	No	-	-

4.2 Fernando de la Rúa (1999 – 2001)

Fernando de la Ruà was center-left (Mora y Arujo, 2011; Politi, 2019). As previously explored in this thesis populism may prevail in any political spectrum so this thesis focused on investigating the prevalence of terms regarding populism that may be harmful to MERCOSUR. Investigation uncovered that President de la Ruà was one of few non-Peronist presidents (Calvo, 2019). This simple fact does immediately strike him from being populist; although, review of his party platform uncovered no indicators and syntax of nationalist or populist rhetoric (EFE, 1999; Villosio 1999). The party platform was about change: or, allegedly, opening up the Argentinian economy – not protectionist – and supporting MERCOSUR (EFE, 2009; Villosio 1999). For the aforementioned reasons, this thesis skips analysis of former-President de la Ruà’s government.

Table 3.

*de la Rúa government*

Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
No	No	No	-	-

4.3 Eduardo Alberto Duhalde (2002 – 2003) – VPG

Weeks President de la Rúa resigned – and after a slew of provisional presidents ascended to the presidency for a period of days – former-presidential candidate Duhalde was elected to the presidency by congress.

President Duhalde wasted no time in immediately drawing an antagonistic divide between “the productive” people and “the alliance that privileged the financial over the productive” (Vieira, 2002). Antagonistic divides echoed throughout his first speech as president directly defining Argentina’s people as those that are sugar workers, cotton pickers, lumberjacks and stating that he would be taking charge of the “real country” of consisting of the aforementioned national industries (Silletta, 2005: 77). Further, in an apparent effort to directly tailor his remarks, in the same speech he states, “This perverse economic model [liberalism] has wiped out everything. It made beggars of two million people and destroyed the middle class.” The antagonistic rhetoric from his acceptance speech largely followed his failed presidential campaign rhetoric. Such as when he offered justification for this rhetoric, “we’re not against more rich people; we’re against having more poor people” (Rohter, 2002). Justifiably, then-candidate Duhalde’s campaign platform was deemed populist (Corrales, 2002: 38).

Hyper-nationalist rhetoric was also exposed during his failed 1999 presidential campaign. During a campaign rally, then-presidential candidate Duhalde proclaimed that Argentinians should “buy Argentine product” and they should “look at the product labels to see if they are produced locally” offering the objective of said advice as to “avoid unemployment in Argentina and not in other countries” (Soliani & Adachi, 1999). This populist rhetoric carried over to his speech when he accepted the presidency; namely, commenting on why he advises Argentinians focus on buying Argentinian products, President Duhalde stated, “we are going to protect what we have left to start changing course, as the denationalization process has been tremendous” (Vieira, 2002).

Regarding his protectionist rhetoric, there exists plenty of empirical evidence. Again, during his failed presidential campaign, then candidate Eduardo Duhalde preached more protectionism in regard to exports from Brazil that allegedly affect Argentinian products (Soliani & Adachi, 1999). Staying true to campaign, near the beginning of his government, on approximately January 2002, President Duhalde stated “his country would abandon a ‘pervasive’ model of economic liberalization that had been adopted more than a decade prior, and that he would adopt a ‘new model’ that is more protectionist” (Oppenheimer, 2002). Further, in the same speech he proceeded to rail on allegedly “‘exhausted’ free-market economic ideas” (Rohter, 2002). Regarding the populist government’s intention to effectuate populist policies: President Duhalde’s newly designated Minister of Production delivered a protectionist-themed speech upon being installed and stated he would immediately tender the president a “draft import restriction” (Vieira, 2002).

In regard to scapegoating MERCOSUR, the evidence of rhetoric was not explicit enough to be included in this analysis; although, there was evidence of the president emphasizing the link between foreign policy issues and domestic policy issues. On February 18, 2002, the presidents of MERCOSUR member states met to sign the Olivos dispute settlement protocol. Here MERCOSUR failed to grant Argentina aid petitioned by Duhalde following the “collapse” of Argentina’s economy. In regard to this failure, President Duhalde states: “We will receive help. We are slowly getting unstuck from the damned banking freeze which has paralyzed our economy. We are slowly dismantling what can be considered a ticking time bomb which could explode at any time with terrible consequences for our people” (AP, 2002). Here the president emphasizes within MERCOSUR that the liberal world order had terrible domestic consequences. Further, on July of the same year, the New York Times reported that President Duhalde had failed to garner the support of the bloc to negotiate more credits from the IMF. In an expression of solidarity, the countries stated “concern for the current behavior of the international financial and economic systems” (Rohter, 2002). Here, the president again, within MERCOSUR. emphasizes the domestic consequences of salient foreign policy. These were, however, very special circumstances. Namely, there was a severe economic crisis in Argentina.

*Table 4.*

*Duhalde government*

Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes, but special circumstances

#### 4.4 Nestor Kirchner (2003 – 2007)

Paramio (2006) states that candidate Kirchner, riding on the coattails of the economic decline in Argentina under President Menem, did not group antagonistic sections of the population and instead took an everyone-must-evacuate-house-immediately approach. Further, Plot (2019) states that President Kirchner indirectly, not through rhetoric, drew divide between two antagonistic groups of people which was subtly inferred by policies he pursued, such as: the “municipalization of the retirement system... and universal child care allowance” (Plot, 2019). Though, these are very different things and it is unclear which sections of society are divided.

Further, in his inaugural speech he appealed to the unity of the Argentinian people (CFKArgentina, 2003). The president was not hyper-nationalist; though, he was vocally weary of multi-national corporations operating in Argentina (Diaz, 2006; Thompson, 2005). The president did not, to the best of this thesis' research, attempt to espouse rhetoric that Argentinian companies were superior. He did, however, subsidize national industries. So much so, that industrial unions commented they never felt more protected (Diaz, 2006). President Kirchner negotiated a Competitive Adaptation Mechanism ("MAC") between Brazil and that allowed for tariff measures and a temporary reduction of free trade within MERCOSUR (Simonoff, 2009; BID-INTAL, 2008). In practice, MAC was never used (BID-INTAL, 2008). Finally, he was a vocal supporter of liberalizing free trade among MERCOSUR countries (Diario Epoca, 2006). Due to the empirical evidence, President Kirchner's government is not populist and analysis will not proceed.

Table 5.

*Kirchner I government*

Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
No	No	No	-	-

#### 4.5 Christina Fernandez–Kirchner (2007 – 2015) – VPG

Empirical evidence quickly uncovers that President Christina Fernandez-Kirchner ("CFK") seems to have drawn a divide between antagonistic groups of people, in this case corporations and 'the people' of Argentina, recorded as far back as during her days as First Lady of Argentina. Lieberman (2011: 12) analyzes an anecdote offered by former-President Kirchner wherein the First Lady Fernandez-Kirchner has an epiphany regarding the Siderar S.A.I.C. crisis in Argentina. First Lady Fernandez-Kirchner ponders: "there is a crisis to pay what is owed to the workers of the Siderar company and there is no crisis to withdraw six million dollars of profitability to for that same economic group? ... we want a State that articulates the public and the private to defend workers" (Lieberman, 2011: 12). Fast forward to 2013, well into her government, the antagonistic rhetoric was still present. Speaking at a rally organized by her party, Victory Front, President Fernandez-Kirchner again comments on this antagonistic divide between corporations and 'the people' of Argentina: "what was our fate in Argentina when those who place candidates are not the people but are the hegemonic corporations and monopolies? It was a bad fate" (CFKArgentina, 2013). Further, during a speech in 2014, President Fernandez-Kirchner railed

against corporations, among other sections of society, clearly drawing a divide between those sections and the 'Argentiniens' stating: "We must not allow that [corporations] continue emptying the pockets of Argentiniens... corporations must not lie further to the Argentiniens" (La Nacion, 2014). During a presidential address in 2014, President Fernandez-Kirchner drew a divide between the bourgeoisie of Argentina and the 'national conscience' stating: "we [in Argentina] need a bourgeoisie with a national conscience, like that the industrialized countries have" (La97, 2014).

Hyper-nationalist rhetoric is apparent in the following selection of President Fernandez-Kirchner's speeches. To begin, throughout her campaign, Fernandez-Kirchner associated herself, and her team, no doubt, pushed to associate her, with the very essence of Argentine patriotism: the strength she drew from the patriotism helped her, as the grieving widow, recover from her loss to then "take the reins of the country" (Arraiz Rodríguez, 2015). So much so that Arraiz Rodríguez (2009) comments that Fernandez-Kirchner, at the time, was the new Evita – the wife of the infamous nationalist General Perón (Arraiz Rodríguez, 2015). As a testament to the intensifying of the hyper-nationalist rhetoric, President Fernandez-Kirchner addressed, during a compulsory broadcast for Argentinian mediums, the Argentinian people in 2014 after having launched a satellite into outer space. During the address she made sure to emphasize the superiority of Argentinian efforts stating: "[the] satellite was built entirely from Argentinean technology, by Argentinean professionals... I want to congratulate you" (Dubove, 2014). To further drive the hyper-nationalist point, the commentator stated, "Along with the president of 40 million Argentineans, the entire country participates in the historic launch of the ArSat-1 satellite that furthers the effort of satellite sovereignty" (Dubove, 2014).

Protectionism was immediately apparent throughout the research into President Fernandez-Kirchner. To begin, there is empirical evidence that Argentina had in 2008 imposed on Brazil non-automatic import licensing (El Pais, 2009). Brazil vocally complained during a meeting between both President Fernandez-Kirchner and President Lula because such measures were being implemented since November 2008 and for a period longer than 60 days – against WTO rules (El Pais, 2009). In 2012, Pavon (2012) theorized that because President Fernandez-Kirchner was unable to continue financing the popular subsidies that benefited her base, she may have chosen to turn to tariffs. In 2012, Paraguayans decried the measures by President Fernandez-Kirchner that forced importers to invest in Argentina or to purchase Argentine products before being granted leave to import products. In a tit-for-tat measure, Paraguayans imposed burdensome administrative measures against Argentine importers due to President Fernandez-Kirchner's measures (Pavon, 2012). In March 2012, Paraguayan legislators urged Paraguayan

President Fernando Lugo to denounce Argentina before the WTO for the protectionist measures that same country had implemented (LMNeuquen, 2012). That same year, President Fernandez-Kirchner threw her support behind “approach of ‘buy local,’ committing the country to a closed economy in which there are clear winners and losers” (Wharton, 2012). In addition vocally supporting the aforementioned position, in 2012, President Fernandez-Kirchner imposed measures such as “quotas;... no[n-]automatic import licensing....; applications for compensation for tariffs;... increases in the common external tariff imposed on 100 industrial products covered by the rules of MERCOSUR” (Wharton, 2012). President Fernandez-Kirchner also made it near impossible to buy foreign currency and imposed a 15% tax on use of Argentine credit cards abroad as a measure designed to incentivize Argentinians to travel locally (Wharton, 2012).

Regarding emphasizing the salience of foreign policy issues, President Fernandez-Kirchner found in MERCOSUR a medium of expression for the internal matters of Argentina. The Malvinas Islands have been a point of contention for Argentina for centuries, and Argentina continues to claim sovereignty over the islands. Accordingly, President Fernandez-Kirchner has ensured that the matter specific to Argentina was discussed in the intergovernmental cooperation effort. On December 20, 2011, the president managed to get her trading partners within MERCOSUR to declare a blockade of civilian ships flying the “illegal” British Falkland’s flag from MERCOSUR ports (Rodriguez-Ferrand, 2011; The Economist, 2011). Here, the populist president is clearly using MERCOSUR to emphasize the salience of the foreign policy issue, the Malvinas Islands, and its link to domestic policy, i.e. the continued claim of sovereignty over the islands.

*Table 6.*

*Kirchner II government*

Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

#### 4.6 Mauricio Macri (2015 – 2019)

President Mauricio Macri did not antagonize between groups of the Argentinian population; in fact, the then-candidate Macri ran a platform that aimed to, among other things: include all sectors of the Agroindustry in regard to decision-making (Prensa fyo, 2015); include deductions for the children of taxpayers under the simplified tax regime (Matías & Sohr, 2019); and, unite Argentines

(Telam, 2015). The newly-elected president also called for the Argentinian people to learn ‘the art of finding common ground’ among themselves during his first presidential address to the Argentinian people (Eitb, 2015). Hyper-nationalist rhetoric was largely absent from his speeches, to the best of the research knowledge of this thesis. Protectionist rhetoric was not a trait for President Macri: he publicly supported reduction of MERCOSUR’s common tariff (Chabay, 2019); and, eliminated, among other tariffs, the 35% tariff on IT products (El Economista, 2017; Schwarze, 2017). Due to the aforementioned empirical evidence, analysis of President Macri’s government does not proceed.

*Table 7.*

*Macri government*

Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
No	No	No	-	-

#### 4.7 Conclusion

To conclude, of the six Argentinian governments from 1991-2019 that had an opportunity to interact with the bloc for more than one year, only President Duhalde and President Fernandez-Kirchner’s were deemed VPGs.

## 5. Analysis of Brazil

This chapter will focus on Brazil's following seven heads of state and their corresponding governments: 1) Fernando Collor de Mello; 2) Itamar Franco; 3) Fernando Henrique Cardoso; 4) Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva; 5) Dilma Rousseff; 6) Michel Temer; and, 7) Jair Bolsonaro.

### 5.1 Fernando Collor de Mello (1990 – 1992)

As candidate, Fernando Collor de Mello blamed the rich for Brazil's troubles; he promised to wane the country off the course that the "political and business elites" had steered the country towards (The New York Times, 1990). While campaigning, then-candidate Collor clearly drew a divide between two antagonist sections of the Brazilian population by conjuring the image of a wealthy Indian prince and assigned it squarely to bureaucrats that – he alleged – lived this privileged lifestyle as opposed to the regular Brazilians (Brooke, 1989). It was fitting for the candidate to use this parallel as his initial fame came from his previous campaign for Governor through which he attacked "overpaid state bureaucrats" (Brooke, 1989). Once elected, President Collor de Mello promised to reduce tariffs for raw materials and most manufactured goods and to gradually eliminate protectionist legislation (Brooke, 1990a; Brooke 1990b). Thus, he was definitely not protectionist. Notably, nationalist rhetoric was largely absent, to the best of this thesis' research. Due to the aforementioned empirical evidence, President Collor de Mello's government is quasi-populist and analysis is not continued.

*Table 8.*

*de Mello government*

Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
Yes	No	No	-	-

### 5.2 Itamar Franco (1992 – 1995)

President Itamar Franco rose to power in 1992 following the impeachment of Fernando Collor de Mello; therefore, campaign material does not exist. Though, evidence exists that the president did not deploy rhetoric to divide sections of the Brazilian population into allegedly antagonistic sections. For example, in his first speech as president he specifically assured all Brazilians that he would promote their well-being "without preconceptions or discrimination of any kind"



(Biblioteca Presidência da República, 1992: 34). The president motivated solidarity among the Latin American population (Biblioteca Presidência da República, 1993: 55). The president was initially weary and objected to the liberalization plans he inherited though he begrudgingly continued with them (Sallum & Palacios, 2000: 751). Accordingly, after a slow start, he endeavored to effectuate privatization programs and to open the Brazilian economy to foreign investment – following the advice of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, his finance minister (Silva, N.D.). Further, research into President Franco’s government did not uncover evidence of hyper-nationalist rhetoric.

*Table 9.*

*Franco government*

Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
No	No	No	-	-

### 5.3 Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995 – 2003)

Research into President Fernando Henrique Cardoso uncovers that as newly-elected president he drew a divide between two alleged antagonistic sections of the Brazilian people. In his inaugural speech, he re-iterated that he would rule for everyone – though, he seems to define ‘everyone’ as not just the few with privilege, and communicates his intent to end the privileges of the few in order to do justice to the majority of Brazilians (Folha de S.Paulo, 1995). In his re-election inaugural address, the president drew a divide between the privileged of Brazil that unjustly claimed hegemony over “public opinion” that did not include the “silent majority” of “workers unions, churches, social movements” (Presidência da República, 1999). Though, President Cardoso renounced nationalist rhetoric during a speech to the Portuguese parliament in favor of “institutional normality... to [resume] dialogue with the world” (Ministério Das Relações Exteriores, 2000). In regard to protectionist rhetoric, during the campaign, then-candidate Cardoso promised to continue opening up Brazil’s economy (Brooke, 1994). Thus, further analysis is also not continued.

Table 10.

*Collor government*

Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
Yes	No	No	-	-

5.4 Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003 – 2011)

Evidence that President Lula da Silva repeatedly drew a divide between the allegedly antagonistic ‘elites’ and the ‘people’ of Brazil is resounding. President Lula da Silva directly blamed the elites for: 1) not accepting a ‘metalworker’ as president (Bragon, 2010); 2) for the economic collapse of Brazil (Financial Times, 2010); and, 3) for perpetuating oppression of Brazilians in regard to obtaining education (Globo, 2010). In regard to protectionism, the president largely continued former-President Cardoso’s neoliberal policies of opening up the Brazilian economy (Bernal-Meza, 2010: 193). Further, President Lula da Silva also sharply denounced returning to protectionism in both 2008 stating temptation to return to protectionism must be avoided and in 2009 stating protectionism must be alleviated (Efe, 2008; Redacción Río Negro, 2009). Hyper-nationalist rhetoric was a staple of the president’s speech. Notably, he regularly railed previous governments for subservience to developed countries (Otempo, 2007) – alluding to Brazil’s superiority and for being ‘negligent’ in fighting for Brazil’s interests (Folha de S.Paulo, 2004); and, used the an appearance in front of the state-owned Petrobras to spouse nationalist rhetoric regarding exclusively Brazilian oil production (Da Redação, 2010). Due to the aforementioned empirical evidence, President Lula da Silva’s government is quasi-populist.

Table 11.

*Lula da Silva government*

Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
Yes	Yes	No	-	-

5.5 Dilma Rousseff (2011 – 2016) – VPG

In this analysis President Dilma Rousseff party, the Workers’ Party, is important. It is known for appealing to the ‘common people’ fighting against a ‘corrupt system’ (Beauchamp, 2016); and as the defenders of ‘the people’ that search for solutions that could help these same ‘poor’ and

'socially excluded' (Antunes, 2019) – excluded, presumptively from an allegedly antagonistic affluent class. During her reelection campaign, Rousseff's team framed Aécio Neves as the 'rich' 'ruling class' that was inherently antagonistic to the real Brazilian people – it is notable to state that analysts theorized that this divide was exclusively constructed by the Rousseff campaign during the reelection cycle (Phillips, 2014) – presumably under the direction of the candidate.

President Rousseff's hyper-nationalist rhetoric is not as blatant as other Brazilian presidents; although, there does exist limited evidence of her underlying hyper-nationalism in rhetoric and policy-making. The president seems to have leaned into nationalist rhetoric when making an appearance at the state-owned Petrobras while unveiling a new oil rigging platform stating: "There are 56 thousand tons of steel, but what we must admire is that it was Brazilian arms that built this platform. What Brazil can produce will be produced in Brazil. We have the capacity for that. We want every piece to be produced in Brazil" (Biblioteca Presidência da República, 2011). Further, when commenting on policy measures her government had implemented to help incentivize competitiveness of Brazilian industries, the president justified her defense of Brazilian industries in the face of 'disloyal' and 'predatory' international competition (Vales, 2012).

President Dilma's protectionist rhetoric, in addition to the justification of protectionist measures in the aforementioned speech that exposed hyper-nationalist cleavages, is evident through the policy measures her government pursued. In October 2011, President Dilma's government felt compelled to unilaterally impose an import tariff of 30% on automobiles with less than 65% production within MERCOSUR (El Cronista, 2011). This, on its face, may seem not protectionist due to the MERCOSUR caveat, but Uruguay did not comply with this caveat which inherently placed the imports from this country in an unfavorable position (El Cronista, 2011). Further, in April 2012, President Dilma's government pursued policies to subsidize Brazilian products, which, an analyst commenting on the president's policy stated, "Subsidizing Brazilian products even if they are 25 percent more expensive than imported products is clearly protectionism" (Portfolio, 2012).

In regard to scapegoating MERCOSUR and emphasizing the salience of foreign policy issues, research into President Rousseff's government did not uncover such evidence. Research did uncover evidence that President Rousseff credits MERCOSUR with Latin American integration efforts and with growing trade among member states at a rate higher than the average rate of the world at the time (El Once, 2014).

Table 12.

Rousseff government

Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-

5.6 Michel Temer (2016 – 2018)

President Michel Temer rose to power after the impeachment of former-President Rousseff so the analysis of this government is limited regarding campaign material. In regard to the president potentially drawing an antagonistic divide, terms such as “the people” “the elite” “bourgeoise” “majority” “minority” “majority” “privilege” and “speech” manifested irrelevant results. The only notable speech was of the president flaunting labor modernization legislation through which he states that the aforementioned legislation is a legacy for ‘all Brazilians’ (Presidência da República, 2017). Terms for hyper-nationalist rhetoric manifested similarly irrelevant results. The only notable speech was of the president framing Brazil’s state-owned company, Petrobras, as the “benchmark for professionalism in Brazil and in the world” (Brandão and Chagas, 2017); although, this single piece of empirical evidence in the absence of more supporting evidence must not prove the president was hyper-nationalist. Further, President Temer rose to power as a free-market, pro-business, anti-spending – as opposed to Rousseff – centrist that did not espouse protectionist rhetoric (Durando and Hjelmgaard, 2016). Thus, analysis will not continue.

Table 13.

Temer government

Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
No	No	No	-	-

5.7 Jair Bolsonaro (2019 – present) – VPG

President Bolsonaro is a resounding populist. To begin with, President Bolsonaro rose in popularity on the coattails of the carwash scandal regarding construction contracts which enthralled various seasoned political members of Brazil (Mounk & Kyle, 2018). Using the scandal, he campaigned on an anti-corruption platform and framed himself as the chosen advocate on

behalf of 'the people' to rid the country of 'corruption' (Kossow, 2019: 5). Chueri (2018) found that then-candidate Bolsonaro "attacks political elites, accuses them of corruption, and blames them for the economic and political crises" (Chueri, 2018: 2) which, in the opinion of this study, inherently draws a divide. Further, also while campaigning, he spoke of "wiping" and "cleansing" his political opponents off the map (Stewart, 2019). President Bolsonaro's alleged antagonistic groups of the Brazilian population are not limited to the seasoned political members of Brazil. While addressing the United Nations General Assembly ("UNGA"), the president framed non-governmental organizations as 'others' and antagonistic to the real Brazilians, which, in this case, where the native peoples of the territory now known as Brazil (UN News, 2019). In this same speech, the president, oddly, frames Brazilian socialists as antagonistic to those Brazilians who value the family and religion (Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 2019).

As a testament to his hyper-nationalist tendencies, the rallying cry for then-candidate Bolsonaro was, "Brazil above all else," a disappointing nod to other hyper-nationalist and blatantly racist regimes throughout history (Benner, 2018). In a stark change to Brazilian culture, the national anthem, which had previously been reserved for soccer games, was made a symbol of the candidate's campaign and was played upon his election (Faiola & Lopes, 2018). As president, Bolsonaro, while addressing UNGA, or the international community, alluded to the sheer size, and alleged superiority of Brazil, when he commented on the West's strict admonishment of his government's policy towards the Amazon which, in his opinion, allegedly encroached on Brazil's sovereignty: "Our Amazonian region is larger than all of Western Europe and remains virtually pristine and untouched, which is evidence of the fact that we are one of the countries that most protect the environment" (Ekmanis, 2019). On the campaign trail, he regularly railed against China repeatedly saying, with a sense of patronizing incredulity, that the Chinese must not own key Brazilian industries (Spring, 2018). As a rallying cry from the nationalist gut, then-candidate Bolsonaro stated, "The Chinese are not **buying in Brazil**. They are **buying Brazil**" (Spring, 2018).

In addition to Bolsonaro's aforementioned rhetoric against China, that may also be interpreted as protectionist, which China certainly interpreted as so when the nation dispatched diplomats to meet with the candidate's advisors. Further evidence of protectionist rhetoric was also found within then-candidate Bolsonaro's campaign; notably, the then-presidential candidate promised to end free trade of bananas with Ecuador to protect Brazil's national banana industry. In December 2019, President Bolsonaro's government imposed non-automatic import licenses for flour imports into Brazil. Argentina's grain industry was quick to comment on the measure: Diego Cifarelli, President of the Argentine Federation of the Grain Industry expressed hope that

the measure was a mistake, that it would be resolved, and that it would ultimately not apply to Argentina (Mira, 2019).

In blunt terms, President Bolsonaro’s Economy minister directly scapegoated MERCOSUR stating, “MERCOSUR restricts Brazil too much” (Magalhaes, 2019). Bolsonaro, from his election, has pressed to have a more flexible trading bloc that may allow member countries to effectuate unilateral deals with third states outside of the bloc’s acquis (Flak, 2019) – however fundamentally unreasonable this position is, in the opinion of this study, because trade blocs are meant to unify a bloc with a single voice, which is undermined with unilateral agreements by individual member states.

President Bolsonaro uses MERCOSUR as an international medium through which his foreign policy may be disseminated in a larger medium to then be reflected back to domestic policy. Brazil’s relations with USA best exemplify this. In response to U.S. President Donald Trump’s threats of halting steel from Argentina and Brazil due to MERCOSUR’s allegedly unfavorable external tariff for US products, President Bolsonaro, during Brazil’s presidency of the CMC, coincidentally advocated for a reduction of MERCOSUR’s common external tariff contrary to his aforementioned protectionist leaning (Guido, 2019). Analysts expressed incredulity but theorized that the president’s counter-intuitive position may be explained by his government’s attempts to deepen relations with the US, and to rid Brazil of a trading bloc the government sees as a “bondage” (Guido, 2019).

*Table 14.*

*Bolsonaro government*

Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

## 5.8 Conclusion

To conclude, of the seven Brazilian governments in power from 1991-2019 that had an opportunity to interact with the bloc for more than one year, only President Rousseff and President Bolsonaro’s were deemed VPGs.

## 6. Analysis of Paraguay

This chapter will focus on Paraguay's following seven heads of state and their corresponding governments: 1) Andrés Rodríguez; 2) Juan Carlos Wasmosy; 3) Luis Ángel González Macchi; 4) Nicanor Duarte; 5) Fernando Lugo; 6) Horacio Cartes; and, 7) Abdo Benítez. President Rodríguez's, Wasmosy's and Macchi's governments will be jointly discussed because of their similarities. President Lugo's and President Duarte's governments will also be jointly discussed, as will President Cartes' and President Martínez's governments.

### 6.1 Andrés Rodríguez, Juan Carlos Wasmosy, Gonzalez Macchi (1989 – 2003)

Before explaining President Rodríguez's government, his party's background, the Colorado Party, is important to briefly analyze because the direction it takes after the coup against the authoritarian leader, Stroessner, has implications for the following three governments. Accordingly, the Colorado party was fundamentally nationalist, with "*Lopizta*" being the specific brand of nationalism that roughly stemmed from the Paraguayan war in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Monteoliva Doratioto, 2002: 19-20). After a bout of both civilian and authoritarian leaders, Stroessner 'inherited' and 'modified' the Colorado Party's nationalist roots for use during his rule from 1954 to 1989 (Monteoliva Doratioto, 2002: 20). During this time Stroessner was preoccupied with, "promoting the authoritarian and militaristic ideology of Lopizta nationalism, that became the official ideology of the Stronista rule" (Monteoliva Doratioto, 2002: 21). This was the case until the coup by General Andrés Rodríguez.

General Andrés Rodríguez was also a member of the Colorado Party, which is important to note given that he staged a coup against his own party with the help of the CIA (Quintana Taborga, 2016: 152-153). Sondrol (1992, 1997), though, finds that General Rodríguez staged a coup not so much because he believed in the rule of law and democratic principles, but because he recognized authoritarian regimes were unsustainable amidst a changing international environment of democratization (Sondrol, 1992: 138; Sondrol, 1997: 116). Succinctly put, something had to change so that nothing would change (Sondrol, 1997: 116).

After a successful coup, the general called for elections under the same democratically oppressive system that basically guaranteed his election as president (Rodríguez, 1991: 49-55; Quintana Taborga: 153). During this time the hyper-nationalist "*Lopizta*" nationalism retrofitted by Stroessner was resoundingly rejected by the Paraguayan electorate (Brooke, 1991). Against this backdrop, while analyzing the empirical evidence, it is intuitive that President Rodríguez drew a

conciliatory tone in his inaugural address: he stressed the unity of ‘all Paraguayans’ from social groups (Misión Presidencial Latinoamericana, 2012) and only drew patriotic, non-hyper-nationalist, undertones to comment on the beauty of the Paraguayan people (Comas, 1989). In regard to protectionism: he was not a protectionist. This is evidenced by his widely documented leaning towards neoliberal policies (Abc, 2002; Uharte Pozas, 2010: 2001; Morales & McMahon, 1996: 174). Among these neoliberal policies was the opening of the economy to foreign investment (Morales & McMahon, 1996: 174).

Both President Wasmosy and President Macchi belonged to the same Colorado Party and largely followed suit. In President Wasmosy’s inaugural speech, he called for dialogue and for the union of all sections of the Paraguayan society (Gonzalez, 2013). President Macchi was confirmed into the presidency by congress and faced civil unrest and coup attempts; although, in his speech to the nation regarding the failed coup he placed the blame squarely on “temporary insanity” and on the coup leader, Lino Oviedo (La Nacion, 2000). Both presidents also largely continued the neoliberal policies enacted by President Rodriguez (Abc, 2002; Bandeira, 2002: 139; NovaPolis, 2002: 54). Scarce empirical evidence manifested when terms that expose hyper-nationalist rhetoric for either presidents were used. Again, this is largely in line with post-Stroessner trajectory of the Colorado party regarding nationalism.

Table 15.

Rodriguez, Wasmosy, and Macchi governments

President	Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
Rodriguez	No	No	No	-	-
Wasmosy	No	No	No	-	-
Macchi	No	No	No	-	-

## 6.2 Nicanor Duarte, Fernando Lugo (2003 – 2012)

Despite being from the same Colorado party as his predecessors, President Duarte absolutely despised the neoliberal model, going as far as calling it ‘the devil;’ deeming ‘the Washington consensus’ a failure; and calling neoliberal thought ‘idiotic (Lambert, 2006; López Göttig, 2007; Vargas Quiroz, 2007). Further, empirical evidence suggests that President Duarte drew a divide at points in his government between ‘the few’ and ‘the privileged’ for whom previous presidents and governments governed and the ‘the starving millions’ and the underprivileged’ that did not



benefit (La Nacion, 2003; Lambert, 2006). The president favored state intervention in the economy, ‘just’ economic conditions for workers, and ensuring development within Paraguay before inserting it into the international market for competition (Granato, et. al., 2016: 76; Morinigo, 2003: 8-9; Red Voltaire, 2006). He was not hyper-nationalist; although, he was, at times, patriotic about the nation and about the native pre-Hispanic language, but did not attempt to espouse superiority (Süselbeck, et. al., 2008: 387; Ultima Hora, 2008). He continued with the break from hyper-nationalism that was initiated by former-President Rodriguez, and even changed course to declare the party “socialist humanist” (Colmán, 2007).

President Lugo, the first non-Colorado party head of state, campaigned on redistributive policies aimed at the poor of Paraguay (Barrionuevo, 2008; Lopez, 2010: 91; Rojas Villagra, 2009). In and of itself, redistributive policies absolutely do not qualify as him drawing an antagonistic divide between sectors of the population; although, the content of his inaugural speech is telling. In his speech he draws divide between a ‘secretive’ ‘corrupt’ Paraguay led by the Colorado party and the ‘people’ (Ultima Hora, 2008). After being declared victor he framed himself as one of ‘the little guys’ along with his supporters and stated that little guys are also worthy of victory (El Espectador, 2008). Protectionist policies and draft policies were uncovered by investigation. On or around March 2009, Hispanic media reported that an executive order was being prepared to increase tariffs against Argentina and Brazil (ÉLogística, 2009). Further, in July 2009, the president signed an executive order increasing tariffs wherein he specifically states his government has found it necessary to protect the domestic clothing industry (Lugo, 2009).

Table 16.

*Duarte and Lugo governments*

President	Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
Duarte	Yes	No	Yes	-	-
Lugo	Yes	No	Yes	-	-

### 6.3 Horacio Cartes, Abdo Benitez (2013 – Present)

President Horacio Cartes did not draw a divide between allegedly antagonistic sectors of Paraguayan society. In his inauguration speech alone, he appealed to all Paraguayans at least four times stating that he wanted to, “earn the trust of all Paraguayans” “treasure the heart and

minds of all Paraguayans” that “my government will not exclude people” and that “the market will be in charge of including all of those socially excluded” (Cappelli, 2013; Centro de Informacion de las Naciones Unidas, 2013; La Vanguardia, 2013; Soares, 2015). President Cartes pandered to international investments various times throughout his time in power (Cappelli, 2013; Soares, 2015). He disparaged his own country saying to would-be foreign investors, “I want you to feel at home. Use and abuse Paraguay” (Martin & Spinetto, 2016). Further, he made sexist and disparaging remarks to potential investors, stating, “Paraguay is an easy and pretty woman” (Lezcano, 2016).

President Benitez did not draw a divide between allegedly antagonistic sectors of Paraguayan society. In his inaugural speech he reiterated he was seeking unity for Paraguayans (Carneri & Londoño, 2018). A year into his government, during a state ceremony he again reiterated that unity is required of the Paraguayan people to weather any storms (Ministerio de Tecnologias de la Infomacion y Comunicacion, 2019). Further, after Paraguayans complained about the unfavorable negotiation of the Itaipú treaty – between Brazil and Paraguay regarding the joint energy enterprise between both countries – the president again endeavored to include all sectors of the Paraguayan society when renegotiating the treaty (Hoy, 2019). Regarding the same treaty, the president was accused of not serving the national interest (Nickson, 2019), being secretive (Elder, 2019), and the Catholic church even pleaded that the president showed limited levels of patriotism while representing Paraguay (Ultima Hora, 2019). Also, the president seems to be effectuating his platform of making Paraguay open and attractive to foreign investors (Carneri & Londoño, 2018; Ministerio de Tecnologias de la Infomacion y Comunicacion, 2019).

*Table 17.*

*Cartes and Benitez governments*

President	Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
Cartes	No	No	No	-	-
Benitez	No	No	No	-	-

## 6.4 Conclusion

To conclude, of the seven Panamanian governments in power throughout from 1991-2019 MERCOSUR's that had an opportunity to interact with the bloc for more than one year, none were deemed VPGs.

## 7. Analysis of Uruguay

This chapter will focus jointly on Uruguay's seven heads of state and their corresponding governments since none of them were identified to be VPGs by empirical evidence: 1) Luis Alberto Lacalle; 2) Julio María Sanguinetti; 3) Jorge Battlle; 4) Tabare Vazquez; 5) José Mujica; and, 6) Tabaré Vázquez. The aforementioned governments will be briefly and jointly discussed in the following "all governments" section.

### 7.1 All governments (1990 – 2019)

President Lacalle's did not draw an antagonistic divide. He reached across the aisle to form alliances because when he was elected his party did not possess a legislative majority (Bonasegna, 1989; Kamm, 1990). In his victory speech, he clearly stated he would attempt to include all sectors of the social and political societies in Uruguay (Reuters, 1989). Additionally, his agenda was focused on liberalizing the economy and attracting foreign investment – not protectionist (Christian, 1990; Mendo, 1990; OxResearch Daily Briefing Service, 1990; Torres Gómez, 2019). Further, terms regarding hyper-nationalist rhetoric did not manifest empirical evidence.

President Sanguinetti, likewise, was forced to reach across the aisle to form a coalition government in which 'antagonisms were difficult' (Aznárez, 1994). President Sanguinetti was a cautious nationalist (The Economist, 1994); though, search for hyper-nationalist terms in his speeches rendered irrelevant results. Also, the president was not protectionist: Fanapel and Lacaze (2017) found that economic liberalization and the opening of Uruguay's economy were both furthered during President Sanguinetti's government (Fanapel & Lacaze, 2017: 49). Similar to former-President Lacalle, terms regarding hyper-nationalist rhetoric did not manifest themselves.

President Battlle did not draw a divide between allegedly antagonistic sections of the Uruguayan population. In his inaugural speech he highlighted his history of support in public service for all Uruguayans (Presidencia de la República Oriental de Uruguay, 2001a). In this same speech he committed himself to including all sectors of the Uruguayan society (LaRed21, 2005), and pushed for peace among all Uruguayans (Clarín, 2000). Regarding nationalist rhetoric: on or around April 2001, during a speech at a seminary organized by Japan's chamber of commerce, he highlighted Uruguay's tiny size, twice, and offered a sarcastic joke about Uruguay's superiority in raising sheep (Presidencia de la República Oriental de Uruguay, 2001b). The president was also not protectionist, he regularly pushed for lowering MERCOSUR's common tariff and warned

against the dangers of protectionism (Colitt, 2001; Presidencia de la República Oriental de Uruguay, 2001c; Presidencia de la República Oriental de Uruguay, 2001d).

The Vazquez I and Vazquez II governments were similar in that they were both not hyper-nationalist and not protectionist; although, they were different in that the Vazquez I government drew divides between allegedly antagonistic sections of Uruguayan society. It did so by alleging a divide between both ‘the delinquent bankers’ and the ‘corrupt government’ and the Uruguayan people (Guerrero 2004; Presidencia de la República Oriental de Uruguay, 2005). Terms uncovered empirical evidence of President Vazquez expressing pride for being Uruguayan, but not in the sense of espousing superiority because of being Uruguayan (Alvarez, 2004; Rojas, 2004). The president was also fiercely committed to advancing free trade within MERCOSUR and outside of it (IADB, 2006: 125).

Empirical evidence uncovers that President Mujica definitely drew a divide between ‘the rich’ and ‘the poor,’ ‘the government’s unfavorable policies’ and their effect on ‘the common man,’ ‘rich people’ as being ‘anti-humanity,’ and ‘aristocrats’ that despise ‘the common man’ (Álvarez Quevedo, 2013; Cidob, 2015: 12; Radio Centenario, 2013; Fairbanks, 2015). In regard to hyper-nationalism, as proof of due diligence, and in an interview with a Spanish medium, President Mujica was humble when speaking about his country saying “my country is small” and in no sense did he attempt to assert a sense of Uruguayan superiority (Rtve, 2013). Terms regarding hyper-nationalist rhetoric did not manifest any other or further empirical evidence. President Mujica was also not a protectionist: he complained twice about his fellow member states, Argentina and Brazil, imposing protectionist policies (El Cronista, 2011; Jubilla, 2013), and also tried to incentivize investment by assuring would-be investors that Uruguay is a safe to invest in (Rtve, 2013; Wurgaft, 2011).

*Table 18.*

*All Uruguay governments*

President	Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
Lacalle	No	No	No	-	-
Sanguinetti	No	No	No	-	-
Batlle	No	No	No	-	-
Vazquez I	Yes	No	No	-	-
Mujica	Yes	No	No	-	-
Vázquez II	No	No	No	-	-

## 7.2 Conclusion

To conclude, of the seven Uruguayan governments in power from 1991-2019 that had an opportunity to interact with the bloc for more than one year none were deemed VPGs.

## 8. Analysis of Venezuela

This chapter will focus on Venezuela's sole head of state during membership in MERCOSUR: Nicolas Maduro.

### 8.1 Nicolas Maduro (2013 – 2017) – VPG

Empirical evidence for President Nicolas Maduro was plentiful in regard to drawing a divide between Venezuelan society. To begin, the president refers to the rich of Venezuela as 'pelucones' which roughly translates to big-wigs. This term uncovered empirical evidence of instances where the president blames big-wigs for the unjust distribution of wealth under the neoliberal model these bigwigs peddle (Noticias Venezuela, 2014). In another instance, after taking office on or around 2013, he demonizes the former-presidential candidate for being part of the Venezuelan bourgeoisie and for allegedly being part of the slew of former presidential candidates that have lied and taken advantage of the Venezuelan people's ignorance (Multimedia VTV, 2014). Further, Vommaro & Arenas (2016) find that President Maduro uses the phrase, "We must fight against the big-wigs that hate the people!" when he incites a cult-like following of former-President Chavez (Vommaro & Arenas, 2016: 18).

Regarding hyper-nationalism, in his inauguration speech on or around 2013, the president railed against neighboring country governments for allegedly being satellite USA governments peddling imperialism. After launching such accusations, the president then proceeds to patronize the aforementioned neighboring governments and to imply that Venezuela would stay the course with its system of government and its 'revolutionary' spirit (BBC News Mundo, 2019). President Maduro also explicitly comments on the alleged superiority of Venezuela's system of governance – which was effectuated by former-President Chavez – over that of the west's neoliberal system during a presidential address (Noticias Venezuela, 2014). To support their claims of superiority, originating from the state coup in 1992, leaders have framed Simon Bolivar as a quasi-divine figure. The nationalist revolutionary spirit, according to Alonso (2017) was fabricated after the coup to attempt to ensure cohesion among the Venezuelan people.

From 2013, as negative effects of Venezuela's protectionist policies – such as food shortages due to the lack of imports of products (Fernández, 2017) – began to take toll, Venezuelan economic analysts blamed foreign exchange controls that had been implemented by the late President Chavez, and held by President Maduro, and that, allegedly, unmotivated investors to engage with the Venezuelan market (Fernández, 2017). Protectionist demeanor was also evident upon investigation. There exists evidence of non-tariff barriers such as government overreach into private-sector matters; specifically, on or around August 2017, President Maduro

ordered private telecommunication companies, including the Spanish company Movistar, to re-evaluate their decision to increase the price of their services in light of fleeting inflation (Lucas, 2017). This, combined with a trend of artificially keeping prices of products and services below cost (Fernández, 2017) may lend validity to Lucas’s (2017) assertion that government overreach may impede companies updating already aging telecommunications equipment in Venezuela. Regarding Venezuela’s protectionism within MERCOSUR: on the eve of Venezuela’s expulsion from the trading bloc, analysts in Latin America keenly emphasized that Venezuela had failed to adopt fully MERCOSUR legislation that enables tariff-free trade among member states, and within the bloc (Garcia Marco, 2016). Analysts also specifically signaled Venezuela as protectionist (Garcia Marco, 2016; El Montero, 2016).

The president did not scapegoat MERCOSUR. In fact, he was in favor of it. He went as far as to state that, “Venezuela is MERCOSUR, the heart, the head, and the mind of MERCOSUR is here in the Bolivarian Republic (teleSUR – JDM, 2016). President Maduro also attributed to MERCOSUR the characteristic of being the vanguard of regional integration (El Once, 2014). As evidence of the importance the president attributed to MERCOSUR, his government fought hard to assume, and ultimately lost, the rotating Presidency of MERCOSUR (DW, 2016).

President Maduro emphasized the salience of his anti-USA foreign policy within MERCOSUR on the eve of Venezuela’s expulsion from the trading bloc. This study infers that, in line with his anti-USA stance, the president acknowledged that MERCOSUR brought immediate benefits to his constituents and stated that not only did member states want to wrongly suspend Venezuela from MERCOSUR, but, “[the other member states] want to finish MERCOSUR and surrender it to USA by and through a free trade agreement” (teleSUR – JDM, 2016), this in and of itself is an emphasis of a foreign policy and its link to domestic policy, i.e. the foreign policy outside of my control will affect the domestic benefits MERCOSUR brought.

Table 19.

*Maduro government*

Antagonistic divide	Hyper-nationalist	Protectionist	Scapegoat MERCOSUR	Emphasize the salience
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes



# 9. Analysis of effect, discussion of findings

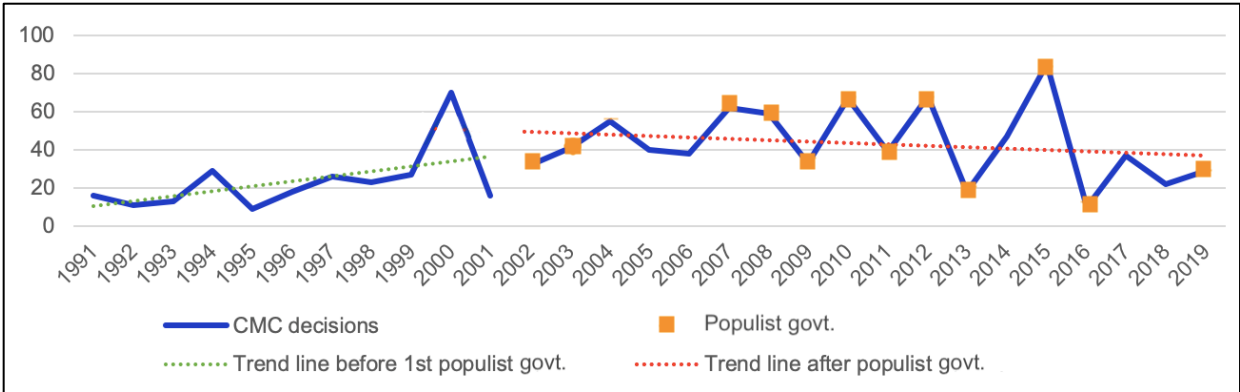
This chapter turns to analysis of the dependent variable by investigating the five VPGs and their possible effect on MERCOSUR through the number of CMC decisions issued from 1991 to 2019. This study contends that falling CMC decisions may be evidence of stonewalling on the part of VPGs. Accordingly, this chapter will analyze the data itself regarding the dependent variable from 1991-2019, CMC decision trends before and after the first VPG in 2002, the intersection between CMC decisions and VPGs, and modulating mechanisms and the change in CMC decisions.

## 9.1 CMC decisions from 1991 – 2019 & trend before and after populist governments

Figure 3 depicts the data regarding the dependent variable from 1991 – present as well as the trend of CMC decisions before and after the election of the first VPG in 2002. The trend, in green hue, depicts that decisions were increasing. This study carefully contends that this means intergovernmental cooperation was also increasing. Election of the very-populist President Duhalde in 2002 kickstarts a clear downward trend, depicted in Figure 3 in red hue, in the amount of CMC decisions that continues to President Fernandez-Kirchner in 2007, and onto the remaining very-populist in power in 2019, President Bolsonaro. This study finds with great caution that the effect of populist governments, generally, has been that CMC decisions have tended to decrease after the very first populist government and throughout the four other VPGs. Thus, analysis finds favorable empirical evidence regarding expectation one.

Figure 2.

CMC decisions from 1991 – 2019 & trend before and after VPGs



Source: own analysis.

## 9.2 Intersection of amount of VPGs, and CMC decisions

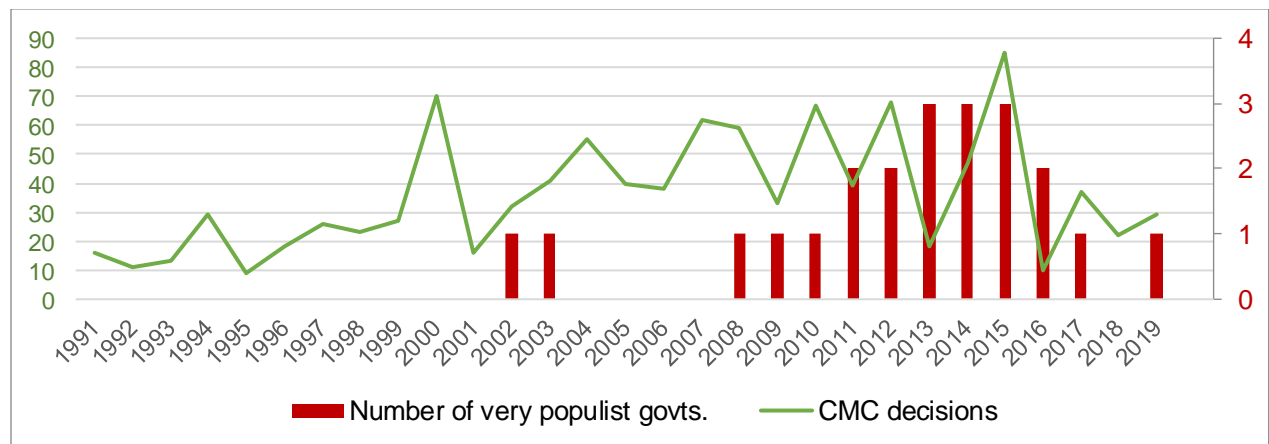
In Figure 4 four of the six violent drops in CMC decisions happened during the government of one or more VPGs and two of the instances of lowest CMC decisions were issued while three VPGs were in power.

The number of CMC decisions dropped violently six times in: 1995, 2001, 2009, 2011, 2013, and, 2016. Four of the six violent drops from 2009 to 2016 happened during the VPGs of President Fernandez-Kirchner, President Rousseff, and President Maduro. The literature review uncovered that MERCOSUR is driven forward by the will of the presidents of each member state and the fact that the four violent drops from 2000 to 2016 happened while VPGs were in power speaks to the destabilizing effect the three VPGs had on intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR.

Figure 4 also depicts that in 2013 and 2016, severe instability in the number of CMC decisions issued – which also led to the lowest number of CMC decisions ever in the bloc in 2016 – during the governments of the very-populist President Fernandez-Kirchner, President Rousseff, and President Maduro. Notably, President Maduro had just been elected in 2013, while both President Fernandez-Kirchner and President Rousseff had been interacting with MERCOSUR for six years and two years, respectively. The highest number of decisions in MERCOSUR also happened in 2015; although this study finds, with great caution, that the presence of all three VPGs in 2013 may at least have contributed to both violent drop in CMC decisions. This study also carefully finds that, at the very least, both President Fernandez-Kirchner and President Rousseff’s VPGs – which interacted more time with MERCOSUR prior to President Maduro’s election – may have contributed to the violent drop in 2013.

Figure 3.

CMC decisions and VPGs by year



Source: own analysis.

### 9.3 Average CMC decisions before and during

VPGs had a negative effect generally on the trend of CMC decisions from starting from the time the first VPG took power in 2002 to 2019; although specific analysis of each eligible VPG is necessary.

Figure 5 averages CMC decisions during the complete term, i.e., all years in-power, of the government prior to the VPG. To be eligible to be included in this sub-section the populist government must follow a previous government that also interacted with MERCOSUR. For example, in the case of Venezuela, there is no “before” in regard to years of decisions. Further, the president must have completed his or her respective term because this study does not draw conclusions from incomplete data. Thus, the VPGs of President Maduro and President Bolsonaro are ineligible for analysis.

As depicted in Figure 5, both very-populist President Duhalde and President Rousseff’s respective governments had a negative effect on the average amount of CMC decisions. Analysis finds that the average amount of decisions issued during the time both VPGs worked within MERCOSUR was lower than that of previous non-populist government. Though, President Fernandez-Kirchner’s government has the opposite effect on intergovernmental cooperation during the time her VPG interacts with MERCOSUR since average decisions during her government were higher than previous non-populist governments. Thus, analysis finds inconclusive empirical evidence regarding expectation one.

Figure 4.

*Average CMC decisions before and during eligible populist governments*



Source: own analysis.

## 9.4 Modulating mechanisms

Analysis of the modulating mechanisms in President Fernandez-Kirchner and President Maduro's governments is necessary throughout their common period of serving as presidents in MERCOSUR from 2013-2015 because the second expectation of this study was that the presence of many populist governments that utilize at least one modulating mechanism would lower intergovernmental cooperation. Both President Fernandez-Kirchner and President Maduro's emphasized foreign policy issues and their link to domestic policy within MERCOSUR – President Fernandez-Kirchner did so with the Malvinas Islands, and President Maduro did so with USA. This study finds that the effect of modulating mechanisms is the opposite of expectation two. Both populist governments that served together from 2013 – 2015 and that utilized at least one modulating mechanism increased intergovernmental cooperation. Thus, analysis finds unfavorable empirical evidence regarding expectation one when a VPG utilized at least one modulating mechanism.

## 9.5 Conclusion

Analysis of CMC decisions found favorable, inconclusive, and unfavorable evidence in support of the expectation. CMC decisions tended to decrease, after the election of the first VPG and throughout the time period all other four were in power, and tended to be severely unstable. There was inconclusive evidence regarding the effect of each eligible VPG on CMC decisions. Also, CMC decisions actually increased when many VPGs that utilized one mechanism were in power simultaneously. Though, in half (2/4) of the above analyses, VPGs negatively affected intergovernmental cooperation.

## 10. Conclusion

This study investigated the effect of populist governments on intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR by determining if member state governments were VPGs to then analyze their effect on CMC decisions, or intergovernmental cooperation. To best conclude, this chapter offers answers to the four relevant sub-questions, discusses findings and limitations, offers policy lessons for MERCOSUR, and identifies further research for South America and the EU.

To begin with, Sub-question 1 asked: *What is the existing knowledge regarding the acquis of cooperation in MERCOSUR?* Literature uncovered that the acquis of cooperation within MERCOSUR is mainly economic and trade-centered, but also includes democratic protocols. Also, presidents propel MERCOSUR, since the bloc does not possess a supranational organ from inception and by design, as opposed to the EU which has the supranational Commission advocating for the interests of the Union. Sub-question 2 asked: *what is known about the effect of populist governments on intergovernmental cooperation in MERCOSUR?* Literature uncovered that there have been cycles of politization, de-politization, and re-politization in regard to trade and democracy. Additionally, sporadic literature exposed cleavages in intergovernmental cooperation such as: the admission of Venezuela driven by President Rousseff's government and after the suspension of Paraguay and objections by Venezuela regarding free trade agreements and the democratic clause – from before being granted full admission into the bloc. The effects of populist governments were not explicitly stated, they were alluded to and inferred from analysis. Sub-question 3 then asked: *what has the effect of populist governments been on intergovernmental cooperation in the EU?* Literature uncovered that populist governments stonewalled intergovernmental cooperation or in extreme cases severed, i.e. ended, intergovernmental cooperation within the EU. These EU experiences helped identify, according to scholars studying the effect of populism on intergovernmental cooperation, three features of populism and three modulating mechanisms may have an effect on intergovernmental cooperation. Finally, Sub-question 4 asked: *what is the expected outcome, the setting of study, and what are the units of measurement?* This study of MERCOSUR from 1991 to 2019 expected that the presence of very-populist member state governments, that may use one of the two modulating mechanisms under study, stonewall intergovernmental cooperation within MERCOSUR. The unit of study for populism and the two mechanisms was presidential rhetoric. The unit of study for intergovernmental cooperation was CMC decisions.

Analysis in Chapters 4 through 9 of all eligible 27-member state governments from 1991 to 2019 found five VPGs: President Duhalde; President Fernandez-Kirchner; President Rousseff; President Maduro; and, President Bolsonaro. This may imply that VPGs are a fairly recent

phenomena in MERCOSUR. Analysis in Chapter 10 then found that VPGs in MERCOSUR generally decreased intergovernmental cooperation, as a trend, from the election of the first VPG in 2002 onwards. During the period many VPGs served together while interacting with MERCOSUR, there was severe instability regarding intergovernmental cooperation, and, when one of the of the modulating mechanisms was used, and many VPGs that served simultaneously, intergovernmental cooperation actually increased. This implies that modulating mechanisms differ starkly from the EU experience. Notably, VPGs are starting to scapegoat MERCOSUR, i.e. President Bolsonaro. So, as a policy lesson, MERCOSUR should promptly educate Union citizens about the direct benefits the bloc awards them.

To mitigate confirmation bias as a limitation, indicators were derived from the literature review. Also, a reasonable effort was made to challenge preconceived notions when interpreting data. When data rejected the expectation, as with analysis of mechanisms within MERCOSUR, it was simply stated.

Another limitation was the lack of online data for early 1990 governments in order to confirm the presence of the two modulating mechanisms. The simple fact is that the EU affects its Union citizens' lives more than MERCOSUR affects its Union citizens' lives. In the EU, there has been a gradual transfer of competencies from member states to the Union that is not yet present in MERCOSUR. Put plainly, in MERCOSUR, presidents have less opportunities to scapegoat the bloc and to emphasize the salience of foreign policy issues. To mitigate the lack of online data, this study found the closest example to the two mechanisms. When there was no proof of a mechanism, it was stated. To mitigate lack of data for early 1990s governments, this study not only relied on websites that preserved and updated records from the early 1990s into its new website, but I also used .pdf scans of older empirical data, such as scanned newspaper articles.

Lastly, future research and within the countries studied may in the future investigate the causal relationships between VPGs and other phenomena in the southern cone because there exist other notable phenomena that may be affected by VPGs. Also, researchers in the EU may choose to empirically investigate the effects of VPGs on intergovernmental cooperation to either find common themes or to draw contrast with the experiences of MERCOSUR.

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## Appendix 1: Table of variables (in Spanish)

Variable	Features	Terms <b>in Spanish</b>	Type of document	Source
Populist government	1. Pooling antagonistic groups of the member state population:	El pueblo; anti-pueblo; oligarquía; los elite; burguesa; specific industry identifier i.e. mineros, leñadores, petroleros, trabajadores de soya, etc. por industria estatal; and a divide framing aforementioned groups as antagonistic such as: odian, oprimen, limitan, roban, quitan, culpa	Speeches by heads of state of member states, media commentary of the same speeches, videos of speeches; and, party platforms	New York Times Washington Post; The Economist; Ultima Hora, El Pais (Spain); Abc.py; Abc.uy; Telesur (Venezuela); La Nacion (Argentina); Folha de S.Paulo (Brazil); El Cronista; Presidential libraries; Youtube

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	2. Hyper-nationalist rhetoric: rhetoric regarding “nation... as an entity superior to others which demands protection and attention” (Davidson, 2006: 43)	Raza pura; raza; superior; revolución; nation-specific identifiers, i.e. Argentinos, Brasileños, Paraguayos, Uruguayos, Venezolanos, etc. and ‘orgullo’ within the same speech in a tone asserting superiority	See above.	See above.
	3. Protectionist rhetoric: rhetoric suggesting more protection from trade is necessary and/or that the purchase of only national products should be undertaken by the population of a member state	protejen; apoyar; imponer; imponer arancel; limitar; reducir; limites no aranceles; orden ejecutiva y/o decreto	See above.	See above.
Mechanism one	Rhetoric scapegoating MERCOSUR for national policy issues	Culpa, limita, flexible, reducir, librarse, deshacerse, cortar relaciones, salirse, minimo	See above.	See above.
Mechanism two	Rhetoric emphasize the salience of foreign policy issues and their link to domestic policy	Referendo; neoliberal; EEUU, estados unidos; imperialismo; Islas Malvinas	See above.	See above.

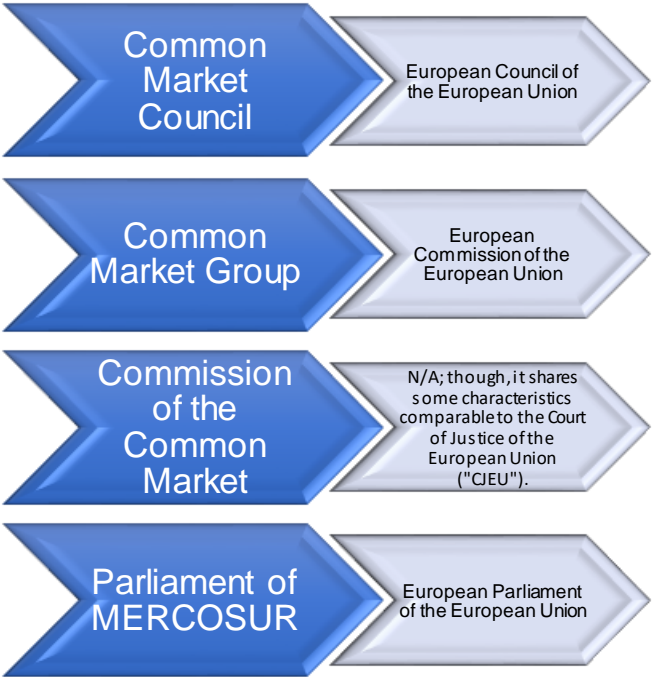
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Intergovernmental cooperation	Number of decisions issued	n/a	CMC decisions	MERCOSUR register
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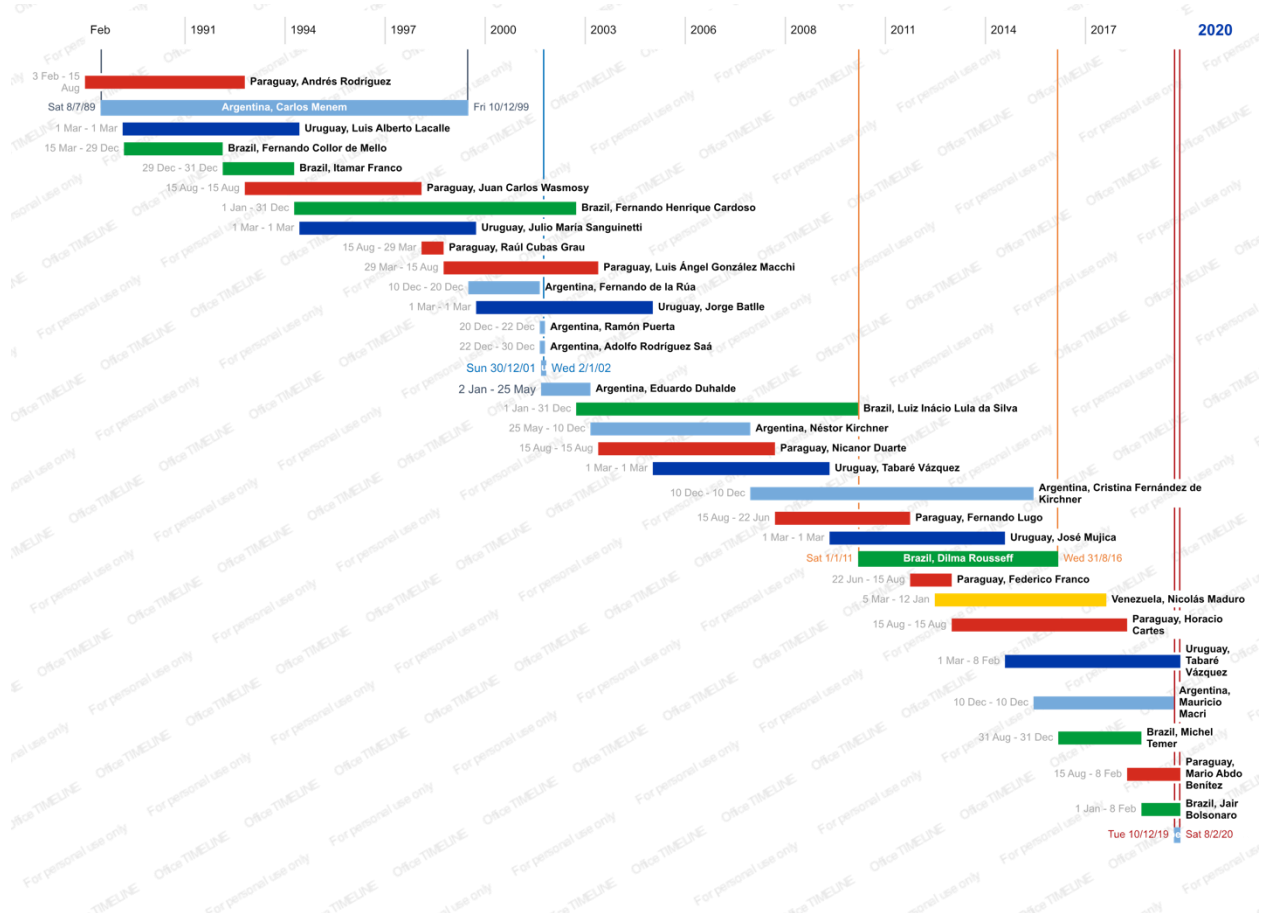
*Source: own analysis.*

# Appendix 2: Rough similarity of MERCOSUR organs to EU organs



Source: own analysis.

# Appendix 3: List of presidents in power during full membership



Source: own analysis