Tutelage and Regime Survival in Regional Organizations’ Democracy Protection
 the case of mercosur and unasur

By Carlos Closa and Stefano Palestini

 Why do states adopt binding and enforceable democracy clauses at the regional level, thereby permitting neighboring states to monitor and potentially sanction their breaches of democracy? To answer this question, the authors test a set of hypotheses in two South American intergovernmental regional organizations, mercosur and unasur. Following the epistemological and methodological requirements of process-tracing analysis, the authors conducted thirty-six interviews with top-level policymakers and decision makers who were responsible for the design and enforcement of the Protocol of Ushuaia (mercosur), the Protocol of Montevideo (mercosur), and the Protocol of Georgetown (unasur). The authors argue that actors formalize these provisions in response to threats to regime survival. Unlike international organizations for the protection of human rights, which rely on the delegation of power to institutions such as supra-state courts, democracy clauses are intergovernmental instruments whose enforcement relies on states’ capabilities. Because of this, the perceptions of governments regarding their own stability and their expectations regarding the future enforcement of the clauses against their own country are causally linked to the decision to support the adoption of the clauses. Thus, governments that perceive themselves as stable democracies or expect that they are too big to be sanctioned support the adoption of democracy clauses because these clauses are functional for others*.* Conversely, governments that perceive themselves as unstable democracies support the adoption of democracy clauses as functional for themselves. The authors contend that any such asymmetry of self-perceptions and expectations, together with regime protection, explain the move toward the formalization of clauses for the protection of democracy in member states within mercosur and unasur.

Contributor Information

Carlos Closa is a professor of political science at the Institute of Public Goods and Policies of the Spanish National Research Council and a faculty member at the School of Transnational Governance at the European University Institute.His research focuses on institutional design in the European Union and regional integration organizations and comparative regional governance with an emphasis on mechanisms for the protection of democracy and rule of law. He is coeditor, with Dimitry Kochenov, of *Reinforcing Rule of Law Oversight in the European Union* (2016), and editor of *Secession from a Member State and Withdrawal from the European Union: Troubled Membership* (2017). He can be reached at carlos.closa@csic.es.

Stefano Palestini is a postdoctoral fellow at the Research College “The Transformative Power of Europe” at the Free University of Berlin. He has been a consultant at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP-Chile) and a visiting researcher and lecturer at universities in Brazil, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, Spain, and the United States. His research focuses on comparative regionalism, and the role of international organizations in the protection of democracy. He can be reached at Stefano.Palestini@eui.eu.