coleção Relações Internacionais

Pedro Henrique Batista Barbosa
(editor)

Challenges and opportunities in the Brazil-Asia relationship in the perspective of young diplomats

Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation

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FUNDAÇÃO ALEXANDRE DE GUSMÃO

Brasília – 2019

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Graphic design and cover:
Varnei Rodrigues / Propagare Comercial Ltda.

Originally published as "Os desafios e oportunidades na relação Brasil-Ásia na perspectiva de jovens diplomatas", FUNAG, 2017.

Dados Internacionais de Catalogação na Publicação (CIP)

C437 Challenges and opportunities in the Brazil-Asia relationship in the perspective of young diplomats / Pedro Henrique Batista Barbosa (Editor). - Brasília : FUNAG, 2019.

512 p. – (Coleção Relações Internacionais)

Tradução de: Os desafios e oportunidades na relação Brasil-Ásia na perspectiva de jovens diplomatas, FUNAG, 2017.

ISBN: 978-85-7631-816-3

1. Relações exteriores - Brasil - Países da Ásia. 2. Comércio exterior - Brasil - Países da Ásia. 3. BRICS - Brasil - Rússia - Índia - China - África do Sul. 4. Diplomacia - Brasil I. Barbosa, Pedro Henrique Batista. II. Titulo.

CDD 327.8105

Depósito legal na Fundação Biblioteca Nacional conforme Lei nº 10.994, de 14/12/2004.

Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance.

Confucius

More important than acquiring great
wisdom is humility when conveying it.

Lao-Tzu

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Ambassador Sergio Moreira Lima, former President of FUNAG, and his entire team, for believing in my publication project and for supporting it from the very beginning.

Ambassador Georges Lamazière, former Undersecretary for Asia and the Pacific, for supporting the project and prefacing the book.

Professors Oliver Stuenkel and Adriana Abdenur, for agreeing to join in this work.

All the co-authors, who were willing to share a little of the experience they gained by defending national interests along with the Asian countries.

Ambassadors Cesário Melantonio Neto, Roberto Colin, Wanja Campos da Nóbrega, Manuel Innocencio, Flávio Damico and Cláudio Lins; Ministers Cláudia Vieira dos Santos, Ricardo Ribeiro da Silva, João Marcos Paes Leme and Augusto Souto Pestana; Counselors Marcelo Salum and Maurício Bernardes; and Secretaries Gabriela Resendes and Helena Melchionna. As reviewers of the texts, their comments and notes were valuable in enriching the articles.

Ministers and former bosses Gustavo Rocha Menezes and Orlando Leite Ribeiro, whose teachings were indispensable for my professional and intellectual improvement.

And, last but not least, God and my family, who taught me that the only way is to believe and persevere.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

The diplomatic career is made up of fortunate coincidences. My first job at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1977 was in the then Asia and Oceania Division, which at that time covered the group of countries that now correspond to the General Undersecretariat for Asia and the Pacific, whose leadership I have just taken over. One of my first tasks as undersecretary-general resulted from the honorable invitation to write the foreword to this book, composed of the text of young diplomats who, like me, have begun their careers dealing directly with this dynamic and complex region.

At the time of my entry into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Responsible Pragmatism of President Geisel and Foreign Minister Azeredo da Silveira universalized Brazilian foreign policy, establishing diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China and thinking about approaching the Asian countries that were experiencing rapid economic growth. Japan at that time had the second largest economy in the capitalist world, while China was opening its doors to the world. These countries became known as the Asian tigers, but the debt crisis, in addition to the geographic and cultural distance, have not contributed to the consolidation in Brazil of a perception of the opportunities that Asia provided.

Since the turn of the century, Brazil's relations with that region have grown in density and complexity, and the trade and investment flows are at present larger than those with some of our neighbors. Technical cooperation programs and cultural activities have also become more frequent, as are the exchanges of tourists and the number of Brazilians residing in Asia. Brazil's increased interaction with Asian countries – in addition to the political and economic importance of this region – has made a significant part of our new generation of diplomats become directly and intensely involved with that part of the globe.

This book is evidence of such importance and involvement. The growing international projection of Brazil and the new level reached in the relationship with Asian countries have demanded of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a reallocation of human resources – 40 years ago, a division with five diplomats did the work that today is done by an Undersecretariat General with 26 individuals. In response to the new challenges, it is essential to be able to count on the intellectual quality of young diplomats and their contributions to the debate on the way forward.

The fourteen chapters of this book address the relations with Brazil's main partners in Asia and reflect on the necessary dynamization of relations with some of the countries in the region. The set of countries and interregional mechanisms analyzed indicate that our diplomacy has a broad vision of Asia, whilst being aware of the challenges and attentive to the different opportunities in this complex region. In addition to economic and commercial issues, our young colleagues are concerned with the Brazilian communities in Asia, the possibilities of cooperation and the diffusion of our culture. Nor do they forget the great international politics, refraining from commenting on Brazil's role in some more complex issues and opportunities for our country in international forums.

I am particularly proud to testify that most of the diplomats who submitted texts to this work were my students when I was the director of the Rio Branco Institute. It is a pleasure to read their contributions in these chapters, which reinforces my confidence in the training of young Brazilian diplomats, and in their ability to reflect on our foreign policy and implement it.

In addressing issues such as Brazil's most traditional partnership with Asia; Japan, and the more recent one with ASEAN, this book, rather than a set of narratives about the history of our foreign policy in the region, illuminates the way forward for our diplomacy in the region.

Georges Lamazière

CHAPTER 1

A BRAZILIAN ATTEMPT TO UNDERSTAND HOW CHINA'S GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR WORK

Germano Corrêa[1]

Pedro Henrique Batista Barbosa[2]

The instruments of economic science are not enough to analyze an economy with the characteristics of the Chinese. It is necessary to understand the culture that is in the head of the operators.

Ambassador Marcos Caramuru de Paiva[3]

1 Career diplomat since 2011. From February 2013 to February 2014, he participated in a Chinese language immersion program in Beijing. From February 2014 to September 2017, he worked at the Division of China and Mongolia of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since October 2017, he has been working at the Brazilian Embassy in Beijing. Bachelor in Anthropology from the University of Brasília.

2 Career diplomat since 2010. He completed his Master's degree in Diplomacy at the Rio Branco Institute, in 2012, the same year he undertook a mission to China to improve his Mandarin studies. He worked, from 2012 to 2016, in the Division of China and Mongolia of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He graduated in Law at PUC-Rio. Ph.D. candidate in International Politics at the Renmin University of China, in Beijing.

3 PAIVA, Marcos Caramuru de. *Lendo a Cabeça do Chinês*. [s.l.], 2016. Interview with *Valor Econômico* portal on May 6, 2016.

Introduction

China: land of superlatives

A few decades ago few international relations theorists risked predicting that China would once again become a major influential power in the world system, regaining the position of hegemony that it occupied centuries ago but which was lost with the advent of the Industrial Revolution in Europe and the subsequent occupation of the country by foreign forces. Essentially agrarian, fresh out of a civil war and a war of national liberation, post-World War II China hardly resembles its twenty-first century version.

Today's China is a land of superlatives, which accumulates expressive numbers and achievements in the main areas of world competition and which is increasingly projected as a power destined to play a preponderant role in the configuration of the global power system that has unfolded after the Cold War.

According to IMF data, in 2014 China became the largest economy in terms of GDP/PPP[4], reaching US$ 18 trillion, while the US reached US$ 17.4 trillion. The GDP of the country in 2015 was, according to the PPP criterion, in the order of US$ 20.85 trillion, predicted to reach, in five years, US$ 30.78 trillion, almost 20% of the world total.

This result was achieved after a period of exceptional economic dynamism: for almost three decades, beginning with the economic reforms of Deng Xiaoping[5] in 1979, China maintained an average real growth rate of about 10%, a unique case in modern economic history. Its contribution to world growth rose from 5%

4 Gross domestic product by purchasing power parity.

5 Deng Xiaoping (邓小平，1904-1997), while never serving as Secretary-General of the Communist Party of China (CPC) or President of the People's Republic of China (PRC), was at the time the main Chinese leader from 1978 to 1992, when he implemented several economic reforms in the country.

in the 1980s to 25% between 2000 and 2014. In the latter period, it was the economy that contributed most to the growth of the world economy, surpassing the United States[6].

China's economic growth was driven by a number of factors, including the state's strategy to promote China as an export platform through the competitive insertion of its economy into global value chains. The establishment of special economic zones in the southeast of the country (in the cities of Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Shantou, in the province of Guangzhou, and in Xiamen, Fujian province) attracted many multinational companies, which, together with local partners, relocated their factories in search of low production costs. As a result, China began to play a growing role in global trade, with significant participation in global production and distribution networks, to become the world's leading exporter in 2009 and, by 2013, the leading global trading power. With a trade flow of US$ 3.96 trillion in 2015 and a balance that exceeded US$ 593 billion[7], China has become a privileged partner of the vast majority of developed and developing countries. In 2015, China was the main trading partner of no less than 120 countries[8].

In addition to consolidating its position as the leading exporter and the world's second largest importer of goods[9], and the third largest exporter and second largest importer of services in 2015[10], it has become an important consumer and importer

6 NU. *CEPAL, Horizontes 2030: la igualdad en el centro del desarrollo sostenible*, p. 39. Mexico City: CEPAL, 2016.

7 Data from the General Administration of Customs of the PRC. Available at: <http://www.customs.gov.cn/ publish/portal0/tab49667/info785157.htm>.

8 CHADE, Jamil. O Brasil quer "corrigir" relação com a China. *O Estado de S. Paulo*. São Paulo, July 21, 2016.

9 STATISTA. Top 20 export countries worldwide in 2015. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264623/leading-export-countries-worldwide/>. Accessed on: Aug. 12, 2016.

10 WORLD DATA ATLAS. Available at: <https://knoema.com/atlas/ranks/Imports-of-services>; Accessed on: Aug. 12, 2016.

market for raw materials. According to ECLAC data from 2013, China consumed about half of the world's production of coal, zinc, aluminum, copper and pork; 30% of soybean exports; and just over 10% of the oil trade[11].

This entire trade boom favored the accumulation of international reserves, which exceeded US$ 3 trillion by the end of 2016. Favored by a high rate of domestic savings, the government implemented a vigorous investment policy in infrastructure, whose sector accounted for almost 50% of the GDP in 2015. In recent years, the country has built more airports and more miles of railroad tracks for high-speed trains than the rest of the world; built the longest bridge and almost half of the skyscrapers of the planet; and developed 167 supercomputers, surpassing the United States as the country with the largest number of supermachines in the world.

A historical recipient of huge flows of foreign direct investment, the country has been consolidating itself since the mid-2000s as a major capital exporter. By increasing Chinese investment abroad in the context of the government strategy called "going out"[12], in 2014, for the first time, the flow of Chinese investment abroad exceeded that of foreign investors in China. The Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute estimated that by 2016, Chinese overseas investments would have reached the US$ 245 billion mark, concentrated in energy and transportation. In Africa, where Chinese companies have invested heavily in commodities for years, it is estimated that between 2000 and 2014, Chinese government, banks and companies have granted loans

11 NU. CEPAL. *Horizontes 2030: la igualdad en el centro del desarrollo sostenible*, p. 40. Mexico City: CEPAL, 2016.

12 The Going Out Strategy, established in the X Five Year Plan (2001-2005), seeks to expand the commercial presence of Chinese companies abroad and support domestic growth through access to natural resources, new technologies and markets.

of US$ 86.9 billion to governments and state-owned companies across the continent. The China Development Bank (CDB), which promotes a policy of stimulating the internationalization of Chinese companies, has become the largest bank in the world in overseas loans in 2012, surpassing the World Bank.

It is not just the numbers of the Chinese economy and trade that are impressive. Data on the country's investments in science, technology, and innovation are remarkable. According to the National Science Foundation[13], investment in research and development (R&D) has grown on average 20% per year since 2001 (against 6.7% in the rest of the world), accounting for 15% of world spending. In the same year, it accounted for approximately 2% of the country's GDP, significantly higher than the 0.73% invested in 1991. In 2012, China surpassed the countries of the European Union in investment in technological research.

With regard to higher education, China invests approximately 2.5% of its GDP at the university level (the average of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – OECD countries is 1.6%). Of the approximately 7 million Chinese students which graduated in 2015, 31.4% did so in the field of engineering (against 5% in the USA) and 12.3% in natural sciences.

The volume of resources invested in R&D and higher education partly explains the significant achievements the country has made in the high technology sector. The economic openness to foreign investment, the strategies for attracting technologies to be internalized in China and the commitment to the domestic production of new technologies are fundamental elements upon which current technological innovation in China is based.

13 Data from the National Science Foundation. Available at: <https://www.nsf.gov/>. Accessed in: June 2016.

Among the technology sectors that stand out as innovative in China are communication equipment and high-speed trains. China currently holds 18% of the world market in communications equipment and 41% in the high-speed rail sector. Chinese exports of communications equipment, which grew 9% a year between 2005 and 2013, account for 48% of the total output of Chinese companies in the sector in 2015. About 500 million smartphones were sold in China this year, of which 85% were manufactured by Chinese brands (Huawei, ZTE, Lenovo, Xiaomi and Coolpad).

China remains committed to transforming its economy towards a more innovation-based growth model and the export of high technology products and services. It has launched the Medium- and Long-Term National Plan for Science and Technology Development (2005-2020) in 2006 and the Made in China 2025 plan in 2015, which, respectively, set the targets of investing 2.5% of the GDP in R&D and of transforming China into a global center of innovation by 2020.

Both plans have already begun to show results. Since 2005, the number of applications for patent publications in China has grown 17% per year. By 2015, the country recorded one million patents, almost the same number of registrations as the following three contenders combined: United States (589,000), Japan (319,000) and Korea (214,000)[14]. Between 2000 and 2011, China's share of the international high-tech market rose from 4.3% to 21.4%. In these eleven years, the Chinese exports of medium and high technology products, for example, went from 2.7% to 10.6%. The prospect is that, in the short term, China will produce high-tech products under conditions similar to those offered by the traditional western industrial countries and at better prices.

14 WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION. Global Patent Applications Rose to 2.9 Million in 2015 on Strong Growth From China. Available at: <http://www.wipo.int/pressroom/en/articles/2016/article_0017.html>. Accessed on: November 23, 2016.

In parallel with its growing economic weight, China has been expanding its political presence around the world, which is reflected in the expansion of its international cooperation, in its increasingly active participation in the debates on major global issues and global governance reform, and in multiplying the channels of political consultation with other countries. Since the rise of the fifth generation of Chinese leaders in 2013, China's foreign policy has adopted an assertive discourse, characterized by firmly upholding China's interests, for instance in the South China Sea, whilst promoting cooperation projects, especially in the areas of trade and infrastructure investment.

President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Li Keqiang have multiplied visits abroad and have pursued a vigorous "result diplomacy": in addition to signing trade, investment, infrastructure, financing and energy exploration agreements, they have announced bilateral and multilateral cooperation initiatives. At the same time, Chinese diplomacy has launched regional integration initiatives, such as the 21st Century Silk Sea Route and the Silk Road Economic Belt, originally launched in 2013 with the aim of interconnecting Europe and Asia logistically. These projects, referred to by the Chinese foreign policy with the term "one belt, one road," will be funded by the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) – whose activities began in December 2015 – with a capital of US$ 10 billion, and the Silk Road Fund – announced at the end of 2014 – with a capital of US$ 40 billion.

In recent years there has been a strengthening of partnerships with developing countries, an important strategic basis for Chinese economic diplomacy. Initiatives to forge relations with various regions of the world have been multiplied. Interregional mechanisms such as the CELAC-China Forum[15], the China-Africa

15 CELAC stands for Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, in English.

Cooperation Forum (FOCAC), the China-Central and Eastern European Summit, the Sino-Arab Cooperation Forum (SACF), the Macao Forum[16], ASEAN-China[17], among others, have started to receive more attention from the Chinese authorities, which was reflected in increasing high-level meetings and cooperation actions. Financing instruments were also set up to provide financial support for these initiatives and to expand Chinese presence in the international financial system, such as the AIIB and the New Development Bank (NDB) and the BRICS Contingent Reserve Agreement (ACR).

On the multilateral side, Beijing has turned its attention to organizations and forums such as the UN, G20, BRICS, the Conference on Measures of Interaction and Confidence Building in Asia (CICA), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (OCX) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), among others, where it has acted with increasing ease and protagonism. Since the beginning of the current administration, the country has adopted an increasingly firm and assertive attitude in the defense of its interests, for example, in the United Nations. On his first visit to the organization in September 2015, President Xi Jinping announced impact measures: (i) the creation of the China-UN Peace and Development Fund, with resources of US$ 1 billion over the next ten years; (ii) the establishment of an 8,000 strong Chinese response force to participate in peacekeeping missions; and (iii) the provision of US$ 100 million over five years to the African Union's rapid reaction force. By June 2015, China had donated US$ 50 million to the FAO to finance sustainable agriculture in developing countries.

16 Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese Speaking Countries.

17 ASEAN stands for Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Bilateral relations

This new geopolitical and economic weight of China has had repercussions for the relationship with Brazil. From an exporter of commodities and importer of manufactured goods and services from Brazil in the 1980s and 1990s, today China mainly exports machinery and equipment to Brazil, while it mainly imports commodities, especially soybeans, iron ore, and oil, which account for more than 72% of Brazilian sales to the People's Republic of China (PRC)[18]. Trade with China increased from US$ 2.3 billion in 2000 (when the country accounted for only 2.1% of total Brazilian trade) to US$ 58.5 billion in 2016 (18.97% of the Brazil's external trade). In the same period, the trade surplus accumulated by Brazil was US$ 47.6 billion. By 2009, China had become not only the largest buyer of Brazilian exports, but also Brazil's largest trading partner. In 2012, it also became the main supplier of products imported by Brazil.

Chinese companies have increasingly earmarked resources to the Brazilian market and gained prominent participation in some sectors. Initially focused on the primary sector, in order to ensure the supply of natural resources to meet the demand caused by the high growth rates of the Chinese economy, Chinese investments have shifted their focus to the industrial sector (automotive, electronics, household appliances, computers, machinery and equipment etc.) and agriculture, as well as the financial and infrastructural areas like telecommunications, energy production and distribution, railway projects, among others.

All this economic dynamism has been accompanied by an increasing cooperation in the political field. Since 2004, for example, there have been twelve visits and meetings of heads

18 Data from MDIC (Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services), 2016.

of state and government, not to mention numerous ministerial and technical meetings. On the Chinese side, the visits of then Vice President Xi Jinping (2009), President Hu Jintao (2004 and 2010), Premier Wen Jiabao (2012), President Xi Jinping (2014), Vice President Li Yuanchao (2015), and Prime Minister Li Keqiang (2015). On the Brazilian side, the visit of President Lula (2004, 2008, and 2009), President Dilma Rousseff (2011), and President Michel Temer (2013, as Vice President).

The bilateral relationship, which moved from the strategic partnership level in 1993 (the first launched among developing countries) to a global strategic partnership in 2012 has come to rely on a strong political-diplomatic framework, and important comprehensive instruments for intergovernmental dialogue have been established. The High-level Sino-Brazilian Commission for Concertation and Cooperation (COSBAN, in the Portuguese acronym) and the Global Strategic Dialogue (GSD) give the bilateral relationship a high degree of institutionalism that allows for the referral of each party's problems and points of interest in practically all areas of Brazil-China cooperation.

Likewise, the signing of strategic planning documents, such as the 2012-2021 Ten-Year Cooperation Plan and the Joint Action Plans 2015-2021, have set goals and targets for bilateral dialogue, with the intention of deepening the relations in all dimensions – bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral – including specific purposes for the GSD sector dialogues and COSBAN subcommittees.

Given the data and information presented above, one can observe the rise of an important actor in the system of states, with considerable impacts on the international political economy. Faced with this geopolitical and economic phenomenon, politicians, decision-makers, entrepreneurs, and many citizens are asking not only how to react to this new situation but, above all, how best to deal with the Chinese people.

This article, reflecting the view of observers who have followed the development of bilateral relations in the last few years, addresses the challenges that public and private actors face in their relationship with China. It begins with the realization that Brazil and China are closer today than ever before: mutual investments are increasing in several sectors of our economy, trade is expanding, and joint projects in the areas of science and technology, space, culture, and education are intensifying. Despite all this dynamism, there are still vast gaps in mutual knowledge that need to be filled.

In the first section of the text, we will analyze some peculiarities of Chinese philosophical thought that influence the thinking and behavior of Chinese public and private agents. Next, the Chinese business culture, whose peculiarities make the exercise of commerce not a trivial activity, will be debated. Subsequently, the characteristics of the Chinese government, as well as its diplomatic activity and practice will be discussed. Finally, a prospective and proactive analysis will be presented on the Brazil-China relationship, suggesting possible measures to be taken and ways to be followed.

1. Historical heritage and philosophical basis

Among the nations of the contemporary world, China occupies a unique place. The country is the heir to the only ancient civilization that has survived the passage of time, through successive wars, disasters, famines, and political disputes. Since the unification promoted by the Qin dynasty in 221 BC, the Chinese state has remained intact, albeit with discontinuities and transformations, as the government of the largest contingent of the world population. This millennial historical depth exerts a strong influence on the Chinese ways of acting and thinking.

In addition to its historical depth and cultural density, to a Western observer China represents the ultimate in what is different. As Belgian sinologist Simon Leys put it:

> *Du point de vue occidental, la Chine est tout simplement* l'autre pôle de l'expérience humaine. *[...] C'est seulement quand nous considérons la Chine que nous pouvons enfin prendre une plus exacte mesure de notre propre identité et que nous commençons à percevoir quelle part de notre héritage relève de l'humanité universelle, et quelle part ne fait que refléter de simples idiosyncrasies indo-européennes. La Chine est cet Autre fondamental sans la rencontre duquel l'Occident ne saurait devenir vraiment conscient des contours et des limites de son Moi culturel*[19] [emphasis added].

In this sense, to make a first approach to Chinese culture, it is necessary to abandon what anthropologists call ethnocentrism, the tendency of perceiving and judging others according our own conceptions. China has a cultural substrate very different from our own. It is essential to understand this difference so we can establish a dialogue and clearly assess the challenges that are at stake in our relations.

Perhaps one of the most fundamental differences is the way Chinese culture understands time. Classical Chinese thought – consigned in books as the Classic of the Changes[20] and the Classic

19 LEYS, Simon apud CHENG, Anne. *Histoire de la pensée chinoise*. Paris: Seuill, 1997, p. 27.

20 In Brazil, this book is commonly called as *Livro das Mutações* or *I Ching*, the divinatory text and the oldest among the Chinese classics.

of the Path and the Virtue[21] – conceives time as a cycle. As Henry Kissinger[22] observes, the founding myth of China is understood as a myth of re-foundation and re-establishment, not the creation an empire. Likewise, Confucius (551-487 BC), the founder of one of the main currents of Chinese thought, claimed, while conveying his teachings, that he did nothing new but only took up the wisdom of Chinese masters of the past.

Another characteristic of Chinese thought is pragmatism. Unlike Western philosophy, there is neither theorizing nor absolute or eternal truths. The primary purpose of intellectual activity is its practical application. This trait is already present in the first passage of one of the fundamental books of the Chinese canon, *The Analects* of Confucius: "The Master said: 'Is it not a pleasure to learn and, when it is timely, to practice what you have learned?'"[23]. There are no merely speculative or literary amusement studies. The teachings of the Chinese masters are directed not to the intellect but to the persons themselves, aiming to correct the way they live. It is a thought immersed in the real and that is not interested in theoretical knowledge that would be of little use in the real world.

Associated with the pragmatism of thought there is, in the Daoist tradition[24], the valorization of restraint, of "acting without acting". According to this precept, one must anticipate the obstacles, preparing to overcome them before they are unsurmountable; an attitude that could be understood as the

21 The work is generally referred to in Brazil as the *Tao Te Ching*, the founding book of philosophical and religious Taoism.

22 KISSINGER, Henry. *On China*. London: Penguin Books, 2012, p. 7.

23 CONFÚCIO. *Os Analectos*. Translation, comments and notes by Giorgio Sinedino. São Paulo: Unesp, 2012, p. 2 [CONFUCIUS. The Analects. Translation and comments by Annping Chin. New York: Penguim Books, 2014, p. 1].

24 Spelling according to the Pinyin Romanization System, adopted by the People's Republic of China in 1952. In the text we will adopt the use of "Daoist" and "Daoism" instead of "Taoist" and "Taoism", created from an outdated Romanization system.

predecessor of the ingrained planning habit observed in Chinese bureaucracy. Still according to this precept, the subtler and the less one acts, the greater the effectiveness of the action.

In the political domain itself, there are also significant differences between the Chinese and Western thoughts. If, in Machiavelli's tradition of realism, politics is dissociated from morality and the ruler's aim is to maintain control over the state, in the Confucian school the parameters are almost the opposite. According to Confucius, the prototype of political relations is the parent-child relationship.

In this relation, children, in a lower hierarchical position, owe loyalty to the father, who, in turn, must watch over the well-being of his dependents. The relation between subject and ruler is constituted in a similar way. The Confucian model of society is fundamentally hierarchical. There is no equality between father and son, or between the subject and their ruler. Equity is neither an ideal nor an objective to be achieved. Asymmetry, however, is not perceived as a problem, as long as each member of society fulfills their role – based on established rites, or rules – and seeks moral perfection through study.

Morality would be manifested through virtuous action. In Confucianism, there are five main virtues: benevolence (仁), sense of duty (义), adequacy or restraint (礼), wisdom (知), and reliability (信)[25]. It is on the basis of established virtues and rites that the ruler in command of the state should act. His ultimate goal should not be to increase wealth and power, but to achieve social harmony. Thus, unlike Machiavelli, according to whom politics and morality are different domains, to Confucius politics is

25 SINEDINO, Giorgio. In: CONFÚCIO. *Os Analectos*. Translation, comments and notes by Giorgio Sinedino. São Paulo: Unesp, 2012, p. 21.

the continuation of morality. More than that, it is the most general activity for achieving moral goals.

The perception that social life is fundamentally hierarchical extends to relations between peoples. The Chinese empire was perceived as the center of civilization, which in the eyes of some would be the result of an exacerbated ethnocentrism. This might be, as Kissinger argued[26], a consequence of a mere circumstance: China has never found societies with the same magnitude and power in its neighboring regions.

Neighboring nations were not treated on the basis of equality, but in accordance with Confucian virtues, especially benevolence, as long as they observed the ritual practices that indicated their submission to the Middle Empire[27].

A key element in the mechanism of Chinese bureaucracy and politics was the system of public examinations, whose influence can still be seen in the management of the state and even in the scholarly and professional behavior of the Chinese. Established in 622 AD during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the mechanism played a growing role in the selection of officials to serve the imperial government and in the formation of local and national elites, consolidating practices of public management and ensuring the continuity of the state apparatus over the course of the long – and wobbly – Chinese history. In addition, the system was instrumental in consolidating the idea of merit in the selection of state employees, a principle still present today in the recruitment and promotion mechanisms of members of the Chinese Communist Party. Abolished in 1905, the system operated for 1282 years,

26 KISSINGER, Henry. *On China*. London: Penguin Books, 2012, p. 8.

27 The translation of the country's name into Chinese (中国) is Middle Kingdom.

and an estimated 110,000 Chinese passed tests throughout that period[28].

The vast Chinese historical experience and cultural accumulation are not a mere curiosity. Not even the forced opening to the West, the so-called century of humiliations, or the rupture with previous history at the beginning of the Communist project have been able to obliterate the strong influence that the past exerts on contemporary Chinese society. There is a well-known anecdote, reported by Kissinger, in which Mao Zedong, in a frontier conflict with India in October 1962, recalls to his commanders the story of a war that had occurred one thousand three hundred years earlier in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AC)[29].

Historical pragmatism, for example, was fundamental to the constitution of the so-called "Socialism with Chinese characteristics". Although somewhat different from the Confucian proposal, pragmatism resurfaced with Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s as a means to correct an outdated ideology and change the course of the Chinese Communist Party's theoretical foundations, and thus achieve other objectives. As Deng Xiaoping said in 1984:

> *There was virtually no industry for us to inherit from old China, and we did not have enough grain for food. Some people ask why we chose socialism. We answer that we had to, because capitalism would get China nowhere. We must solve the problems of feeding and employing the population and of reunifying China. That is why we have repeatedly declared that we shall adhere to Marxism and keep to the socialist road. But by Marxism we mean Marxism that is integrated with Chinese conditions,*

28 WILKINSON, Endymion. *Chinese History*: A New Manual. Cambridge (Massachusetts): Harvard University Asia Center, 2012, p. 299.

29 KISSINGER, Henry. *On China*. London: Penguin Books, 2012, p. 1.

> *and by socialism we mean socialism that is tailored to Chinese conditions and has Chinese characteristics*[30].

The way to integrate Marxism with Chinese reality was pragmatism. This attitude was expressed by Deng in the historic Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in 1978, as follows: "seek truth in the facts"[31]. The phrase, which follows the linguistic structure of old Chinese proverbs signaled, on that occasion, an important change in the Party's guidelines. From then on, the key was to pay more attention to practice than to Marxist theory in the management of economics and government.

In recent years, China has gone through a phase of rescuing its ancient culture, perceived as a counterweight to the corrosion of values caused by the country's accelerated modernization. Today's Chinese are turning to old traditions like Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism for answers in a society undergoing dramatic changes. In this context, understanding the importance of historical and cultural heritage for the Chinese is fundamental to seize opportunities and overcome the challenges that arise in relations with that country.

2. The party, government, and Chinese diplomatic culture

Challenging as it is understanding the exceptional Chinese thinking and the characteristics of China's corporate culture, it is equally challenging to comprehend China's internal politics and governmental structure, whose nuances and peculiarities turn analytical activity into a serious task even for the most experienced

30 DE BARY, William Theodore (org.). *Sources of Chinese tradition:* Volume Two – From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century. New York: Columbia University,1999, p. 508.

31 In Chinese 实事求是, which could be translated as "seek truth from facts".

experts. The difficulty lies in the fact that in Western countries there is no political model corresponding to the Chinese state, where three parallel and hierarchically assimilated institutions (in theory) – the Communist Party of China (CPC), the government and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) – coexist in a complex decision-making system where government and party bodies intertwine and overlap, multiplying decision-making centers and political dialogue channels.

Before moving on to the study of China's internal decision-making process, it would be convenient to briefly outline the structure of the state and the composition of each of its three pillars.

2.1. The Chinese state

The CPPCC was founded in 1949 and consists of an advisory body to the party and government leadership. It consists of 2,237 delegates and brings together representatives not only of the CPC, but also of 34 entities or groups of people. It is in the CPPCC that other Chinese political parties are found[32], representatives of union and employer sectors and entities[33], representatives of ethnic minorities[34], religions, and autonomous regions[35], relevant internal actors[36], and others. Its function is to serve as a forum for

32 The Chinese Kuomitang Revolutionary Committee, the Democratic League of China, the Democratic National Construction Association of China, the China Association for the Promotion of Democracy, the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Democratic Party and the Zhi Gong Party of China.

33 Like the All-China Federation of Trade Unions and the All-China Women's Federation.

34 China has 56 different ethnic groups. The largest, Han, represents more than 90% of the population.

35 In addition to the 22 provinces, China has five autonomous regions (Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Tibet, Ningxia and Guangxi), four municipalities directly linked to the central government (Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Chongqing) and two autonomous Special Administrative Regions with a high degree of autonomy (Hong Kong and Macao).

36 In particular, the Communist Youth League.

"multiparty cooperation" and "political consultation"[37], debating ideas and drafting proposals that can be analyzed by the National People's Congress (NPG)[38] or adopted by decree of the State Council. Its proposals, however, are not legally binding.

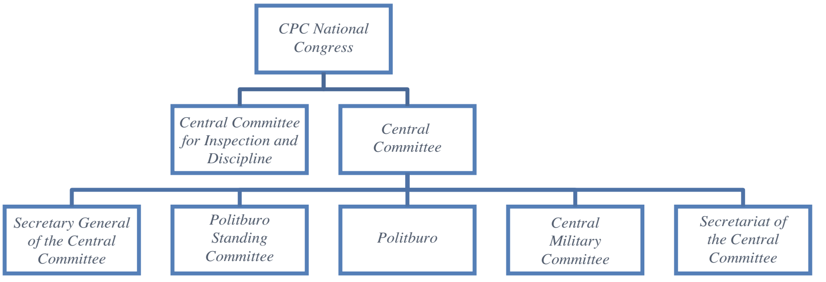
The role of the CPPCC lies in part in its historical importance. In the post-World War II era, the Kuomitang (KMT) and the CPC participated in the Political Consultative Conference, which recognized the Government of the Republic of China under the KMT as the legitimate government and the CPC as opposition. On September 21, 1949, the CPPCC, in its current format, opened its first session, in which the People's Republic of China was founded. The constitutional preamble acknowledges its role "in the struggle for reunification and unity of the country". Immediately after the mention of the Conference, the constitution establishes the definition of the PRC as a "multinational unitary state", which praises the CPPCC's commitment to maintaining the country's stability and unity in diversity.

Another pillar of the state – indeed, the most important – is the Communist Party of China, founded in 1921 and now with more than 85 million members[39]. The main instances of the CPC are the National Congress, the Central Committee, the Politburo (or Political Bureau) and its Standing Committee, the Secretariat, the Central Military Commission and the Central Commission for Inspection and Discipline (CCID).

37 Constitution of the People's Republic of China. Preamble. Available at: <http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/2007-11/15/content_1372962.htm>.

38 Or Popular National Assembly.

39 It is considered the largest political party in the world.



According to the party constitution, the National Congress and the Central Committee elected by it are the supreme leadership bodies of the Party, to which all organizations and members must be subordinate[40]. The Congresses respect the annual periodicity of five years and have, among other functions, to discuss and decide on matters relevant to the Party and elect the Central Committee and CCID.

The Central Committee manages the party between the sessions of the National Congress. Its 376 members – divided into standing and rotating members – are elected per secret ballot by the National Congress every five years and meet annually. The newly elected Central Committee elects, in turn, the secretary general of the CPC, the members of the Politburo, the Standing Committee of the Politburo, the Secretariat and the Central Military Commission.

The 25-member Political Bureau brings together the political elite of the Party and the PRC, with its Standing Committee – currently with seven members – as the ultimate seat of political power in China; the main party and government decisions emanate from there. Both are supported by the Secretariat, which oversees the day-to-day administration of the CPC.

40 Constitution of the Communist Party of China. Article 10. Available at: <http://english.cpc.people.com.cn/206972/206981/8188065.html>.

The Central Military Commission (CMC) is in charge of managing the Chinese armed forces, whose People's Liberation Army (PLA) is controlled by the Party, in line with Mao Zedong's maxim that "the Party controls guns". Finally, the CCID is the body responsible for investigating and prosecuting corruption cases involving members of the CPC.

The third pillar of the Chinese state, the government, whose organs overlap those of the Party, has some characteristics that do not very much resemble the Western model of independent powers governed by a system of checks and balances. Although the constitution of the PRC recognizes the separation and independence of powers (Articles 126 and 131), the judiciary and the executive are formally subordinated to the legislative branch.

In the Chinese government, the National People's Congress (NPC) is at the top of the hierarchy[41]. The NPC is the legislative power and is composed of about three thousand deputies elected indirectly in the provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities under direct control of the central government and by the armed forces, and who serve five-year terms. These delegates meet only once a year, usually in March, around the same time as the annual CPPCC meeting, for ten days of work. The "twin sessions" of the NPC and the CCPPC constitute the main public political event of the Chinese calendar.

Chinese executive power is exercised by the State Council. It is chaired by the Prime Minister together with four deputy prime ministers, five state councilors, ministers, an auditor-general and a secretary-general[42]. Ministries, commissions and national

41 Constitution of the People's Republic of China. Article 57. Available at: <http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/2007-11/15/content_1372962.htm>. Accessed on: May 16, 2016.

42 Constitution of the People's Republic of China. Articles 85 to 91. Available at: <http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/2007-11/15/content_1372962.htm>. Accessed on: May 16, 2016.

administrations, among other organs, are subordinated to the State Council. The Central Military Commission is also part of the government and responsible for administering the PLA, as well as its counterpart in the CPC.

2.2. The decision-making process in China: reality and practice

The way government decisions are made in China intrigues and confuses those who follow it, not only due to the peculiar structure of the Chinese state but above all to the fact that reality goes beyond the written law.

A common feeling among public and private actors who study Chinese political dynamics is the difficulty in knowing for sure who really holds the power in some situations. The intertwining between governmental, partisan and military instances is a key feature of the Chinese state. In a context where several entities perform superimposed functions, reports of foreign agents facing problems in finding the right interlocutor within the government are not uncommon. The mere reading of the official organizational charts does not reveal the multiplicity of actors involved in the decision-making process and its actual hierarchy, as well as the existence of politically important instances that are sometimes unknown to outsiders.

Although the CPC, the government, and the CPPCC are considered parallel and hierarchically equivalent institutions, and the Constitution stipulates that the PNA is the highest level of the government, to which the State Council and other ministries must answer, in practice, the command chain is more extensive. It is the responsibility of the CPC to direct the public and governmental activities of the country. The guidelines to be followed by government agents come from the Party, more precisely from the

Standing Committee of the Politburo. The CPC's preeminence over the administration manifests itself in a variety of ways, such as overlapping instances of the government and the Party, and the fact that key government positions are filled by CPC members.

Both the government and the CPC have a central military commission, which manages the armed forces. Considering Mao Zedong's maxim that "the Party controls the guns", it can be expected that real power lies in the Party's counterpart. Another example of duplicate instances is in the communications sector: the Information Office of the State Council is the governmental face of the Central Committee's Propaganda Department.

The CPC's control over government is also evident in the definition of administrative staff. Above the whole political system is the Secretary-General of the CPC, whose position is politically more important than the other two occupied by him: that of president and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. In addition, the positions of prime minister, vices and state councilors, not to speak of president of republic, are exercised by party cadres, as well as the great majority of the heads of ministries and equivalent offices. The model is repeated in the provinces and municipalities, where governors and mayors share power with the secretaries of the provincial and municipal committees of the CPC.

In addition to the administrative and partisan instances, there are other bodies with undeniable decision-making powers that are usually unknown to the general public and do not appear in the official diagrams. Small leadership groups, permanent or *ad hoc*, play an important role in articulating the decision-making centers of the government and the Party. They are commonly charged with important issues, such as the Small Economic and Financial Leadership Group of the Central Committee. According to Richard McGregor:

> *The party committees (known as "leading small groups"), which guide and dictate policy to ministries, which in turn have the job of executing them, work out of sight. The make-up of all these committees, and in many cases even their existence, is rarely referred to in the state-controlled media, let alone any discussion of how they arrive at decisions. The membership of these groups can only be deduced by painstaking Kremlinological compilations from scouring the Chinese press, sometimes over years*[43].

In recent years, there has been a marked tendency towards professionalization and specialization of the Party and government members. Their ranks tend to be occupied by technocrats, whose efforts and qualifications are evaluated on the basis of meritocratic criteria. It is increasingly common for the country's leaders to possess masters or doctorates. A few years ago, there was a clear predominance of graduates in the exact sciences, with an emphasis on engineering. More recently, however, the number of social science graduates has increased at all levels of the Chinese bureaucracy.

Within the Politburo Standing Committee, for example, there is a relatively clear division of labor in which the previous trajectory of a candidate for a position of leadership weighs heavily. The economic formation of Li Keqiang and Zhang Gaoli[44] would have been an important factor in their appointments as "tsars" of the

43 MCGREGOR, Richard. *The Party*: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers. London: Penguin Books, 2011, p. 21.

44 Li Keqiang obtained a doctorate in economics from Beijing University. He was also a member of the Small Economic and Financial Leadership Group of the Central Committee. Zhang Gaoli studied statistics and economics at Xiamen University; and for many years has held important positions in Guangzhou and Shandong Province, which for decades have led China's economic growth rates.

economy, responsible for making the necessary adjustments in the current economic model.

Before moving up the party or government's hierarchy, officials need to demonstrate that they meet the conditions to assume greater responsibilities. Communist leaders are constantly subject to performance reviews that involve, among other criteria, GDP growth, tax collection, social stability, and, more recently, environmental protection. In addition, having work experience in relatively less developed or politically sensitive places – a tradition dating to at least the Tang Dynasty (618-907) – such as Tibet, Xinjiang, or Inner Mongolia, is also taken into account at the time of promotion. The Organization Department, a kind of human resources department of the Party, tests prominent officials by allocating them to different regions of China before promoting them to a position in Beijing. The reason behind this is likely to stimulate potential new PRC leaders to understand the challenges faced by Chinese citizens and to be aware of distinct realities within China.

Another interesting aspect of Chinese politics lies in the succession process, in which different generations of leaders succeed each other. Commonly, the leadership of the five generations of CPC leaders is attributed to Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping, respectively. From the third generation onward, with the retirement of Deng, the foundations of a model of collective administration began to emerge, in which no leader individually holds unquestionable power. Instead of centralized leadership exercised by a single individual, a model of collegial governance has emerged, in which relevant decisions require consensus. This model is evident in the functioning of the Political Bureau of the CPC and its Standing Committee, whose leadership is divided into pairs, without the unconstrained influence of one charismatic figure prevailing over the others. The notion of a great leader gave way to a *primus inter pares* concept[45].

At the same time, starting with the fourth generation, a set of rules regarding the process of power alternation in China – some of them unwritten – began to emerge, as a way of seeking greater stability and predictability during party successions. Members of the Politburo Standing Committee now serve two five-year terms, which coincide with two CPC National Congresses. There is also an age reference limit for retirement in the Party: 68 years. Along these lines, in the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party at the end of 2022, Xi Jinping's retirement and the rise of the sixth generation leaders are expected. Prior to this, during the XIX Congress, in 2017, five of the current seven members of the current Standing Committee should retire based on this age criterion: Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli.

Another interesting aspect of Chinese politics is its factional character. Within the CPC, it is possible to find different ideological currents and interest groups. These groups derive from the most diverse factors: family or geographical ties, convergent bureaucratic careers, defense of certain public policies, university education, and others.

The most common factional scheme among scholars of Chinese political reality is the one which divides the ruling elite between "princelings" ("太子党"), which are children of historical

45 Many experts in China have highlighted various signs of concentration of power in the hands of President Xi Jinping. Some of them would be his immediate rise to the presidency of the Central Military Commission (Hu Jintao assumed the presidency after two years as President of the PRC, Jiang Zemin retained the leadership of the CMC in that period), the creation of new institutions directly under his direction in important areas, such as the National Security Council and the Internet Leadership Group, and his appointment as "Commander-in-Chief of the Joint Operations Command," which seems to consolidate his command in the Chinese military.

leaders, and "populists" ("团派", literally "faction of the League"), those of humble origin who have made a career in the Communist Youth League (CYL). In the current composition of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau, there are remnants of the two factions. President Xi Jinping is usually considered a princeling because his father, Xi Zhongxun (1913-2002), was deputy Prime Minister and an influential advocate for economic reforms in the country. Prime Minister Li Keqiang, on the other hand, would be part of the populists, because he rose up from the ranks of the CYL.

2.3. Diplomatic activity in China

The above-mentioned factors influence, to a certain extent, the exercise of a diplomatic and governmental dialogue with China. It is difficult to make sense of what is going on in such a tangle of local practices, social codes, cultural traditions, governmental and party structure, protocol, legal and para-legal procedures etc., which diverge from what many diplomats are accustomed to.

In much the same way as in other subjects, the intertwining of administrative and partisan spheres is repeated in the diplomatic field. There are several bodies that interfere with the conduct of Chinese foreign policy. The latter is believed to be coordinated by the Foreign Affairs Office of the State Council[46] and the Communist Party's Central Committee. Commonly, much decision-making power is attributed to the Small Group of Leadership on Foreign Relations of the Central Committee of the CPC, usually headed by a member of the Politburo's Standing Committee. The Waijiaobu[47]

46 State Counselor Yang Jiechi (杨洁篪) is currently responsible for conducting foreign policy matters at the State Council.

47 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China (外交部).

then has the executive function of implementing the directives emanating from the government's higher instances and the CPC[48].

The Chinese diplomatic discourse has unique elements. It is usually structured from the general to the particular, starting with assertions of principles, reruns of the most important recent bilateral events, and ending with proposals to advance themes of common interest. The speech is also filled with symbolism, which seeks to give the relationship an aura of importance and exceptionality. It is common for Chinese foreign policy makers to present the bilateral relationship as a strategic partnership and to characterize all aspects of the agenda, including trade and investment, as win-win cooperation ("共赢合作").

One aspect that intrigues Western interlocutors is the ritualism around ceremonies and work meetings in China. Chinese diplomacy is characterized by a rigid protocol structure, with rules not always explicit and whose specificities can differ considerably from Western formulas.

Drawing on their long tradition of planning, the Chinese are well aware of their foreign policy interests and priorities, both in terms of themes and countries. Therefore, it is common for these priorities to be evident in the protocol of meetings and visits. Ministers visiting China are usually received only by their counterparts. Meetings with higher authorities are seldom granted, and when they are, they serve to indicate the degree of importance that the Chinese government attaches to the visitor. In recent years, for example, with the exception of the heads of state of the United States and Russia, few foreign visitors were given a courtesy hearing with President Xi Jinping.

48 BRADY, Anne-Marie. Making the Foreign Serve China. Maryland: Rowman & Litllefield Publishers, Inc., 2003, p. 2.

Another striking feature of Chinese diplomatic practice is to reserve important decisions and announcements for high-level meetings, such as state and government visits. In these meetings, it is customary for the leaders of each side to oversee the signing of various agreements and to report investments and financing of substantial size. This model makes it imperative to maintain a regular flow of visits from high-level authorities as a means to push certain agendas, as is done by the USA, several European countries, and nations neighboring China. A brief look at the schedule of visits to Beijing impresses any observer, due to the intense succession of high-level visits, often preceded by meetings of delegations at a more technical level, as a means of securing results.

This calendar of visits is repeated at the provincial and municipal levels, where the decentralized model of power in China encourages governors and mayors to strengthen their external ties, often through sister city and province programs. Taking into account that, according to the Chinese political model, many of these local authorities are likely to ascend to central power, it is advisable to strengthen relations between subnational units as a way to facilitate access to the upper echelons of the CPC and government in Beijing.

Work meetings are marked by a high degree of formalism and artificiality, in which there is practically no room for improvisation. The meetings usually follow a predefined agenda, followed to the letter by the Chinese interlocutor. Speeches are usually read by the authorities in Chinese – even if they are fluent in the common language of the counterpart – based on a prepared text and then translated by interpreters, while other officials take note of everything that has been said. As the cases of foreigners who command Mandarin are rare, the dialogue often ends up as a succession of statements and phrases, with little interaction between the participants. Furthermore, it is not unusual for the Chinese side to repeat their views and interests throughout the meeting.

Henry Paulson, after decades of experience with the Chinese, has made interesting comments about the choreographic style of meetings in China.

> *Chinese meetings have a definite choreography and ceremony to them, and it is within this context that you look for the signals being sent and the messages being given. In general, everyone sits in chairs set out in a horseshoe or U-shaped arrangement, with the most senior Chinese official at the closed end of the U and the most important visitor to his right; other Chinese officials and members of the visiting delegation are arrayed in descending rank on the flanks of the horseshoe, facing one another.*
>
> *Meetings are anything but free-form. [...] There is no interchange or dialogue in the conventional sense. There can be a stilted, scripted feel to the proceedings*[49].
>
> *The Chinese leaders are charming hosts and interlocutors, skilled at making you feel good, leading you to think you've heard what you wanted to hear. It's easy to become giddy and overly optimistic*[50].

As in the private sector, guanxi (系, or relationship in English) is fundamental in the diplomatic activity. Relations with well-positioned people – a situation in which the command

49 PAULSON, Henry. M. Jr. *Dealing with China:* an insider unmasks the new economic superpower. 1st. ed. New York: Twelve, 2015, p. 9.

50 *Ibid*., p. 13.

of Mandarain is an asset – helps to circumvent much of the omnipresent formalism in the Chinese protocol and to best navigate between the written and unwritten rules of state bureaucracy. Meals and gifts play a considerable role in building social connections and mutual trust, sometimes overcoming legal and administrative obstacles. According to Schiavani, Scherer and Coronel's article:

> *While the concept of "what you know" is valued in Western culture, referring to technological specialization and the quality of the product or service, in Chinese society the emphasis is on "who you know", that is, on social connections with authorities and other individuals*[51].

3. Characteristics of the Chinese economy and corporate culture

Economic activity is a social activity and, as such, strongly influenced by cultural elements. Additionally, in the case of China, there is a strong overlap between economics and politics, influenced by communism. This feature, added to the cultural distance, generates some prejudice that prevents a clear understanding of the singularities of China's economic inner workings and how Brazil can perform more effectively in that important market.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the country's economy was planned by the central government through the five-year plans. With the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 and the rise of Deng Xiaoping, important economic reforms were implemented, usually grouped under the slogan "reform and

51 SCHIAVINI, Janaina Mortari; SCHERER, Flavia Luciane; CORONEL, Daniel Arruda. Entendendo o Guanxi e sua Influência nas Relações Internacionais. *Economia Contemporânea*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 16, n. 2, p. 316-332, May-Aug. 2012.

openness”[52]. The adjustment process of what would become one of the greatest industrial powers on the planet was initiated by a reform of the agricultural sector, abolishing the system of collective land ownership. This had extraordinary effects on the countryside, causing the rural *per capita* income to more than double between 1979 and 1984. At the same time, with new capital coming from the countryside, there was a rapid expansion of so-called district and city companies (TVEs – Township and Village Enterprises[53]), which combined the energy of private entrepreneurs and state support.

Two principles were fundamental in the process of reform and transition of the Chinese economy. The first was pragmatism; the second, experimentalism. The formulation in the late 1970s of “socialism with Chinese characteristics” was the signal emitted by the Party’s mainstream that ideological factors could not be a limiting factor for growth. As Deng said, when he received the Czechoslovak Prime Minister Lubomír Štrougal in 1987, “being poor is not being socialist”[54]. The spirit was to try new productive arrangements in order to increase the income of the country. In another formulation, “development is the only iron law”[55], used by Deng Xiaoping on his famous trip to Southern China in 1992, we see the reaction of the reformist impetus against the conservatism that had settled in Chinese politics since the events of June 4, 1989 on Tiananmen Square.

Gradual experimentalism was instrumental in testing the new policies before they were implemented across the country. The best example of this were the Special Economic Zones, limited

52 In Chinese, 改革开放.

53 In Chinese, 乡镇企业.

54 In Chinese, 贫穷不是社会主义.

55 In Chinese, 发张才是硬道理.

test fields of measures that were later applied throughout China. The attitude was summed up in another slogan by Deng: "cross the river by feeling the stones"[56]. In short, it was not a matter of simply abandoning the socialist past, but of making a gradual change in pursuit of the country's development.

Western observers tend to attribute to the Chinese economy degrees of coordination and centralization that are actually inexistent. The Chinese economic model, despite the five-year plans, is not exactly centralized. Decentralization was the result of the remarkable geographical diversity of China and also of a strategy designed by Mao Zedong, thought to be the best means to resist an invasion by the United States or the Soviet Union[57]. Subnational governments have a high degree of discretion and autonomy, larger than in Western democracies. A 2004 report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) states that, in democracies, spending below the national level would be on average 25% of total government spending. Contrastingly, in China, between 1958 and 2002, the average was 54%, a proportion that in 2014 reached the level of 85%, above any democratic nation[58].

In any case, China, even today, in its political model, maintains the Leninist structure; a characteristic that has fundamental economic consequences. For Lenin, it was necessary to keep as much centralization as possible at the top of the decision-making structure to ensure the direction of activities. Correspondingly, at the lowest level of the bases, greater decentralization or flexibility should prevail in order to ensure a continuous flow of information to the top. The Leninist model was the basis of the CPC at its

56 In Chinese, 摸着石头过河.

57 KROEBER, Arthur R. *China's Economy:* What Everyone Needs to Know. Oxford: Oxford University, 2016, p. 5.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

founding, but it was made more flexible by Mao Zedong, especially with regard to the centralization of decision-making power at the top. With Deng, this centralism was recovered and consolidated in Chinese politics and economy. During the reform of the state sector initiated by Zhu Rongji[59] in the mid-1990s, one of the slogans was "to invigorate large enterprises while relaxing control over small ones"[60]. The objective was to control the strategic sectors of the economy through large state enterprises and to promote privatization in less important sectors where small state enterprises operated.

Deng's reform process was marked by measures and countermeasures, and China's economic transition continues to this day. Unlike the Soviet Union, which initiated reforms at the political level, reforms in the PRC began with a transition to economic liberalization, with a view to ensuring the Party's leadership in the conduct of the process. In 2013, the final communiqué from the Third Plenum of the 18th CPC Central Committee indicated that there was still a need to reaffirm the role of the private sector in the economy. In the document, it is argued that "the market must play a fundamental role in the allocation of resources"[61]. Among the challenges, however, there is the reform of state-owned enterprises, which still control important economic sectors. Still, the growth rates of the last few decades leave no

59 Zhu Rongji (朱镕基) was the fifth Chinese prime minister, from 1998 to 2003, during which he promoted the continuation of economic reforms in China.

60 In Chinese, 抓大放小.

61 In Chinese, 使市场在资源配置中起决定性作用. Previously, the market should play a somewhat more restricted role, as it would play only a basic "基础性" role in allocating resources (KROEBER, Arthur R. *China's Economy*: What Everyone Needs to *Know*. Oxford: Oxford University, 2016, p. 51).

doubt that China is a vibrant and dynamic economy: between 1980 and 2015 the country grew at an average rate of 9.72%[62,63].

Economic growth, or, more precisely, the employment level, is the fundamental variable through which the party leadership adjusts economic policy. The maintenance of a certain level of economic growth is perceived as the main instrument of social stability and, consequently, perpetuation of the political regime. To this end, the Party maintains influence over a relatively large group of companies, particularly in the energy, transport, raw materials, telecommunications and finance sectors. In large companies, public and private, it is common to see the influence, sometimes strong, of the political lines of the party. For example, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) released a document in 2012 stating the bank's commitment to some premises proposed by the 18th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party[64]. More recently, in 2015, the CITIC bank, in announcing the five objectives to be pursued that year, included the goal of "strengthening the comprehensive construction of the Party"[65]. The leaders of large Chinese state-owned enterprises have a title similar to minister in the Chinese hierarchy and often maintain a channel of open and direct dialogue with the leadership of the CPC.

> *On the desks of the heads of China's fifty-odd biggest state companies, sits a red phone. [...] The 'red machine'*

62 IMF. *World economic outlook*. Washington, DC: IMF, 2016. Available at: <http://www.imf.org/ external/pubs/ft/weo/2016/01/pdf/text.pdf>. Accessed on: Feb. 7, 2017.

63 In recent years, the Chinese economy, for various reasons, has been slowing down. In 2016, the GDP growth rate was 6.7%.

64 ICBC. "ICBC Seeks a Fuller Embrace of the 18th CPC National Congress". Available at: <https://www.icbcasia.com/icbc/newsupdates/icbc%20news/ICBC%20Seeks%20a%20Fuller%20Embrace%20of%20the%2018th%20CPC%20National%20Congress.htm>. Accessed on: Aug. 14, 2016.

65 THE ECONOMIST. *Politics*: power to the party. v. 419, n. 8987, May 2016.

> *is like no ordinary phone. Each one has just a four-digit number. It connects only to similar phones with four-digit number within the same encrypted system. [...] For the chairmen and women of the top state companies, who have every modern communications device at their fingertips, the 'red machine' is a sign they have arrived, not just at the top of the company, but in the senior ranks of the Party and the government. The phones are the ultimate status symbol, as they are only given out to people in jobs with the rank of vice-ministers and above*[66].

In this context, the CPC and the state are key interlocutors in business. The establishment of transnational partnerships and big business deals needs government approval. Dialogue and negotiation are not only between enterprises but also between governments. In the Chinese model, the visible hand of the state and the invisible hand of the market, rather than being contradictory, are complementary and reinforce each other[67].

For this reason, some elements of Chinese political culture have influence on business activity. Similar to the contacts between states, it is important in the Chinese business culture to establish the correct channels, as well as to ensure that the hierarchical level of the interlocutors is equivalent. Even in the business world, it must be expected that sometimes the interlocutor has no decision-making power or that the reactions from the Chinese side take some time, since they are subject to a process similar to that of state bureaucracy.

66 MCGREGOR, Richard. *The Party*: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers. London: Penguin Books, 2011, p. 8.

67 *Ibid*., p. 28.

The recognition that the state still plays a central role in the Chinese economy should not, however, obscure the fact that China's market is extremely dynamic and a source of great opportunities. The initial source of China's entrepreneurial vitality was the grassroots level (草根), the most flexible in the Leninist model, or as Chinese writer Yu Hua puts it:

> *With all the changes since 1978, there's no end to such stories. China's economic miracle of the past thirty years, it's fair to say, is an agglomeration of countless individual miracles created at the grassroots level. China's grassroots dare to think and dare to act; in the tide of economic development they will adopt any method that suits their purposes, and they are bold enough to try things that are illegal or even criminal. At the same time China's legal system has developed only slowly, leaving plenty of loopholes for the grassroots to exploit and putting all kinds of profits within their reach. Add to that their having nothing to lose, since they began with nothing at all. "The barefoot do not fear the shod," the Chinese say, or as Marx put it, "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains, and they have a world to win"*[68].

Yu Hua further adds that the reforms of Deng Xiaoping which ignited the entrepreneurial spirit of citizens at the grassroots level were a continuation of the agitations promoted by the Cultural Revolution:

> *As I look back over China's sixty years under communism, I sense that Mao's Cultural Revolution and Deng's open-door reforms have given China's grassroots two*

68 HUA, Yu. *China in ten words*. New York: Random House, 2011. [Kindle edition] location 2585 of 3245.

> *huge opportunities: the first to press for a redistribution of political power and the second to press for a redistribution of economic power*[69].

One cultural feature that has an important influence on the way of doing business in China is the way the Chinese understand the social bond and how trust is built between the parties. In China, there was no legal system such as the Roman Law, which regulated social relations and eventual disputes according to pre-established laws. In this way, the sense of stability of contracts was built through trust in the personal relationship, or guanxi (关系). In order to do good business, it is necessary to build trust with partners, a construction that is done, above all, in social events that are not directly related to business interests, such as banquets and parties. According to Henry Paulson, "China lacked a strong adherence to the rule of law. [...] the rule of men was the norm, which meant that building strong personal relationships was essential for doing business"[70].

China, with its cultural peculiarities, presents a very different economic and business mode of operation than that found in countries with which Brazil historically has closer ties. These differences, however, should not be rejected as illogical or incomprehensible. To the contrary, these particularities have to be understood in their context to prevent any cultural differences from being transformed into insurmountable obstacles.

4. Challenges in the Brazil-China relationship

In spite of all the cultural differences between Brazil and China, the path to closer ties between the two countries requires

69 *Idem.*

70 PAULSON, Henry. M. Jr. *Dealing with China*: an insider unmasks the new economic superpower. First Edition. New York: Twelve, 2015, p. 33.

a consistent and comprehensive strategy to increase mutual knowledge, which involves multiple initiatives.

In the face of a partner who values long-term planning, it is important to strengthen our capacity for political coordination in order to not only avoid dispersed, disjointed and sometimes duplicate initiatives of public and private actors, but to precisely define strategic national interests. Greater high-level articulation of the main stakeholders on the Brazilian side would certainly bring tangible results in terms of a greater political, business and commercial presence in China.

At this point, it is important to design a strategy of promotion and commercial intelligence that combines governmental and private efforts to reduce the lack of knowledge of the potential of the Chinese market and local tastes and preferences, and to diffuse the Brazilian economic reality, which would help attract investment to Brazil and promote exports to China. This articulated action could also contribute to the reduction of barriers for certain Brazilian products to enter the Chinese market, and would stimulate the presence of trade associations in China through representative offices in large cities and in the interior of the country, economic dynamism, and perhaps the creation of a binational chamber of commerce. In order to achieve these results, and in view of the difficulties imposed by the linguistic barrier and the differences in corporate and political-bureaucratic culture, the government incentive to train specialists on either side with a high degree of fluency in both languages is an asset not to be overlooked.

At the same time, initiatives in the cultural and educational fields could soften misperceptions from one side to another and foster interest in such distant realities. The teaching of Portuguese in China has seen an increasing demand and acceptance; there are several Chinese universities with an interest in starting Portuguese courses; concomitantly, the interest of Brazilian students in learning Mandarin and the number of Confucius Institutes in the country is growing. On other fronts, the reader teacher program could be strengthened in the country, as well as a beneficial organization of exchange of experts and students. Another measure not to be taken off the radar is the establishment of a Brazilian cultural center in China, to deepen the relations between Brazilian teaching and research institutions and the main Chinese universities, whose lecturers often have good relations with the government.

It is interesting to note that the same perception that sectors of government and private enterprises have regarding the need to foster greater knowledge of China in Brazil is shared by the Chinese. According to Niu Haibin:

> *To build a global and strategic partnership, both sides need to enhance the understanding of each other in terms of economy, society and culture beyond politics. There are some difficulties such as language, geographic distance, and economy frictions obstructing the mutual understanding. Lack of Brazilian newspapers, magazines or media in English make it difficult for the Chinese to know a great deal about Brazil. There is no influential research institute focusing on China in Brazil*[71].

Regardless of the eventual slowdown in China's economic growth, there is no prospect that China will cease to be a crucial element for Brazilian development in the short, medium or long term. Indeed, with the transition of its export-based economic model to a strengthening of domestic demand and hence a higher standard of living of an increasingly urbanized population eager

71 HAIBIN, Niu. Emerging Global Partnership: Brazil and China (2010). *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional,* v. 53, p. 183-192, 2010.

for new consumption habits, it is expected that the demand for products that Brazil has the ability to offer at competitive prices will remain high. At that, it is up to us to seek not only to guarantee the maintenance of the current level of political dialogue and commercial exchange, but also to take advantage, tactically and strategically, of other opportunities that may open up in the bilateral relationship, in its most diverse areas of cooperation.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Baron of Rio Branco perceived the change of the axis of power from Europe to the United States and promoted changes in the conduct of the Brazilian foreign policy. A little over a century later, the emergence of a new dynamic pole in the world, with an increasing capacity to influence and relate with the most diverse regions of the globe, is observed. Faced with this new configuration of the international system, we must remain prepared to better defend our national interests.

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CHAPTER 2

BRAZIL AND JAPAN: BUILDING A COMMON GLOBAL AGENDA

João Augusto Costa Vargas[1]

On November 5, 1895, Gabriel de Toledo Piza e Almeida and Sone Arasuke signed the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation, which established diplomatic relations between Brazil and Japan. The signing of the Treaty in Paris, where the two signatories were plenipotentiary ministers of their respective countries, was not incidental. Europe was still, at that time, the center of global political geography. Peripheral, Brazil and Japan were not only physically distant from one another, but also distant from the strategic considerations of European countries. For Japan, this would begin to change with the victory in the Russian-Japanese War, ten years later; for Brazil, the journey to global relevance would be even more time-consuming.

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Under these conditions, it is not surprising that relations between Brazil and Japan have developed mainly, if not exclusively, strictly bilaterally, and have taken a long time to become truly global. The Japanese-Brazilian interaction had to overcome geographical, cultural and political distances in order to establish the robust and multifaceted partnership that exists today.

Brazil and Japan are not only regional powers, but also in many areas they play a leading role at the global level. In this context, one of the most interesting and challenging aspects of the bilateral relationship is the effort to create a common global agenda between the two countries – *i.e.,* identify issues of international relevance in which dialogue and collaboration between Brasilia and Tokyo can generate benefits for the international order as a whole. It is a question of finding ways in which Brazil and Japan can pool their resources – material, political, technical or technological – to generate a greater impact than the simple sum of their individual capacities would suggest.

This article will explore some of the ways – with no pretensions of exhaustion –the two countries will be able to work to build this agenda. For this, the text will be divided into four parts – two of them contextual and two substantive.

The first will briefly review some of the key dimensions of bilateral relations – economic, political, and human – in order to contextualize subsequent discussions. The intention here is not to present a complete inventory of the history of Brazil-Japan relations, but only to demonstrate that the density of the relationship enables the two countries to coordinate globally.

In the second part of the article, some considerations will be outlined about the diplomatic activism that has characterized Japan under the government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who took office in December 2012. The main objective will be to clarify the context in which the establishment of the Strategic and Global Partnership between Brazil and Japan in 2014 was established.

The third section of the text will deal directly with the construction of a new shared global agenda, recalling what had already been done for this purpose before the establishment of the Strategic and Global Partnership, and indicating the new directions established from 2014 onward.

In the fourth part, we will examine in more detail how the dialogue on issues of international peace and security between the two countries could prove to be a useful field for building a common global agenda.

1. The history of the bilateral relationship – three dimensions

After the end of World War II and the subsequent recomposition of diplomatic relations between Brazil and Japan[2], it was not long before the two countries began to move closer to what would be normal between two peoples so far apart. The economic dimension of the relationship was the first to thrive, followed by the political-diplomatic one. Subsequently, the human ties that have united the two countries since the beginning of the twentieth century were further reinforced by the migration of large contingents of Brazilians to Japan.

1.1. Economic partnership

After 1945, the immediate priority in Japan was the reconstruction of the country, still under US occupation. However, even before this process had been completed, Japanese

2 In August 1942, when Japan declared war on Germany and Italy, Brazil confined itself to breaking diplomatic relations with Japan; it only declared war on Japan in June 1945, two months before the Japanese surrender (KOIFMAN; ODA, 2013).

businessmen began to explore the possibilities for investment abroad – including in Brazil, then in full process of industrialization.

In the 1950s and 1960s, large Japanese companies settled in the country. This was the case of Toyota, for example, which in 1958 established in São Paulo its first factory outside of Japan, as well as Mitsubishi and Marubeni. Japan also invested, as of 1957, in Usiminas – Japan's largest overseas investment up to that point (SHIMIZU, 1987).

In the 1970s, the Japanese contribution to the Brazilian economy made a qualitative leap; Brazil has grown into the third largest recipient of Japanese capital in the world (BARBOSA, 1994, p. 345). There were significant Japanese investments in major Brazilian development projects, like the Programa Grande Carajás, Albras and Alunorte, Celulose Nipo-Brasileira S.A. (Cenibra) and Siderúrgica de Tubarão (NUNES, 2008). Most notable was the Programa para Desenvolvimento do Cerrado (Prodecer), which contributed to the development of the Brazilian Cerrado region by stimulating agriculture, investing more than 68 billion yen over almost twenty years (see CAMPOS DA ROCHA *et al.,* 2016).

However, the 1980s brought the debt crisis and economic instability in Brazil – particularly hyperinflation – that led to a cooling of Japan's enthusiasm for Brazil, which persisted during the 1990s. Even after the implementation of the Plano Real, Japan "remained distinctly apathetic or distant from the Brazilian privatization process" (ALTEMANI DE OLIVEIRA, 2006, p. 282) – also due to the collapse of the Japanese economic bubble at the beginning of the decade.

From the decade of 2000 onward, however, there was a marked economic rapprochement between the two countries. Between 2001 and 2009, Japanese foreign investment in Brazil totaled US$ 11 billion – an increase of more than six times in relation to the previous decade. The peak of Japanese direct investment in Brazil was in 2011, when Japan became the fourth largest investor in the country, with a total flow of US$ 7.5 billion[3]. Even with a decline to more modest figures in subsequent years, Japanese FDI in Brazil in 2015 was US$ 2.8 billion – making Japan the sixth largest source of investment in the country.

It is evident that the increase in Japanese investment in Brazil at the beginning of the twenty-first century reflects the good performance of the Brazilian economy throughout most of that period and the identification of promising opportunities on the part of Japanese entrepreneurs in an expanding economy.

However, the concerted effort of the two governments to stimulate this investment was also important, as was evidenced during President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's visit to Japan in 2005. At the time, the "Joint Program for the Revitalization of Economic Relations" was adopted, which included the adoption of a set of important measures – including regular government consultations and covering sectors including energy, mining, infrastructure, biofuels and agriculture.

During the visit, the creation of the "Brazil-Japan Council for the 21st Century" was announced – a body made up of businessmen from both countries and responsible for formulating recommendations for the further development of bilateral relations. Today known as the "Group of Brazil-Japan Notables," the body continues to bring together some of the leading entrepreneurs from both countries – such as Chairmen and CEOs of VALE, Toyota, Nippon Steel and Mitsui – and has played an important role in presenting concrete proposals on the strengthening of the relationship, particularly in the economic

3 Data of the Central Bank of Brazil.

sphere, in a successful effort by the governments to mobilize the private sector for a strengthening of economic ties.

1.2. Political-diplomatic partnership

Although the main focus of the bilateral relationship has been economic interaction, Brazil and Japan also maintain an important political partnership.

Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi (1959) and President Ernesto Geisel (1976) held their first bilateral visits at the level of heads of state and government. To date, six Japanese prime ministers have visited the country, while four presidents of the Republic have visited Japan[4].

In addition, the two countries have maintained an important routine for bilateral political consultations. In November 1989, the then Secretary General of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Paulo Tarso Flecha de Lima, visited Tokyo, at which time the two countries agreed to establish such a routine. The first consultation meeting took place in 1991 and was repeated in subsequent years. However, by the end of the decade, the frequency of these meetings had diminished.

In 2002, then-Foreign Minister Celso Lafer visited Japan in a visit that sought, in the minister's words, to demonstrate that "Brazil at the beginning of the 21st century is very different from the country of the 'lost decade' of the 1980s" and that it was "the time to reverse the loss of Japan's participation as an investor and trading partner of Brazil" (MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 2002a). The joint communiqué issued during the visit stated: "Aiming at expand and strengthen the bilateral political dialogue,

4 It is also noted that President Dilma Rousseff visited Japan in 2008, as chief of staff of the Civil House, to represent President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva at the commemorations of 100 years of Japanese immigration to Brazil, and that future prime minister Taro Aso visited Brazil in 2007 as chancellor.

the chancellors of Brazil and Japan have agreed to examine the establishment of annual high-level consultations" (MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 2002b). The "reestablishment" of the political consultation routine reflected the renewed interest of Brasilia and Tokyo in strengthening their relationship.

When, less than two years later, Minister Celso Amorim visited Japan, "there was agreement on the importance of intensifying the political dialogue between the Brazilian and Japanese chancelleries, with the institutionalization of the high-level consultation routine agreed to in 2002" (MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 2004). This desire for greater institutionalization has borne fruit, since in the twelve years between June 2004 and March 2016, six meetings in this format took place, always at the level of undersecretary-generals. These consultations helped to ensure, throughout this period, that the political dimension walked *pari passu* with the economic dynamics of the relationship.

1.3. Human bonds

It is impossible to speak of the history of bilateral relations without reference to the human ties that unite Brazil and Japan. The arrival of Japanese immigrants in Brazil from June 1908 onward, when the ship Kasato Maru arrived in the Port of Santos, provoked a change in the Brazilian DNA, both literally and figuratively. There is no doubt that the decision of these immigrants to build their lives in Brazil and the capacity of Brazilian society to accommodate and integrate them have had a profound impact on the reciprocal perceptions between Japan and Brazil.

Opinion polls commissioned by the Japanese government in Brazil reveal that the successful integration of the Japanese diaspora into Brazilian society has helped to create a positive image of Japan in the country. In the latest of these surveys, whose results were released in March 2013, 81% of respondents stated that Brazilians of Japanese origin were contributing to Brazil (MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 2013a). When asked which countries should be Brazil's most important partners in the future, the respondents pointed first to the United States (59%), followed by Japan (50%). China, in third place, was mentioned by only 32%.

Thus, Brazil's community of Japanese descendants – the largest in the world outside Japan – has an important symbolic role in the bilateral relations and contributes to creating a more favorable image of this partnership among the Brazilian population. The relevance of this type of perception cannot be underestimated, considering that in democratic societies foreign policy must necessarily accompany and respond to the population's perceptions.

The weight of this symbolic role was evidenced in 2008, when there were a series of events to celebrate the centenary of Japanese immigration to Brazil. In addition to the ceremonies and official visits – then Minister Chief of Staff Dilma Rousseff went to Japan in April and Crown Prince Naruhito visited Brazil in June – the celebrations overflowed into many aspects of Brazilian life and culture, from Maurício de Sousa's comics to samba school themes.

Human ties have a second dimension, which is the Brazilian community in Japan. From the end of the 1980s onward, a significant migration of Brazilians to Japan began, reflecting both the stagnation of the Brazilian economy and the dynamism of the Japanese economy at the time (COSTA, 2007: p. 34-35). The Brazilian community in Japan reached its numerical peak in 2008, surpassing the mark of 312,000 people. It suffered a significant decrease in the following years – also due to the good performance of the Brazilian economy in the period – so that, in 2015, the number had fallen to the still significant sum of approximately 173,000 (MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, 2016).

As with the Japanese who came to Brazil, there is no doubt that the Brazilian community contributes to Japanese cultural life – though to a much smaller extent, given that the Brazilian community in Japan is much more recent. The fundamental difference between the Japanese-born community in Brazil and the Brazilian community in Japan is that the children, grandchildren and other descendants of the Japanese immigrants in Brazil received Brazilian nationality at birth. Thus, while maintaining cultural and affective links with Japan, they are legally Brazilian and treated as such by the Brazilian State.

The Brazilian community in Japan does not have the same status: their children and grandchildren do not receive the Japanese nationality, even if they were born in Japan. Thus, they have a different relationship with the Japanese government and depend, in various circumstances, on the support of the Brazilian State to defend their interests. Therefore, the Brazilian community in Japan, in addition to the symbolic dimension, effectively depends on the relationship between the two governments.

It was the mutual recognition of this reality that led to the establishment of the Consular Coordination Meetings, whose first edition took place in 2003, and to the adoption of the "Joint Program Concerning Brazilian Communities in Japan," on the occasion of President Lula's visit in 2005 (COSTA, 2007: p. 185-186 and 197). The Program encompassed areas such as education for Brazilian children, Japanese language teaching, and social security – essential to the integration of the Japanese community in Brazil (MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 2005). This integration has not always been easy, even though the majority of the Brazilians who reside in Japan is of Japanese origin and could have, in theory, greater ease of adaptation. Today, more than ten years after launching the Joint Program, Brazilians "continue to seek full integration" into Japanese society, toward which "not only our consulates in Tokyo, Nagoya and Hamamatsu have worked, but also our Japanese partners in national and local government, civil society and the business community," wrote Brazilian ambassador André Corrêa do Lago (CORRÊA DO LAGO, 2015).

2. The Abe Government's diplomatic activism

In 2014, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Brazil, at which time a Joint Communiqué was adopted that announced the establishment of the Strategic and Global Partnership between the two countries. This step reflected the maturity and density of the bilateral relationship, but it was also the result of a time of unusual Japanese diplomatic activism that began with the return of Shinzo Abe to power on December 26, 2012 (Abe had already been prime minister once, between September 2006 and September 2007).

Abe's election marked an inflection in Japanese politics, given that the six governments that preceded his had an average longevity of one year and fifteen days each. Thus, Abe has been, to a certain extent, the first Japanese trustee since Junichiro Koizumi (who ruled between 2001 and 2006) with enough time to devise a government plan and implement it systematically.

The scenario Abe was confronted with when he took office was troubling to Japan in many ways. In the economy, in addition to the absence of economic growth and persistent deflation – to be counteracted by a set of measures called "Abenomics" – there was an even more serious structural problem: the demographic crisis. The country has a population which is very old (according to data from 2014, 22% of the population was 65 years old or more) and shrinking rapidly. From 2013 to 2014, the population decreased by 244,000 people and it is estimated that by 2060, the population will drop from approximately 127 million to about 87 million (THE ECONOMIST, 2014). In addition, the country's energy dependence – being a major importer of oil and liquefied natural gas – had been aggravated by the shutdown of all Japanese nuclear power plants following the earthquake and tsunami that caused the tragedy at the Fukushima plant (BAHIA DINIZ, 2016).

On the external front, there were difficulties in relation to China and South Korea, due to the "nationalist" or "revisionist" positions that the two countries accused Abe of defending (for further exploration of this theme see NINOMIYA; TANAKA, 2015). Here too, there was a more serious structural issue, namely, the rebalancing of power in Asia, with China's (economic, political and military) rise and the consequent relativization of US primacy in the Pacific.

The alliance with the United States has been the core of Japanese foreign policy since the post-World War II era. Thus, the strengthening of China and the gradual erosion of US military supremacy in the Pacific is a central theme for Japan (MIYAMOTO; WATANABE, 2014). The question arises as to whether, in the future, this change in the correlation of forces will lead to a reduction of the capacity or willingness of the United States to bear the costs of maintaining its almost unconditional support to Japanese security.

Under these conditions, Abe put much greater emphasis than most of his predecessors on foreign affairs, including reinforcing perception in the USA of the strategic value of the alliance with Japan. In a speech he made in Washington two months after taking office as prime minister, Abe was explicit: "It is high time, in this age of Asian resurgence, for Japan to bear even more responsibility" (ABE, 2013a).

But Abe's diplomatic activism also advances other goals, as well as seeking to increase the importance of the American-Japanese alliance in the eyes of the United States: finding profitable destinations for Japanese investments, as the country's economic and demographic situation makes overseas investment essential for Japanese growth; help disseminate the Japanese vision of the ongoing transformations in Asia; and strengthen ties with other East Asian countries that are important to Tokyo from both an economic and political point of view (PANDA, 2016).

The manifestations of this diplomatic activism were diverse. One of the most striking was Abe's travel calendar: in his first 20 months of office, he visited 49 countries (*ibid*.). Some trips were particularly notable, such as his trip to Russia in April 2013 (the first visit by a Japanese prime minister in ten years), when he underlined his interest in resolving the Kuril Islands territorial dispute and concluding a peace treaty with Russia, which was never signed after the Second World War. His interest in expanding the frontiers of Japanese diplomacy is also evidenced by the fact that Abe has visited a number of countries that had never received a Japanese head of government, such as Ukraine, Portugal, Trinidad and Tobago and Tajikistan.

Abe's diplomatic activism is also reflected in the expansion of the budget for the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the fiscal year 2013 – whose budget began to be prepared before Abe took office – 608 billion yen were assigned to the MNE (approximately US$ 5.7 billion in today's exchange rate). By the fiscal year 2016, this number had already risen to 714 billion yen (about US$ 6.7 billion in today's exchange rate) – an increase of more than 17 percent in just three years (MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 2013b and 2016). Abe has promoted extensive revisions to the official development assistance law provided by Japan, the Development

Cooperation Charter, in order to make the disbursement of government assistance more flexible (GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN, 2015).

Abe has also given new momentum to Japanese defense diplomacy, whose agenda was traditionally concentrated almost exclusively on the United States. The Japanese Constitution prohibits the country from maintaining “land, sea and air forces as well as other war potential” (which is why the country has “Self-Defense Forces” instead of the Armed Forces), and Japan has a number of other specific restrictions in this area. Nonetheless, the Japanese Self-Defense Forces have recognized capabilities, particularly with regard to maritime operations.

Abe has engaged in defense dialogues with numerous other partners, including India, Turkey, France, Russia and the United Kingdom; he relaxed self-imposed restrictions on the export of military equipment, which now allow for the joint development of military technology with other partners; and changed the legislation which prohibited Self-Defense Forces from participating in acts of international collective security operations, including peacekeeping missions – a topic that will be dealt with more deeply in the following section.

These measures sparked protest and cautious reactions from China and South Korea, as a reflection of the still unresolved traumas of World War II in Asia. They were not, however, accompanied by a significant increase in military resources; as pointed out by some analysts, increases in Japan’s nominal defense budget during the Abe administration did little to change the effective investment in the Self-Defense Forces (TATSUMI, 2015).

Latin America and the Caribbean did not go unnoticed in the midst Japan’s effort for diplomatic projection. In addition to accelerating negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements with some Latin American partners, Prime Minister Abe made an important visit to the region between July and August 2014, passing through Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago (where the Japan-Community of Caribbean States summit took place), Colombia, Chile and Brazil.

It was the first official visit of a Japanese prime minister to Brazil – and to the region – in ten years, since the visit of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in 2004[5]. In São Paulo, on August 2, Abe delivered a speech titled "Together!" in which presented his foreign policy for Latin America, promising that the "Japanese Prime Ministers and other Ministers will visit Brazil and other countries of Latin America and the Caribbean with increased frequency" (ABE, 2014b). More than an empty promise, the statement seems to reflect the recognition that interaction with the region has become a priority for Tokyo, as the Japanese economy increasingly needs internationalization, and geopolitical pressures compel the country to seek an increasingly active role.

In this context, it is symptomatic that press coverage of Prime Minister Abe's visit to Brazil and other Latin American countries highlighted the proximity to Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to the region a few weeks earlier. This reading spread not only throughout the Brazilian and Japanese press, but also in international vehicles (THE ASAHI SHIMBUN, 2014; SACCOMANDI, 2014; FORD, 2014; DOMINGUEZ, 2014).

The notion that the visits of the two leaders would be nothing more than a manifestation of the dispute between China and Japan "for Latin America" seems simplistic and inadequate – not only in denying the countries of the region the status of agents

5 This decade-long gap seems likely to reflect turmoil in Japanese politics and frequent prime minister exchanges (seven exchanges between 2006 and 2012), which made it difficult for chiefs to travel, particularly to more distant regions such as South America.

and to reduce them to the condition of pawns in international politics, but also in ignoring the complexity of the interests at stake. For countries like Brazil, the partnerships with Tokyo and Beijing do not present a zero-sum game or a choice between one or the other. Despite the dubious substantive merits of this analysis, the fact that there is talk of Asian "competition" in Latin America demonstrates how the growing importance of Asia is beginning to be felt in the region and how this will inevitably affect its international relations. In his speech in São Paulo, Abe said: "as Japan seeks to widen its diplomatic horizons, Latin America and the Caribbean are the partners we look to count on" (ABE, 2014b).

In the Brazilian case, Abe's interest in raising bilateral relations to a new level coincided with Brazil's simultaneous determination to strengthen its ties with Asia, including Japan. From this convergence emerged the Strategic and Global Partnership between the two countries, whose establishment was announced in the Joint Communiqué issued during the same visit by Abe.

3. A common global agenda

3.1. The common global agenda before the Strategic and Global Partnership

The establishment of the Strategic and Global Partnership was a clear demonstration by the Brazilian and Japanese governments that they wanted the dialogue between the two countries to transcend purely bilateral issues and more directly cover issues on the global agenda. However, even before 2014, there were already some areas of the relationship aimed at discussing such topics.

This is evident, for example, in examining the documents pertaining President Lula's visit to Japan in May 2005. In addition to important texts on the bilateral aspects of the relationship –

such as the "Joint Program for Brazilian Communities in Japan" and the "Joint Program for the Revitalization of Economic Relations between Brazil and Japan," mentioned above – specific statements about a series of hot topics on the international agenda were included, such as the United Nations reform and sustainable development, indicating the desire of the two countries to strengthen the dialogue in these areas.

There are at least three other relevant examples of the institutionalization of the discussion of global issues by the two countries prior to the establishment of the Strategic and Global Partnership. The first are the bilateral consultations on United Nations issues, the first edition of which took place in 2002. The latest meeting of the mechanism – the eighth – took place in July 2014. The meetings, held in Brasilia, Tokyo, and New York, covered a number of issues on the Organization's agenda – from disarmament to reform of the UN.

Another form of institutionalized discussion on global issues is the bilateral meeting on climate change held annually since 2003. By allowing the direct engagement of climate change negotiators from both countries with quite different positions, experiences, and interests in the field, it demonstrates the willingness by both sides to build bridges between developed and developing countries in the negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Brazil and Japan also annually co-organize the "Informal Meeting on Future Actions in the Climate Change Area" that brings together, at the beginning of each year, the main international negotiators of climate change.

In 2015, Minister Mauro Vieira published an article in Japan on the Brazilian efforts to combat climate change by reducing deforestation, in which he underlined the interest in further strengthening cooperation with Japan in this area, noting:

> *As the world's second-largest developed and developing economies, respectively, Japan and Brazil are expected to actively engage in promoting sustainable development. [...] Our two countries share a long history of friendship, including cooperation in third countries. The preservation of forests can be a promising new frontier for bilateral and trilateral cooperation* [VIEIRA, 2015b].

In addition to consultation on United Nations issues and climate change, another institutionalized format of dialogue between Brazil and Japan is the G4, wherein the two countries – together with Germany and India – work towards the reform of the UN Security Council. The Group's own constitutional process illustrates how the willingness to open dialogues and the creation of mechanisms to promote it can have a significant impact on international relations, as will be shown below.

Soon after the end of the Cold War, both Brazil and Japan presented themselves as candidates for permanent seats on a reformed Security Council. The arguments put forward by each in favor of their candidacy were, however, different (VARGAS, 2011). Brazil emphasized, among other factors, the need for an adequate representation of developing and Latin American countries in the Council, stressing that the legitimacy of the body would tend to be eroded if such countries remained excluded from their decision-making center (India made similar arguments).

Japan, on the other hand, like Germany, argued that it would be entitled to a permanent seat on the basis of its financial contributions to the United Nations. Tokyo was not only the second largest contributor to the regular budget of the Organization (as it continues to be), but also accounted for a significant part of the costs of the first Gulf War – estimated at about US$ 13 billion. It argued, therefore, that because it was responsible for such a significant portion of the Organization's resources, it should have a greater say in how such resources were used.

The creation of the G4 in 2004 by Brazil, Japan, India and Germany represented a considerable effort in diplomatic engineering to combine these two – at first glance almost contradictory – discourses and create a united diplomatic front in favor of a UN Security Council reform. The G4 has fundamentally altered the dynamics of discussions on the subject in New York and given new momentum to the reform, forcing other countries and groups to articulate their positions on the subject more clearly. Even though it has not yet achieved its goal, the G4 is a testament to the fact that, through dialogue between countries with apparently diverging interests, it is possible to transform the terms of a discussion to give rise to new opportunities (*ibid*.).

3.2. The establishment of the Strategic and Global Partnership and the common global agenda

The establishment of the Strategic and Global Partnership in 2014 did not occur in a vacuum: there was obviously a reciprocal willingness to create a common global agenda. The 2014 Joint Communiqué evidenced, however, the determination to elevate this agenda to a new level. This is a natural step for states the size of Brazil and Japan, which have interests, as well as an ability to exert influence, not only in their own regions, but around the world. It is noteworthy that both countries have a particularly broad diplomatic network – according to the Lowy Institute's Global Diplomacy Index for International Policy, Brazil has a diplomatic network of 222 posts (7th largest in the world), while Japan has 214 posts (9th largest in the world).

In the preamble of the Joint Communiqué, there is mutual recognition of each actor's global role: Japan recognizes that it plays "an important role" in "international economic and political affairs," that Brazil is a "prominent global leader and actor," and that the two countries "play leading roles in global development issues and contribute significantly to international peace." In announcing the increase in bilateral relations at the level of Strategic and Global Partnership, the annual "Brazil-Japan Dialogue between Chancellors" (which had its first edition in July 2015 – the 120th anniversary of bilateral relations – when Minister Mauro Vieira traveled to Tokyo for this purpose).

In addition to the Chancellors' Dialogue, the Joint Communiqué records the commitment of the two leaders to hold more frequent meetings (paragraph 1). There is also a decision to "initiate, in the future, a dialogue on foreign policy and defense exchange" (paragraph 13), and reference to "the progress made in trilateral cooperation in favor of Latin American and Caribbean countries and Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa" (paragraph 15).

Nearly half of the Declaration – paragraphs 29 to 52 – is reserved for "Global and Regional Issues" and "Sustainable Development and Climate Change." Among the many issues covered are international trade and finance (paragraphs 29 and 30), international peace and security (paragraphs 32, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42, 43 and 44), women's rights (paragraph 34), information society and internet governance (paragraphs 40 and 41), climate change (paragraph 49), and the promotion of African development (paragraph 52).

The diversity of issues addressed in the Communiqué signals the ambition and willingness of the two countries to give their partnership a truly global character. However, it poses a challenge in that it requires a specific reflection effort on each of these sectors in order to assess ways in which concrete results can be achieved for both countries and, hence, which sectors should be prioritized.

4. International peace and security as part of the common global agenda

In the context of this effort to identify ways of moving towards a common global agenda between the two countries, experiences in relation to climate change and the reform of the Security Council could serve as a model. These cases seem to show an important lesson: cooperation does not require identical positions. Acknowledging the different approaches from side to side and without necessarily trying to fully "convert" the other to one's own vision, it is possible to find innovative ways that could even be welcomed by third states.

One consequence hereof is that the opportunities for productive dialogue which bring tangible benefits to both countries and to the international community as a whole are not necessarily in the most obvious areas and themes: they may occur in relation to issues in which, at first sight, there is little interaction or convergence.

Taking this into consideration, this last part of this article will explore the possibilities of deepening the dialogue between Brazil and Japan in the area of international peace and security. This type of cooperation appears to be particularly relevant between two countries that aspire to occupy permanent seats in the Security Council and which are now the countries that have most often served as non-permanent members (Japan on 11 occasions; Brazil on 10).

Both countries share pacifism as a striking feature of their international performance. Among the principles that guide Brazilian foreign policy, according to article 4 of the Federal

Constitution, are non-intervention, the defense of peace and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

In Japan, the pacifism established after the end of World War II is even more institutionalized. The Japanese Constitution prohibits the country from maintaining "land, sea and air forces as well as other war potential" (which is why the country has "Self-Defense Forces" rather than the Armed Forces), and Japan has a number of other specific restrictions in this area. Shinzo Abe's government has, however, sought to change the way Japanese pacifism manifests itself through his doctrine of "proactive contribution to Peace" and a review of Japanese security legislation. Announcing the new doctrine to the world in his address at the opening of the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2013, Abe said that "Japan is working to garner trust from the world as a creator of added value and a net contributor for regional and world peace and stability," and that he would enable "Japan, as a Proactive Contributor to Peace, to be more actively engaged in UN collective security measures, including peacekeeping operations" (ABE, 2013b).

The exact meaning of the notion of "proactive contribution to peace" became clearer in the new NAP strategy adopted in 2013, which states that the proactive contribution to peace would include:

- More emphatic diplomacy within the United Nations, with increased Japanese participation in peace missions and other activities such as preventive diplomacy, mediation, peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance;
- Strengthening the rule of law at the global level, including by strengthening multilateral international regimes;
- Leadership role in disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives;

- Promotion of international cooperation on peace and security, including through training and technical cooperation projects; and
- Promotion of international cooperation against terrorism (GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN, 2013).

Thus, the "proactive contribution to peace" seems to bring together a number of instruments through which Japan can play a more active role in preventing and resolving various crises that plague the globe. This would serve to both strengthen Japan's credentials as a true global actor and enable the country to assume greater responsibilities in the context of its alliance with the United States.

However, in seeking to play a more active role in maintaining international peace and security, Japan would hardly be able to participate directly in coercive military action, either because of constitutional constraints or because of the opinion of the Japanese electorate, which is still very attached to the pacifism instilled after the catastrophic defeat in World War II. In this sense, it is symptomatic that, in upholding the new security legislation put forward by the government, Abe considered it necessary to assert that the Self-Defense Forces "will never employ their force in battles such as the Gulf War or the Iraq War" (ABE, 2014a).

Japan's ambition to increase its contribution to international peace and security within the framework of the United Nations Charter without directly participating in coercive actions is convergent with the Brazilian position. In a speech in 2016, Chancellor Mauro Vieira recalled the "historical principles of our foreign policy, such as the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the valorization of multilateralism as the main means of addressing global issues," whilst at the same time criticizing "a serious banalization of the use of force by the most diverse countries and actors," emphasizing that the Brazilian position would not be "merely discursive or rhetorical, but also practical, because we make a concrete contribution to world stability through the engagement in United Nations peacekeeping operations and by promoting regional integration" (VIEIRA, 2016).

Under these conditions, peace and security issues could be a fruitful avenue to intensify the global dialogue between Brazil and Japan. This possibility was recognized in the Joint Communiqué of 2014, announcing the decision to initiate a "dialogue on foreign policy and defense exchange" (paragraph 13). It also cites proactive contribution to peace (paragraph 38), and convergence on several associated topics (paragraphs 35, 36, 37 and 39). Some specific topics that could form part of this dialogue which will be further examined below are peacekeeping, peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

4.1. Opportunities for dialogue: peace missions

An interesting effect of the restrictions imposed by Japan over the years on the work of the Self-Defense Forces is that they end up specializing in missions that do not involve direct combat. This, in turn, suggests promising avenues of cooperation with Brazil, particularly in the area of preparation for peace missions, in which the Brazilian Armed Forces have gained a reputation not only for acting in combat situations, but also for their capacity to use non-coercive means to help peacekeeping missions fulfill their mandates.

A concrete example of this are the military engineering companies deployed in various peacekeeping missions. Brazilian military engineers at the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) have distinguished themselves not only by their direct support to other military units of the mission, but also by the implementation of "Quick Impact Projects", as they are called in UN jargon, aimed at bringing immediate benefits to the local population and raising sympathy, thus facilitating the achievement of the mandate's objectives. Following the catastrophic earthquake that hit Haiti in January 2010, Japan also sent a company of military engineers to join MINUSTAH.

It is precisely in this type of activity that defense cooperation between the two countries could move forward. There was an initial step in this direction in March 2013, when the Permanent Missions of the two countries, together with the UN in New York, held a seminar on the role of military engineering units in peace missions (INTERNATIONAL PEACE INSTITUTE, 2013). The dialogue on foreign and defense policy envisaged in the Joint Communiqué could possibly identify new forms of cooperation of this kind.

On a more conceptual level, too, there would be room for dialogue on peace missions that could have concrete impacts on the UN's performance in numerous conflict situations. It is known, for example, that one of the main debates regarding peacekeeping operations in recent years has been in relation to the protection of civilians. Many missions are mandated by the Security Council to protect civilians in their areas of operation, but the most effective and legitimate ways of doing so, particularly in the context of the scarce resources available to them, have generated heated debates within the United Nations (SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT, 2013).

Both Brazil and Japan have cautioned the use of force for peacekeeping operations and advocated the use of preventive methods to protect civilians. Although the positions of the two countries are not identical, there is enough convergence to imagine that a more in-depth bilateral dialogue on the subject may produce relevant results. In turn, the results of this potential convergence could be presented to the United Nations as a contribution to the functioning of the peace missions.

This kind of dialogue neither needs nor should be restricted to the Foreign Ministries and Ministries of Defense of the two countries. The Centro Conjunto de Operações de Paz do Brasil (CECOPAB), established in 2005[6], and the Japan Peacekeeping Operations Research and Training Center, which dates from 2010, could do joint studies on the subject, and eventually promote the exchange of trainers. Japan also has a body directly linked to the Prime Minister's office entitled Headquarters for International Peace Cooperation, which has a team of researchers focused exclusively on issues such as peace missions and humanitarian assistance.

4.2. Opportunity for dialogue: peacebuilding and conflict prevention

Another promising area for bilateral dialogue in the context of the Strategic and Global Partnership is peacebuilding in post-conflict situations and actions to prevent the outbreak of conflict.

Brazil and Japan have shown special interest in this issue within the framework of the United Nations, having chaired the Organization's Peacebuilding Commission in 2014-2015 and 2007-2009 respectively. In addition, Brazil presides over the Commission's specific configuration for Guinea-Bissau, and Japan chairs the Commission's Working Group on Lessons Learned.

6 Technically, the *Centro de Instrução de Operações de Paz (CIOpPaz)* was created within the scope of the Army in 2005; in 2010 the Ministry of Defense amended its name to *Centro Conjunto de Operações de Paz do Brasil (Cecopab)* and established its responsibility to prepare members of the three Forces to join peace missions.

As countries with a strong interest in non-military solutions to security problems, it is not surprising that Brazil and Japan have dedicated themselves to issues of peacebuilding and conflict prevention. It is interesting to note, however, that the emphasis and techniques of the two countries on this matter are, in important respects, different from each other.

On the Japanese side, particularly with the Abe government, two trends have been notable in addressing these issues. The first is the willingness to employ large sums of money in the form of Official Development Assistance to build stability in post-conflict countries. The new Japanese "White Paper on Development Cooperation" states that

> *Japan will comprehensively address a wide range of factors causing conflict and instability, including poverty. It will also provide seamless assistance for peacebuilding from conflict prevention, emergency humanitarian assistance in the conflict situation, and promotion of conflict termination to emergency humanitarian assistance and assistance for recovery, reconstruction, and development* (GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN, 2016, p. 6).

The official discourse has been accompanied by the disbursement of resources: in 2016, the Japanese government approved a budget of 551.9 billion yen for Official Development Assistance (approximately US$ 5.18 billion in today's exchange rate) (NIKKEI ASIAN REVIEW, 2016).

The Abe government also placed particular emphasis on combating extremism and radicalism by creating economic opportunities. Following the execution of two Japanese citizens by the self-proclaimed terrorist group "Islamic State" in January 2015, the Japanese government announced a strategy of "Three

Pillars" to combat terrorism and radicalization, which includes assistance in areas such as jobs for young people, reducing economic inequality, strengthening education, and promoting economic growth (MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 2015).

Brazil has not had comparable financial resources for international cooperation, but has endeavored to use its comparative advantages to make a concrete and lasting contribution through South-South cooperation and the transfer of Brazilian "social technologies and policies" to other countries (MUGGAH *et al.*; 2013).

Brazil, Japan and Mozambique succeeded in uniting their cooperation approaches in a trilateral project titled Program of Agricultural and Rural Development for the Nacala Corridor (ProSAVANA) – which suggests that in the future, Tokyo and Brasilia might make similar efforts in countries in a post-conflict or otherwise unstable situation.

Therefore, in the area of peacebuilding and conflict prevention there seems to be a convergence of interests, but also a divergence of methods that would suggest the potential for further dialogue between Brazil and Japan in the context of the Strategic and Global Partnership.

5. Conclusion: Brazil and Japan in the Asian Century

The intention of this article is not to suggest that the dialogue on peace and security issues should be central to the relationship between Brazil and Japan. Rather, it emphasizes, through this example, the need to creatively and unpredictably approach the task of building a global agenda common to both countries.

If this is done, the Strategic and Global Partnership will be able to fulfill its true purpose, not being restricted to negotiating rooms and joint communiqués, but strengthening the ability of both countries to play "leading roles in global development issues" and to contribute "significantly to international peace."

The choice of this article to use international security issues as an example is one among several possibilities, but it is not random. As candidates for permanent seats on the Security Council, Brazil and Japan have a special interest in demonstrating to the rest of the international community their ability to make a positive and innovative contribution to addressing the issues on the Council's agenda. In particular, the fact that the two countries have strong (though quite distinct) traditions of pacifism makes them especially well-placed to demonstrate that, as permanent members, they could act in the Council with an approach different from that of the current permanent members (whose presence in the body still reflects the military victory in World War II).

There is every reason to believe that the twenty-first century will effectively become an "Asian Century" – or perhaps more precisely, the "Pacific Century" because of the vitality of American power. But the transformations promised by this alias will not be simple or unidirectional. The differences in resources, challenges, and ambitions of countries such as China, India, Japan, Indonesia and Korea are accentuated, and generate dynamics that will require careful monitoring and analysis by Brazilian diplomacy.

In this context, we cannot miss the opportunity to deepen and consolidate our more traditional partnership in the region, with a country that is linked to us not only by economic and political ties, but also culturally and socially. Undoubtedly, a side benefit of building a common global agenda with Japan is that Brazil will have greater access to the analyses and perceptions of Japan on the Asian transformations – perceptions that can draw on centuries of history and a formidable and well-funded establishment that condenses government, business and academia.

Further developing the bilateral relationship with Japan is not a choice to be made to the detriment of any other country. The universalism that has ruled Brazil's foreign policy for decades has as one of its axes a reluctance to take sides in disputes that do not directly affect us. Particularly in a region like Asia, where many historical wounds remain open, Brazil's ability – and indeed, determination – to dialogue with all, without exclusion, is more important than ever.

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CHAPTER 3

BRAZIL-INDIA: BUILDING A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP – COOPERATION BETWEEN TWO DEMOCRATIC GIANTS OF THE 21ST CENTURY[1]

Paulo Antônio Viana Júnior[2]

Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization.
Mahatma Gandhi

Introduction

During the period in which I worked at the division responsible for following the relationship between Brazil and India at the headquarters of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on several

1 This article was written in 2016 and first published in 2017; it reflects the political context of that time.

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occasions I had the chance to hear, from senior Indian diplomats, that New Delhi often gave its employees accredited to multilateral international bodies the following instruction: "If in doubt, follow the Brazilian position[3]." Such a recommendation, which represents recognition and respect for the Brazilian diplomatic tradition, also bespeaks the interests and challenges shared by two of the world's largest emerging democracies. Both large and populous countries with multiethnic and multireligious societies, Brazil and India have been seeking economic growth with social inclusion and technological development, as well as a more just, legitimate and representative global governance reflecting the current multipolar international reality.

India is the only country that is a co-founder and member of all the extra-regional global groupings in which Brazil participates: G4, IBSA, BRICS, BASIC, and G20. In addition to the wide cooperation maintained in the bilateral sphere, the partnership established in groups of countries that have become a reference for the debate on the transformations of the contemporary world, contributes to make the relationship with India one of the most important and fruitful in the realm of Brazil's foreign relations.

However, much remains to be done in the Indo-Brazilian partnership: it is necessary to expand and diversify bilateral trade, to promote mutual understanding between the two countries, and to follow up on the numerous cooperation initiatives already under way, for example. In this context, this article aims to provide a brief analysis of the Brazil-India relationship, to present, finally, some ideas aimed at contributing to its continuous positive evolution.

3 This article is dedicated to the colleagues who have been posted to the Embassy of Brazil in New Delhi, whose work was essential for the conformation of this text.

1. India

Today's India is the primary heiress of some of the world's oldest civilizations. It is also, however, one of the youngest nations in the international community. Numerous are the paradoxes of this country, which has a territory almost three times smaller than that of Brazil and a population that is more than six times larger[4].

The historical periods in which the present-day Indian territory was subordinated to one central power were brief. The 29 states of the current Republic were subdivided, in the past, in numerous principalities. The successive waves of invaders who arrived also contributed to the difficulty of politically unifying that portion of the subcontinent.

These invaders came mainly from Central Asia and used passages between the Himalayan mountains to reach the one-million-square kilometer area bathed by the seven rivers of the Indus valley. Dravidians, Indo-Aryans, Medes, Persians, Arabs and Mughals were just a few who came, settled down and were gradually "Indianized." Others came by sea, like Alexander the Great.

The Aryans brought the principles of the religion that would become Hinduism, created Sanskrit and introduced the caste system. Afterwards, India – or much of the subcontinent – had Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Muslim and Christian rulers.

At the end of the fifteenth century, Portuguese sailors like Vasco da Gama landed in Goa and in the region of present-day Mumbai, located on the Malabar coast. English merchants arrived in the early seventeenth century. In 1876, Queen Victoria became Emperor of India, "the most beautiful jewel of the British empire."

4 According to data from the World Bank, available on the electronic platform "World Bank Open Data."

At the end of the nineteenth century, nationalist opposition to the British rule galvanized around the Indian National Congress, which was supported by famous historical characters such as Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohandas Gandhi. The latter became the main defender of "swaraj," or self-determination. Independence was achieved only in 1947, followed by a process of territorial dismemberment that claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and resulted in one of the largest mass migration movements in History.

Although predominantly Hindu (about 80% of its population), India still has more than 170 million Muslims today[5]. In the context of the negotiations for the independence of British dominions in South Asia, the leaders of the Muslim League submitted the proposal to divide the territory to the British viceroys, with Muslims getting control over the regions where they were the majority of the population. Thus, West Pakistan (present-day Pakistan, which means "land of the pure" in Urdu) and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) were established, divided by sixteen hundred kilometers of Indian territory. Such a process of partition – during which up to one million people are estimated to have died – continues to be a source of difficulties for the countries that emerged in the late 1940s, such as the wars between India and Pakistan, a nuclear arms race, terrorism, and peaks of tension in South Asia.

1.1. History of the Indian political system

For the purpose of analyzing the contemporary Indian state, it is possible to identify three periods of decisive impact in its formation and consolidation: (i) Independence, territorial dismemberment and its unfolding; (ii) the predominance of Prime

5 According to data from the 2011 Indian Census, the latest available.

Minister Indira Gandhi, in power from the late 1960s to the early 1980s, which includes an exception period ("Emergency") and substantive challenges to the internal order; and (iii) the economic reforms of the early 1990s, after which a period of economic expansion and modernization started.

As mentioned above, India's independence in 1947 was the result of a political process initiated at the end of the 19th century by political leaders who gathered around the Indian National Congress (INC). In spite of having independence from Great Britain as a common ideal, the forces at work during the British Raj era also included the Muslim League, which favored the creation of a separate Muslim state, Pakistan. From the 1930s, the movement centered on the INC intensified with massive campaigns promoted by Mohandas "Mahatma" Gandhi. Gandhi's popularity and the success of his non-violent methods of action gave such political weight to the INC, to which he was affiliated, that it came to be identified with the independence movement itself.

The national reach of the INC, later organized as the Indian National Congress Party, as well as the prestige of its leaders (starting with Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, from 1947 to 1964), ensured the party's political hegemony in the first decades of the new nation. The tensions and conflicts between the newly independent India and Pakistan around the territorial issue of Jammu and Kashmir may also have contributed to the political agglutination around the INC.

The beginning of the 1970s led to a further period of political and economic difficulties in India, marked by another war with Pakistan, the intensification of activities by insurgent movements, and rising oil prices. In June 1975, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi started ruling by decree and suspended civil liberties by declaring a state of emergency. Elections were held only in March 1977, when

Indira Gandhi was defeated and gave way to the first government ruled by a party other than the Congress – the Janata Party ("People's Party"). In 1980, after new elections, Indira Gandhi returned to the position of prime minister, dealing with conflicts and internal separatist movements whose repression led to her own assassination in 1984[6].

Starting in the 1990s, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao – with Manmohan Singh as Minister of Finance – began the process of economic reform. The country adopted policies to open up the Indian market, with incentives for direct foreign investment, tariff reductions, an end of controls on the industry and modernization of the financial sector.

The promotion of such openness and accelerated economic growth did not prevent the INC from losing political space, especially to the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP, Indian People's Party), a representative of the center-right Hindu nationalism. Minor political associations defined around caste, religious or regional alignments also grew. It is in this context that the BJP came to power in 1998 as leader of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

In early 2004, the NDA was again defeated by the INC in the polls. However, for the first time the latter was forced to form a coalition (the United Progressive Alliance – UPA) to govern. Until then, the Congress Party had never shared power. The election of Sonia Gandhi (of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty) to the party presidency in 1998 would then have collaborated to revive it.

Once the outcome of the 2004 elections was announced, Sonia Gandhi stepped down from the position of prime minister

6 In the context of Operation Blue Star – aimed at containing separatism in the state of Punjab – the most sacred temple of the Sikh religion (the "Golden Temple" of Amritsar) was seriously damaged. Months later, the Sikh bodyguards of the prime minister would murder her.

and Manmohan Singh took over. A respected figure in the party, recognized for the technocratic and academic treatment of issues during his term as Minister of Finance, Singh – who belongs to the Sikh community – became the first non-Hindu to achieve the position of head of government in India – and was reappointed to the post of prime minister in 2009, having ruled until May 2014.

1.2. Contemporary political scenario

The last general elections of India, held between April and May 2014, registered a record turnout of 66.3% out of 834 million voters in the country[7]. The BJP won a historic victory, getting 282 out of the 543 seats in the Lower House – ten seats more than the minimum to secure an absolute majority in the House, regardless of the party coalition. The parliamentary majority obtained by the BJP and Modi in 2014 was the first of such magnitude achieved by a single party since 1984. The political coalition led by the BJP, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), obtained 336 seats. The absolute majority conquered by the BJP consecrated Narendra Modi as the Party's main leader. Modi took office as prime minister on May 26, 2014.

Prime Minister Modi's government states that its priority is the recovery of the upward trajectory of the Indian economy – the cornerstone of the electoral campaign, backed by his successful tenure as governor ("chief minister") of the state of Gujarat – a position he held for more than a decade. Measures to attract foreign investment were announced, as well as the creation of a program for the opening of popular bank accounts – suggesting a possible migration from the social benefits system to a direct

7 Electoral Commission of India. Loksabha Election, 2014. Available at: <http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/archiveofge2014/2%20-%20HIGHLIGHTS_04122014.pdf>. Accessed on: Jan 18, 2017.

transfer method, based on the Brazilian experience of the "Bolsa Família."

Macroeconomic data for the fiscal year 2015-2016 (that ended in March 2016) indicated a 7.6% increase in the nominal Indian GDP, which reached US$ 2.18 trillion[8] – in 2015, India had the highest growth rate among the major economies, surpassing even China[9]. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the recent acceleration of Indian growth is due both to internal economic reforms and to the favorable international environment, particularly as a result of the considerable drop in international prices of petroleum-based products, of which India is one of the largest importers in the world.

In the social area, however, there have been growing concerns about religious sectarianism in the country. Militant groups of the Hindu nationalist right, close to the BJP, have reinforced a discourse in defense of Hinduism and Hindu fundamentalist values, to the detriment of other religions that are present in the Indian society and of ethnic and sexual minorities[10].

2. Brazil and India: bilateral relations

2.1. Background

Diplomatic relations between Brazil and India were established in 1948, just after Indian independence. Until the 1990s, political

8 THE ECONOMIC TIMES. India's growth at 7.6% in 2015-16 fastest in five years. Available at: <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/indias-growth-at-7-6-in-2015- 16-fastest-in-five-years/articleshow/52522153.cms>. Accessed on: Jan. 19, 2017.

9 INTERNATONAL MONETARY FUND. Subdued demand, diminished prospects. Available at: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2016/update/01>. Accessed on: Jan. 18, 2017.

10 THAROOR, S. Why India Intolerance Problem is Hurting its Global Reputation. *The World Post*, New Delhi, Dec. 2015. Available at: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/shashi-tharoor/india-intolerance-problem_b_8699164.html>. Accessed on: May 24, 2016.

dialogue between the two countries remained virtually confined to cooperation in multilateral bodies. Economic, commercial and cultural exchanges were not too expressive. From the reforms that resulted in greater openness of their economies onwards, this picture began to change. It was, however, in the 2000s that bilateral cooperation expanded exponentially, resulting in a large number of reciprocal visits of high-level officials from both countries.

Throughout most of their almost 70 years of diplomatic relations, various constraints – such as geographical distance and domestic problems – seemed to contribute more to moving both countries apart than to bringing Brazil and India closer together. Between the 1950s and the 1970s, the two countries were more inward-looking, dealing with their respective internal issues and seeking to lay a foundation for a type of development compatible with the needs and aspirations of their societies at that historical stage.

Despite their economic and political limitations, Brazil and India attempted a more direct rapprochement following the arrival of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in Brazil in August 1968, the same year in which Foreign Minister José de Magalhães Pinto visited New Delhi to attend a meeting of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

In that year, Trade and Cultural Cooperation Agreements were signed. Negotiations also began to establish cooperation in the nuclear field and other high-tech segments, culminating in the signing of the Agreement on Cooperation for the Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy, which came into force in 1970. Due to fact that India conducted its first nuclear test for military purposes in 1974, the agreement was not renewed after five years into force. Ten years later, in 1984, Foreign Minister Ramiro Saraiva Guerreiro visited India, aiming to convey the Brazilian desire to stimulate cultural, commercial and technological relations. This approach led to the signing of the Agreement on Cooperation in the Fields of Science and Technology the following year.

The end of the Cold War presented new challenges that gave rise to economic reforms in both countries, which eventually led to a relative increase in bilateral trade, as well as fresh initiatives to deepen relations with partners from their regional environments. While Brazil signed the Treaty of Asunción in 1991, India started to implement its "Look East Policy", through which it sought to expand its relations with the nations of Southeast Asia.

In 1996, President Fernando Henrique Cardoso visited India on an official mission – the first by a Brazilian head of state – when a Nuclear Cooperation Agreement was signed. Two years later, Indian President K. R. Narayanan came to Brazil[11].

Indo-Brazilian trade grew steadily in President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's second term – jumping from US$ 480 million in 2000 to US$ 1.2 billion in 2002. Also in 2002, the Brazil-India Joint Commission on Political, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation – co-chaired by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the two countries – was established. Currently the Joint Commission is the main mechanism for reviewing and coordinating the comprehensive Indo-Brazilian bilateral agenda.

Between 2003 and 2004, the relations between Brazil and India gained new political and diplomatic momentum. In his first inaugural speech, for example, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva made explicit mention of India among the priorities of his Foreign Policy. Also in 2003, as per the Brasília Declaration, the India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA) was established.

11 Following the return visit of President K.R. Narayanan to Brazil in 1998, India resumed nuclear testing in Rajasthan. This episode ended up negatively affecting the bilateral relationship.

In January 2004, President Lula made a state visit to India, where he was the guest of honor at the country's Republic Day celebrations. More than the new bilateral instruments signed at the time – Agreements on Cooperation in the Peaceful Use of Outer Space and Cooperation in Tourism, an Executive Program for Cultural Cooperation, the MERCOSUR-India Preferential Trade Agreement, for example – the visit of the Brazilian leader, with a large delegation composed of representatives from the government and the private sector, signaled Brazil's firm intention to strengthen its relations with the world's largest democracy.

In September 2006, Indian Prime Minister Manmoham Singh returned the gesture and visited Brazil. At the time, the Brazil-India Strategic Dialogue was launched; its first meeting took place in April 2007 between Foreign Minister Celso Amorim and Indian National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan. That same year President Lula made his second state visit to India, when he launched the Brazil-India Business Leadership Forum. In 2008, President Pratibha Patil chose Brazil to begin her first international mission, which included visits to Mexico and Chile.

In 2012, President Dilma Rousseff made a state visit to India, during which the 1st Brazil-India Joint Commission on Science, Technology and Innovation and the 3rd Meeting of the Bilateral Trade Monitoring Mechanism were held. Also during the visit, seven agreements were signed, giving more substance to cooperation in areas such as Culture, Education, Women's Rights and Science and Technology. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh also visited Brazil in 2012 to attend the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). In 2014, India's head of government would visit Brazil once again: Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in Brasília and Fortaleza, when he attended the 6th BRICS Summit and had a bilateral meeting with the Brazilian president.

In October 2016, President Michel Temer made an official bilateral visit to India on the sidelines of the 8th BRICS Summit in Goa. At the occasion, agreements were signed in the areas of agriculture, livestock, and regulation of medicines.

In addition to the above-mentioned visits, missions of senior officials from one country to the other became numerous and frequent from the 2000s onward. Government authorities from Brazil and India also held constant meetings on the sidelines of international summits. This interaction contributed to the expansion and further development of bilateral cooperation and the establishment of a Strategic Partnership in 2006. The fact that more than three dozen agreements were signed between Brazil and India between 2000 and 2016, for example, is representative of this reality.

2.2. Major mechanisms

Coordination of the broad dialogue between Brazil and India occurs mainly through the Brazil-India Joint Commission on Political, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation ("Comista" Brazil-India). As previously mentioned, this mechanism was established in 2002 by a Memorandum of Understanding and aims to evaluate and provide guidelines for the further development of bilateral cooperation and for the promotion of Indo-Brazilian commercial exchange. The Joint Commission is co-chaired by the foreign ministers of the two countries and has had seven editions (2003, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2015).

Another important mechanism is the Brazil-India Strategic Dialogue. With an eminently political nature, it brings together the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil and the National Security Advisor of India to deal with relevant and particularly sensitive issues on the Indo-Brazilian agenda, as well as global issues of mutual interest, such as energy and food security, reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and conflicts that may represent a threat to global peace and stability. The fourth and most recent meeting of the Brazil-India Strategic Dialogue took place in November 2015.

There is also the Joint Brazil-India Defense Committee, which promotes meetings of authorities from the Armed Forces of the two countries to explore possibilities for cooperation and exchange. The first meeting of the Joint Defense Committee took place in August 2010; the second, in October 2011; the third, in May 2013; and the fourth, in June 2015.

In the economic field, there is the Brazil-India Trade Monitoring Mechanism (TMM/MMC). Created in 2008, it aims to provide agile treatment to specific aspects of the bilateral trade, as well as to examine ways to stimulate exchange and bilateral investments. It also intends to identify barriers and obstacles to trade, and to propose means to eliminate them. The fourth and most recent meeting of the TMM took place in September 2016 in Brasília. On the Brazilian side, the mechanism was conducted by the Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (MDIC).

3. Current state of cooperation: highlights of a comprehensive agenda

3.1. Political relations

In the political field, Brazil and India have numerous points of view in common, resulting from a perception that the two countries have significant similarities (such as democratic institutions and societies characterized by diversity), as well as common goals and aspirations at the domestic (economic development with promotion of social justice) and international (greater decision-making power in global governance bodies, such as the UN Security Council and the IMF) levels.

In a twenty-year period, since the invitation to President Fernando Henrique Cardoso for the celebration of Republic Day in New Delhi in 1994 (an invitation that in 2006 would also be extended to President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva), until the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Brazil in 2014, bilateral relations registered more progress than in the previous four decades. Bilateral trade, which was approximately US$ 480 million in 2000, reached its highest value in 2014: US$ 11.4 billion, according to data from the Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (MDIC)[12].

During the two terms of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (2004-2009, 2009-2014), the Indian side also expressed a consistent interest in the development of relations with Brazil. Prime Minister Singh visited Brazil on three occasions (2006, 2010 and 2012) and it was in his administration that the two countries formalized a Strategic Partnership (2006).

The government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not change the perception of Brazil as a special partner. With the start of his tenure in 2014, Brazil and India continued to work for the intensification of political exchanges in the bilateral sphere, without prejudice to the dynamic engagement between the two countries in the plurilateral and multilateral sphere.

3.2. Bilateral trade

In 2012, for the first time in the historical series, the US$ 10 billion mark in bilateral trade was surpassed, and in the following

12 The annual evolution of these flows, as well as the amount of the main products traded, can be found on the website of the MDIC's Secretariat of Foreign Trade (SECEX).

year it dropped to a level of US$ 9.48 billion. In 2014, the historic high of US$ 11.42 billion was reached. In 2015 and 2016, however, there was a significant drop (to US$ 7.9 billion and US$ 5.64 billion, respectively – a result most likely linked to falling international oil prices, which is the most important item in the bilateral trade agenda)[13].

The strong concentration of trade in crude oil exports and diesel imports makes the trade balance particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in both the volume of trade of these items and to changes of their international prices. In addition, some of the main products exported by Brazil – with greater potential to enter India – face difficulties in accessing that market. For agribusiness products, for example, tariff and regulatory barriers are still high. There are also bureaucratic and structural difficulties. The case of frozen chicken meat is representative: its commercialization is reduced due to the poor capitalization of the Indian retail sector and to the shortcomings of the local refrigerated supply chain.

Also in the scope of trade between Brazil and India, it is necessary to mention the potential of the MERCOSUR-India Preferential Trade Agreement. Signed in 2004 and in force since 2009, the PTA covers 450 tariff lines from each side and can be an instrument capable of expanding and diversifying bilateral trade. Currently, Brazil and India have been working to increase the scope of the PTA to around 2,500 tariff lines from each side.

3.3. Investment

Brazil's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India is estimated to be around US$ 1 billion, while Indian investment registered

13 According to data available on the website of the Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (MDIC).

in Brazil is of nearly US$ 5 billion[14]. Most of the Brazilian investment capital in India is concentrated in a few companies, mainly Gerdau and WEG. In addition to these two companies, it is worth mentioning Perto, a company that manufactures banknote dispensers and develops payment solutions; and Marcopolo, which has maintained a joint venture with Tata Motors for the production of buses.

Indian investment in Brazil covers companies in various sectors of the economy. Special mention should be made of operations aimed at the steel, automotive, pharmaceutical, agricultural, electronic and energy sectors. Mahindra, ACG Worldwide and the state-owned company Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) are examples of Indian companies operating in Brazil.

Regarding the economic-trade relationship between Brazil and India, it is noteworthy that, although both countries have experienced a period of strong political convergence since the beginning of the 2000s, the level of trade and investment activity is still far from reaching its potential. The possibilities for trade diversification between Brazil and India are still little explored by the entrepreneurs of both countries. The strengthening of the trade balance depends on greater engagement of the business community, in addition to the governments' actions.

India remains a promising market for Brazil, given its population of more than 1.2 billion inhabitants[15] and its large and growing consumer middle class. The increase in trade between Brazil and India seems to depend, to a large extent, on the ability of both countries to diversify their export agendas.

14 Consulate General of India in São Paulo. Bilateral Relations. Available at: <http://www.http://cgisaopaulo.in/cgi.php?id=Bilateral>. Accessed on: Jan 18, 2017.

15 According to data from the 2011 Indian Census.

3.4. Energy

The main area of trade between Brazil and India in recent years has been energy (based on the export and import of petroleum and derivatives), which is also one of the pillars of the significant growth registered in bilateral trade in the last decade.

The sharp drop in oil prices since 2014 has led to the reduction of the bilateral trade flow in 2015, an aspect that, as pointed out above, highlights the need to diversify the bilateral trade agenda in order to reduce dependence on oil and oil products.

Although trade and investment flows indicate a certain approximation between Brazil and India in the energy sector, bilateral cooperation is still in its infancy. There are only two agreements in force: (i) the Memorandum of Understanding on Technological Cooperation in the Area of Ethanol Mixture in Transport Fuels, signed in 2002, which provides for cooperation and transfer of Brazilian technology to India; and (ii) the Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in the Oil and Natural Gas Sector between the Ministry of Mines and Energy and the Ministry of Oil and Natural Gas, signed in 2008, which created a Joint Working Group. Both agreements, however, have not yet been implemented.

Although the Indian government has expressed great interest in the Brazilian model of production and use of biofuels and in the technology of flex-fuel engines, especially during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's tenure, cooperation in the sector has evolved little beyond the exchange of information on national programs.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration has indicated that it intends to promote the use of biofuels by introducing a national policy for the development of flex-fuel engines for the automotive industry. This could be a very beneficial countermeasure, given India's heavy reliance on crude oil imports, aside from concerns about greenhouse gas emissions in urban centers already affected by air pollution. There are great opportunities for cooperation in this sector with Brazil, which is a historical leader in the production of ethanol for flex-fuel engines.

The solar energy sector could also be very positive to bilateral cooperation. The government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sought to increase solar energy production in India: the goal of having 100 GW of installed capacity for solar energy generation in the country has been recently approved, and the International Solar Alliance (ISA) has been created under Indian leadership. It may be in Brazil's interest to cooperate with India to learn more about public policies to encourage research and development of low-cost solar panels and to attract investment for solar-based power plants.

3.5. Science, Technology, and Innovation

The area of science, technology, and innovation is one of the most relevant and promising for bilateral cooperation. There is plenty of room for action – in terms not only of expanding to new themes but also of further developing the fields already explored. An Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation was signed between Brazil and India in September 2006 and entered into force in July 2010.

The completion of the first Brazil-India Joint Commission on Scientific and Technological Cooperation on March 22 and 23, 2012, in New Delhi, has been an important concrete step forward. The convening of a new meeting of this mechanism could foster the exchange of successful experiences and programs, as well as the establishment of new partnerships, both scientific and business-related, with a view to a strong knowledge economy.

Brazil and India have a number of complementarities in the field of scientific research and face similar challenges in promoting innovation.

3.6. Cooperation in Space Research

Since the signing of the Framework Agreement for Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in 2004 and the Implementing Agreement Regarding Cooperation in Augmentation of a Brazilian Earth Station for Receiving and Processing Data from Indian Remote Sensing Satellites in 2007, cooperation in the space area with the South Asian country has been strategic for Brazil. India has excelled in the development of satellite and remote sensing technologies, gaining momentum in research through strong government support.

It is known that the Brazilian and Indian space programs share principles and objectives. Both are focused on the pursuit of national development and international cooperation, including South-South cooperation. In addition to such affinities, space cooperation with India is of a strategic nature for Brazil, especially in light of the progress made by the Indian program – for example, the successful deployment of an operational mission to Mars in 2014 via the Mangalyaan satellite.

The Framework Agreement on Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, signed in 2004, provided for cooperation between the National Institute for Space Research (INPE) and the Indian Organization for Space Research (ISRO) involving the reception and distribution of data from the Indian satellites ResourceSat-1 and ResourceSat-2. This has proved to be of crucial importance for programs to combat illegal deforestation and fire monitoring in Brazil.

The current good moment for Indian space research, conducted by ISRO, could bring more positive outcomes to Brazil as well. The local policy of developing low-cost technologies and the use of national parts highlight the aforementioned strategic and innovative nature of the field of scientific research in India, and is a subject that could be further explored bilaterally. Although the dialogue between INPE and ISRO is particularly important for coordinating areas such as space research and the environment, it would be possible to seek new areas to be explored for the joint development of technologies adapted to the realities of developing countries.

3.7. Consular cooperation

The Brazilian consular network in India consists of the Consular Section of the Embassy in New Delhi and the Consulate General in Mumbai. Brazil's Honorary Consulate in Calcutta is subordinate to the Embassy in New Delhi. The consular network of India in Brazil consists of the Consular Section of the Embassy of India in Brasília and the Consulate General in São Paulo. The strengthening of the trade relations between Brazil and India, in addition to an increase in the number of tourists from one country to the other, has resulted in a greater need for consular services.

More than 300 Brazilian citizens, mostly in the jurisdiction of the Embassy in New Delhi, are registered in the Brazilian consular offices in India. It is estimated that 510 Brazilians currently have permanent resident status in India[16]. In 2013, the Consular Cooperation Framework Agreement was signed, during which the First Meeting of the Brazil-India Consular Dialogue Mechanism

16 MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MRE), Brazil. *Brasileiros no mundo*. Available at: <http://www.brasileirosnomundo.itamaraty.gov.br/a-comunidade/estimativas-populacionais-das- comunidades/Estimativas%20RCN%202015%20-%20Atualizado.pdf>. Accessed on: Jan. 18, 2017.

was held (Brasília, July 2015), during which it was possible to exchange information on the needs of each party in this area.

3.8. Environment

Brazil and India, two of the main players in the negotiations on climate change and biodiversity, have historically adopted positions based on similar principles, which give them plenty of room for concertation and cooperation. Both countries attach central importance to the concept of sustainable development, as well as to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Such an approach, common in the multilateral field, could also be extended into the bilateral sphere, considering that in 2014 a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Environment was signed.

3.9. Culture and Education

Under the auspices of the Framework Agreement on Cultural Cooperation, four Executive Programs have been signed, under which artistic residency programs were created between 2011 and 2014. The signing of the Audiovisual Co-production Agreement between Brazil and India, which came into force in November 2011, had great symbolism for cooperation in this area, since it established a legal framework for the execution of works between the two countries, with the granting of dual nationality to the films that were made. Even with broader prospects of funding, distribution and exchange in the audiovisual area, a joint production has not yet been carried out. This may represent a very positive milestone in the bilateral relationship, given its potential to generate interest of the society of one country about the other.

In the educational field, cooperation is legally backed by a framework agreement. Bilateral academic exchange is still restricted nonetheless. Despite the opportunities previously offered under the "Science Without Borders" Program, there has been little interest from Brazilian scholars.

The Lectureship Program has been part of the efforts undertaken by Brazil to promote the Portuguese Language, Brazilian literature and Brazilian Culture in India. Brazilian lecturers have already held positions at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and the University of Goa.

3.10. Defense

Bilateral defense cooperation is developed within the framework of the Defense Cooperation Agreement, concluded in 2003 and in force since 2006. This instrument establishes nine priority forms of cooperation – from intensified mutual visits by high-level delegations in the defense sector to the development of technology programs applied to the defense industry.

The dialogue in this area has evolved consistently, particularly after the placement of a military attaché at the Brazilian Embassy in New Delhi in 2009. This cooperation was driven by strong political support from the highest level and has gained momentum on its own through the perception that the Armed Forces of both countries complement and can benefit from each other. Defense cooperation, although recent, is already contributing significantly to the consolidation of the strategic profile of the Indo-Brazilian partnership.

In addition, there is the IBSAMAR initiative within the IBSA group, which is a series of naval exercises between the navies of Brazil, India and South Africa. The objective of these exercises is to increase interoperability among the three countries' navies, as well as to develop common procedures for maritime safety and naval operations, thus increasing mutual trust and knowledge. The fifth edition of IBSAMAR took place in India in February 2016.

4. Conclusion

As continental countries, Brazil and India have very different civilizational trajectories, besides occupying distant geopolitical areas. Historically, ties have not been particularly dense. However, many elements from their complex realities also unite the two countries, which share socio-economic problems and face similar challenges in several aspects. In addition, they uphold common values, such as democracy and pluralism. The Brazilian multiethnic synthesis and the ancient Indian sociocultural mosaic need to have more and better understanding of each other, for mutual benefit and as a condition to consolidate relations of greater trust, because real approximation requires knowledge.

On the one hand, both India and Brazil face the challenges of infrastructural barriers, social inequality, and difficulties in accessing foreign markets; on the other hand, they actively participate in the activities of forums such as the G20, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. South-South cooperation in areas such as science, technology, outer space, and renewable energies – fundamental for full, autonomous, and innovative socio-economic development – contributes to the strategic character of the relationship.

The multilateral and bilateral dimensions of the Indo-Brazilian dialogue have reinforced each other, enabling the expansion of the partnership into other formats, such as the trilateral articulation of the IBSA Forum, launched in 2003, and the BRICS group, whose first Summit of Heads of State and Government took place in 2009. Brazil and India therefore established themselves as indispensable actors for the construction of legitimate, democratic and representative global governance, strongly committed to the aspirations and needs of developing societies.

4.1. Encouraging mutual understanding

The great advances made in the bilateral sphere since the 1990s, particularly since the early 2000s, as well as the establishment of an intense and dynamic political agenda, have not exhausted the potential for new initiatives in the relation between Brazil and India.

One area in which it would be useful to encourage greater bilateral approximation is that of parliamentary exchange. Like the Brazilian National Congress, the Indian Parliament plays a central role in the country's political life, including foreign policy matters. Similarly, greater contacts between the electoral authorities of two of the world's largest emerging democracies will certainly contribute to the further development of its Strategic Partnership.

The academic approach can also be a promising area to encourage inter-societal dialogue. India has a rich academic landscape with renowned and active research institutions whose production influences Indian decision makers and all those interested in the country. Debates on India's relations with Brazil and Latin America, however, are still infrequent. Likewise, the literature about these relations is scarce and outdated. A lack of mutual knowledge between the Brazilian and Indian societies, as well as cultural and geographical distance, are some of the reasons for the limited interest of students and lecturers in academic exchanges and mutual research.

For example, as noted before, only a very small number of Brazilian students have shown an interest in studying at Indian universities through the Science without Borders program. The creation of a Brazilian Cultural Center in India could certainly give greater projection to the country and would be an additional stimulus to the study of the Portuguese language.

The Indian press publishes few news and articles about Brazil, nearly always reproducing content produced by major international outlets. In the Indian media, there is no editor or journalist specialized in Brazil. The same can be said of the Brazilian press in relation to India. In this context, it would be positive if international correspondents of one country could be present in the other, in order to convey more reliable information of that distinct reality – and more suited to the interests and curiosities of its receiving public. The creation of a group of eminent personalities from both countries, with the task of providing suggestions and insights for deepening Indo-Brazilian cooperation and friendship in the long term, as well as encouraging a greater exchange of visits from opinion leaders on both sides, could also contribute to the improvement of the partnership and interaction between Brazil and India.

The Indian film industry – popularly known as "Bollywood"[17] – is among the largest in the world, both in terms of employment, films produced and tickets sold. Nonetheless, its productions still receive little exposure in Brazil. Given that a significant number of these films are recorded outside India, it would not be excessive to suggest that more Indian productions take place in Brazil – under the terms of the Audiovisual Co-production Agreement – which could certainly stimulate greater mutual interest and knowledge[18].

17 The term "Bollywood" is commonly used in reference to all Indian cinema. In specific terms, however, it is the nickname only of the Hindi-language film industry, centered on the city of Mumbai (formerly known as "Bombay").

18 Despite the criticism that it portrayed the complex Indian reality in a simplistic and stereotyped way, the soap opera "Caminho das Índias" (screened by Globo channel in 2009) brought about unprecedented interest in India by Brazilians. Expressions in Hindi, punctually used by its Indian characters, became common in dialogues between Brazilians at the time.

The progress of a partnership such as the one between India and Brazil – multidisciplinary and comprehensive – depends on the two societies knowing, understanding and admiring each other. The field of cultural relations is fundamental to consolidate these bonds.

4.2. Promoting the expansion and diversification of trade

According to World Bank data, the Indian economy is, along with the Chinese, the one that shows the highest growth rates among the emerging countries[19]. India's current Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is over US$ 2 trillion: while the first trillion took sixty years to be created, the second took only seven. It is estimated that in twenty years, India will become a middle-income country and, a little more than ten years later, high-income. At the demographic level, India's population is expected to surpass China's by 2022, until it reaches a peak of 1.7 billion inhabitants in 2050[20].

India has a very positive economic momentum, with high GDP growth rates (above 6% in 2015)[21], inflation under control, accumulation of international reserves (over US$ 360 billion) and attraction of foreign direct investment. This scenario represents an opportunity for the expansion and diversification of trade and investment between Brazil and India. In order to do so, it may be positive to give new momentum to initiatives such as the Trade

19 WORLD BANK. *Global Economic Prospects, January 2016: Spillovers amid Weak Growth*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2016. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/ handle/10986/23435>. Accessed on: Jan. 19, 2017.

20 UNITED NATIONS. *World Population Prospects*: The 2015 Revision. Available at: <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp>. Accessed on: Jan. 19, 2017.

21 INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND. *World Economic Outlook Database*. Available at:<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2015/02/weodata/index.aspx>. Accessed on: May 18, 2016.

Monitoring Mechanism (TMM) and negotiations for the extension of the MERCOSUR-India Preferential Trade Agreement, according to intention already demonstrated by the governments of both countries.

The food sector can be particularly auspicious for the increment and diversification of bilateral exchange. India has been undergoing rapid socio-economic changes, which are remodeling patterns of consumption and food marketing. This context represents an opportunity to expand Brazilian agricultural exports of products as diverse as coffee and poultry.

The Indian retail system does not yet generally have the necessary logistical infrastructure to distribute processed and refrigerated or frozen foods. In this segment, Brazil has exceptional qualifications and may initiate mutually beneficial cooperation initiatives with India. The Brazilian insertion in the Indian food processing sector would also be in line with the current policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration, which has expanded infrastructure spending and approved measures to attract foreign investment.

Finally, improving connectivity between Brazil and India is fundamental for increasing trade, tourism, and bilateral cultural and educational exchanges. At present, there is still no direct maritime and air connectivity between the two countries. However, the implementation of the Air Services Agreements (2006 and 2011) is expected to contribute to changing this situation.

Final considerations

Brazil and India share values such as democracy, tolerance and the pursuit of sustainable and socially harmonious development. There are also many common political objectives, such as overcoming poverty, generating and distributing wealth, and building a more just, democratic and legitimate international system. Deepening reciprocal understanding is a condition for intensifying bilateral cooperation.

In other words, Indo-Brazilian relations are anchored in internal situations that present similar aspects and political objectives, both in the domestic context and internationally. At low intensity for more than forty years, bilateral interaction has rapidly increased, boosted by the economic progress of the two countries and significant transformations in the international reality. Multilateral initiatives and participation in groups such as IBSA, BRICS, G4 and BASIC have allowed for comprehensive and effective cooperation and for building mutual trust. Without prejudice to the strengthening of this engagement at the multilateral and plurilateral levels, the intensification of the bilateral political dialogue will contribute to consolidating the foundations of a relationship that is increasingly dense and relevant.

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CHAPTER 4

BRAZIL AND RUSSIA: BUILDING THE POST-COLD WAR STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Igor Abdalla Medina de Souza[1]

Introduction

Winston Churchill's definition of Russia as a "riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma" is famous. Russia's metamorphosis with the end of the Soviet Union has only made the exercise of unraveling it more complex. This article draws on elements of the constructivist orientation in International Relations to analyze the evolution of Russia in the post-Cold War and its consequences for relations with Brazil. Presented as a superpower during the Cold War, Russia today has a dual identity of great and emerging power. The argument is that the redefinition of Russia's identity has paved the way for a closer relationship with Brazil, which, in turn, actively seeks to strengthen ties with this significant partner, with whom it shares bilateral complementarities and multilateral flags.

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Seeing Brazil as another pole of influence in the world, a fellow emerging power in search of development, Russia opens up to the country, in line with its typically realist vision that enshrines multi-polarity and bilateral relations among members of the restricted club of great powers. Political convergence, albeit still without economic-commercial results of a corresponding magnitude, has spilled over into a strategic partnership that feeds bilateral interaction in areas such as defense, space cooperation and education, as well as a technological alliance between the two countries that meets the mutual imperative of modernization of their economies.

This article is structured as follows. In the first part, we deal with the evolution of post-Cold War Russia, focusing on its main identity dualities: great or emerging power and European or Eurasian country. We will analyze how the Russian self-image unfolds in its relations with the West. In the second part, after describing the antecedents of bilateral interaction and multilateral convergence, we deal with Brazil-Russia relations in recent years. The bilateral strategic partnership uncovers a myriad of cooperation in areas such as defense, space, energy, education, culture, and sports.

1. Post-Cold War Russia

Russia is an interesting case for the constructivist orientation in IR, which focuses on the identities of states, formed in interactions with their peers, to argue that the international system is a social construct[2]. The very diffusion of constructivism

2 Not all constructivists focus on the concept of identity; scholars such as Nicholas Onuf and Friedrich Kratochwil focus on language, norms and intersubjective understandings to analyze the international system as a social construction, the premise common to all constructivists. See KRATOCHWIL, Friedrich. *Rules, Norms, and Decisions* – On the conditions of practical and legal reasoning in international relations and domestic affairs. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989; and ONUF, Nicholas. *World of Our Making*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989.

coincided with the end of the Soviet Union, for the absence of explanation for the peaceful collapse of the superpower demonstrated the obsolescence of traditional IR theories – realism and liberalism. This is precisely the motto used by the best-known constructivist theorist, Alexander Wendt, for whom the identities of states precede and condition their interests. They flow into different logics of international anarchy[3]. With the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev and the new thinking on foreign policy, the USSR redefined, in its interactions with the West, its identity and, consequently, its role in the international system. This process rendered the bipolarity of the Cold War obsolete. Not without a cavalcade of perplexity, due to the virtual absence of violence, the superpower that had sufficient war power to end life on Earth collapsed.

Unlike inflection points such as 1648, 1815 and 1945, the end of the Cold War in 1991 did not bring a new arrangement of the international system. Russia's role in the new order remained undefined and identity issues conditioned its insertion in the post-Cold War world. The national elites formulating foreign policy see Russia as a country destined to be a great power. There is, however, disagreement about how Russia should realize this vocation. The guiding thread of divergences unfolds in the central theme of relations with the West. The identity of Russia as a great power coexists with the contradictory idea of emergent power, which imposes an anti-hegemonic trait against the West. As the West is seen as an amalgam of the US and Europe, another key identity issue is the definition of Russia as a European or Eurasian country. We shall look at these identity issues before we approach the post-Cold War Russia-West interaction.

3 WENDT, Alexander. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Wendt concentrates on the states, which, although criticized among the more radical constructivists, makes his constructivism particularly useful for the purposes of this article.

1.1. Great power or emerging power?

Although weakened, post-Cold War Russia is a considerable power. The largest country in the world in geographical extension, twice as large as Brazil, Russia remains a formidable military colossus with an enviable defense industry. As an energy superpower, it is the second largest producer of oil and natural gas in the world. Because of its history, civilization, and power resources, there is consensus among the elites in charge of Russian foreign policy that the country is a great power[4]. Following the constructivist orientation, Iver Neumann argued that Russia's external action is aimed at achieving great power status in the international system[5]. Andrei Tsygankov adds that this recognition turns to the West, whose interaction with Russia shapes the identity of this country[6]. The constructivist framework combines with realism[7], for the Russians see the predominance of a handful of great powers in the world. Russia favors bilateral relations with other powers and select clubs, such as the United National Security Council and the G7/G8, from which it was excluded in the wake of the crisis in Ukraine.

Russia takes action when it perceives itself as being denied the status of great power. This is the case, for example, when it believes

4 Russia's self-referencing as a great power also includes official Russian pronouncements. In the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (2000), approved by President Vladimir Putin, one of the objectives of its external action is to "guarantee the security of the country, preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity, achieve firm positions and prestige in the world, consistent with the interests of the Russian Federation as a great power."

5 NEUMANN, Iver. Russia is a Great Power. In: HEDENSKOG, J.; KONNADER, V.; NYGREN, B.; OLDBERG, e PURSIAINEM, C. (Orgs.) *Russia as a Great Power*: dimensions of security under Putin. New York: Routledge, 2005.

6 TSYGANKOV, Andrei. *Russia's Foreign Policy*: Change and Continuity in National Identity. 4th. ed. Lanhan: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

7 MANKOFF, Jeffrey. *Russian Foreign Policy*: The Return of Great Power Politics. Lanhan: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009. The combination of constructivism and realism in Russian foreign policy described by Mankoff is relevant to the purposes of "unraveling" Russia to which this article proposes.

that the West disregards Russian interests in the post-Soviet space, a region where, since the war with Georgia, Russia admits to have "special interests[8]." The realism of the worldview manifests itself in a sovereigntist position, *i.e.* the Russians are refractory to violations of sovereignty. They often denounce the search for a unipolar order in the post-Cold War period[9], a configuration that, if accomplished, would deny not only the Russians, but all other countries the condition of great power and, ultimately, of a sovereign nation. In response, the Russians favor a multipolar world order, which would not only safeguard their interests as a great power with reduced influence after the end of the Cold War, but also the very effectiveness of international norms and institutions. This is because, in their critique of what they see as Washington's imperial designs, the Russians argue, in line with the English School of IR[10], that multipolarity is a condition for the effectiveness of law and institutions.

If the self-image of great power is omnipresent, the venue to realize it creates divergences. Constructivist Andrei Tsygankov refers to the well-known trial division of IR literature by British theorist Martin Wight[11] to describe three schools of thought in

8 Interview by President Dmitri Medvedev with the Euronews Network on 09/02/2008.

9 *The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation* (2000) mentions as "new challenges and threats to the national interests of Russia", the "growing tendency towards the establishment of the unipolar structure of the world, with the political and economic domination of the U.S."

10 See BULL, Hedley. *A sociedade anárquica* [The Anarchical Society]. São Paulo: Editora Universidade de Brasília, 2002.

11 WIGHT, Martin. The three traditions of international theory. In: *International Theory* – The Three Traditions. Leicester and London: Leicester University Press, 1991.

Russian foreign policy: Westernism, statism and civilizationism[12]. Westernists, prominent in the Yeltsin administration, accentuate Russian membership of the West's family of nations, which they regard as the world's most advanced civilization. Statists, preponderant with Vladimir Putin, emphasize the state as provider of internal stability, combining national independence with pragmatic cooperation with the West. Civilizationists, such as the Lenin-Trotsky duo, focus on the particularities of Russia, as opposed to the West, which is viewed as adversary in the dispute for control over Eurasia, the fundamental geopolitical space where Russia has a privileged position. Putin's statism absorbs Westernist-civilizationist elements by advocating firm action in the post-Soviet space. By incorporating elements from other schools, Putin's policies have attained hegemonic status and strong support in Russia.

Although richly endowed with 'hard power' resources, Russia presents the socioeconomic statistics of a developing country. This Russian idiosyncrasy generates a curious dual identity. The great power, a permanent member of the UNSC and a key element in the resolution of conflicts such as the war in Syria, coincides with the emerging power that holds the banner of reforming the global economic governance system in fora such as the G20 and BRICS. The enduring structure of economic governance centered on Western powers after the Cold War, with the IMF, the World Bank and GATT/WTO has resulted in Russian under-representation. There is therefore a mismatch between the Russian role in the so-called high politics, issues such as peace and security, in the face

12 TSYGANKOV, *Russia's Foreign Policy*. Mankoff employs quadripartite typology, but his schools of Atlanticism, Centrism, and Euroasianism are equivalent, respectively, to Tsynkov's westernizing, statist, and civilizing schools. The fourth school contemplates Russian nationalism, particular in favoring the notion of purity to the detriment of expansionism. In practice, the nationalists, who were instrumental in ending the Soviet Union with Boris Yeltsin, focus on immigration and the situation of Russians abroad. MANKOFF, *Russian Foreign Policy*.

of timid participation in global economic governance. Although limited, Russia's economic activity converges with anti-hegemonic political action against what it sees as a roller-coaster imposed by Western powers that includes a fixed and unchanging formula for economic development. For the Russians, on the other hand, the formulation according to which countries are free to tread their own paths towards economic development is valuable.

On the one hand, the dimension of emerging power in Russian identity indicates that, despite being consolidated, the great power self-image has not been fully realized in practice. On the other hand, the conception of Russia as a country in search of development is linked to the notion of great power in the idea, promoted by Vladimir Putin and Dimitry Medvedev, that economic development is the passport for the country to definitely join the select club of great powers, on an equal footing with the United States. Constructivist Ted Hopf sustains, in fact, that Putin and Medvedev's political project consists of catapulting Russia via liberal economic modernization. Although it contradicts the country's action in fora such as the G20, in which it has resisted austerity policies, this goal finds its place in Putin's economic policy[13]. The adoption of orthodox policies, even if in an environment of state intervention, allows Putin to broaden his support base by incorporating liberal agents who would otherwise oppose him.

1.2. European or Eurasian country?

Given the scope of this book, a first-order identity issue is the characterization of Russia as a European or Eurasian country.

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13 HOPF, Ted. Common-sense Constructivism and Hegemony in World Politics. *International Organization*, v. 67, n. 2, 2013. A comprehensive study of the identity of the USSR/Russia made by this author is found in *Social Construction of International Politics*: Identities & Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 & 1999. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky asserted in a witty way that "in Europe we are Asians; in Asia, Europeans." In the 1990s, the predominance of Western views emphasized Russian membership of the European family of nations. At the time, the issue was whether Russia, which is a member of the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, should accede to the European Union. Since taking office, Vladimir Putin has repeatedly mentioned the "choice for Europe." The vast Russian territory includes half of Europe, as far as the Ural Mountains. The very notion that Europe goes to the Urals was originally proposed by Russian geographer Vasiliy Tatishchev, commissioned by Peter the Great[14], a statesman who, with military effort mirrored in the West, laid the cornerstone of the Westernist school[15].

If, for the autonomist schools, Russia seeks the recognition of its status as a great power, the Westernist vision mixes this design with the recognition by the West that Russia itself is part of it. Since the Napoleonic wars, Russia has participated as a great power in the European balance of power, with its battles described in verse and prose in the country's rich literature.

The dramatic culmination of the process of inclusion in the European system was undoubtedly the particularly costly victory over the Nazis in the "Great Patriotic War," a crucial formative event of the Russian self-image as a nationalist and resilient people. Russia itself attested to the dictum of the writer Leon Tolstoy, in the classic *Anna Karenina*, that there is no condition to which the human being does not adapt. According to recent estimates, the victory cost the lives of 27 million Soviets. Although occasionally removed from the West in political terms, Russia will never completely give up the European component of its national

14 NEUMANN, "Russia is a Great Power", p. 12.

15 TSYGANKOV, *Russia's Foreign Policy*.

identity. Ambassador Estanislau do Amaral captured this Russian identity trait[16]:

> *Celebrating the victory over Nazism is a central feature of Russian identity. The "Great Patriotic War", in which the Russians lost tens of millions of lives, is not only a justified national pride, but also locates Russia, historically and culturally, in Europe and the West.*

Russia and the European Union signed a strategic partnership in 1994 which, to a certain extent, meant that Russia would not join the EU. In 2003, the cooperation of the so-called four spaces was created: Economy; Freedom, Security and Justice; External Security; and Research, Education and Culture. As enlargements have added to the EU countries of the former iron curtain refractory to Moscow, Russia responded by creating bilateral partnerships with key countries like Germany and Italy. Even though concrete results have emerged – such as the Nord Steam gas pipeline in the critical energy sector for Russia-EU relations – the EU's common front against Russia during the Ukrainian crisis showed the limits of the strategy of electing preferential partners to dilute resistance to Russia in the EU. A different Russian strategy is to oppose Europe to the US to lessen opposition to Russia in the West, which occurred during the Washington-sponsored Iraq War and was opposed by important European countries like Germany and France.

There are civilizationalist foreign policy makers who preach that Russia's identity is conditioned by its unique position in Eurasia[17], a central geopolitical concept for academics such as

16 *Usos da história: a diplomacia contemporânea dos estados bálticos subsídios para a política externa brasileira.* Brasília: FUNAG (MRE), 2011, p. 133. Free translation.

17 MANKOFF. *Russian Foreign Policy*.

Zbigniew Brzezinski[18]. Eurasia, the gigantic combined territory of Asia and Europe, is the primary geopolitical theater, whether by the weight of the territorial and population mass, or by the enormous amount of natural resources. The Eurasian school in Russia, led by the unmistakable figure of Alexander Dugin, proposes that the country, as a Eurasian power par excellence, should seek primacy in Eurasia. The tonic of confrontation with the West gained popularity, to the point of speculating on the influence of Dugin in the Kremlin, especially at a time when Russia and the West were squabbling over Ukraine, defined by Brzezinski as pivot in Eurasia. Russia has a strong influence over the critical region of Central Asia, dominated by former Soviet socialist republics, through political, economic and military mechanisms such as the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

If its western part inserts it into the European theater, the huge portion to the east inscribes Russia in the complex mosaic of global geopolitics, in which actors such as China stand out. China represents an alternative to the US and Europe, an ally to Moscow in its anti-hegemonic orientation. The approach to China, with which Russia signed a strategic partnership in 1996, is driven by economic complementarities – trade has reached the 100-billion-dollar mark. Russia and China converge in the defense of sovereignty, multipolarity, and a more prominent role of the state in the economy, although the Chinese projection on the Russian Far East brings the old Sino-Russian rivalry to light. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is the result of good relations between Russia and China, which have united to consolidate their ascendancy over Central Asia, to the detriment of extra-regional actors, notably the United States. India, another regional

18 *The Grand Chessboard*: American primacy and its geostrategic imperatives. New York: Basic Books, 1997.

heavyweight that has good relations with Moscow, is today a member of the organization, along with rival Pakistan. There are now frequent references to Russia's pivot to the East, which would come as much from the deterioration of relations with the West as from the recognition that the center of dynamism in the global economy has shifted eastward.

1.3. Russia and the West in the post-Cold War

In the early years of the Boris Yeltsin administration, which spanned the 1990s, a heavily weakened Russia sought its return to the pantheon of great powers through integration into the West in an environment of economic, political and military chaos. In 1992 alone, Russia's GDP declined by no less than 15% and inflation exceeded 2500%. From 1991 to 1998, when the country was hit by a severe financial crisis, Russian GDP plummeted 45% and industrial production 42% – by comparison, industrial output had fallen 24% during the Second World War. Tensions between President Yeltsin, a dissident of the Communist Party of the USSR, and a communist-dominated parliament almost brought the country to civil war in 1993, the year in which Yeltsin enacted a centralizing constitution. Finally, the military disaster of Chechnya's first war (1994-1996) humiliated Russia and curtailed Yeltsin's already low popularity. He nevertheless relied on the support of the oligarchs and the vast power resources available to the Kremlin to be re-elected in 1996.

Russia gradually became disenchanted with the Westernizing platform. The prevailing perception was that gestures of goodwill were not reciprocated by the West, giving rise to the pejorative term "unilateral cooperation" to describe Russian foreign policy in the immediate post-Cold War era. Discontent worsened with actions considered hostile, such as NATO's expansion into Central Europe, announced in 1995 and completed in 1999, when Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, former iron curtain countries, formally joined the military alliance. In addition to the strategic loss, the Russians felt betrayed. This is because, and the matter is controversial, they were promised by the West that there would be no further expansion of NATO to the east in exchange for Russian acceptance of a reunified Germany in the military alliance[19]. The first battles in NATO's history targeted Serbia, a historical ally of Russia, in the secession wars in former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Kosovo). Western actions strengthened statist actors in Russia, which would eventually prevail over the Westernist orientation[20].

The change came with the 1996 replacement of Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev with Yevgeny Primakov, who advocated autonomy from the West. Primakov gave priority to the post-Soviet space and partners such as China and India, with whom Russia could counter the West. The rescue of the external autonomy gave Primakov visibility as he was promoted to the position of prime minister in 1998, when a serious financial crisis broke out in Russia. The former chancellor became the favorite to succeed President Boris Yeltsin until the dizzying rise of Vladimir Putin, then director of the Federal Security Service, successor to the KGB.

Putin became prime minister in 1999 and won the presidential election in March 2000, a feat he would repeat in 2004 and 2012. The popularity of his ruthless approach to Chechen terrorism was key in his electoral success. Putin's presidency coincided with the commodity boom and the country – dependent on the sale of oil and natural gas – gained significant economic growth in contrast to the 1990s. The statist vision led to the recovery of the role of central power in the economy, especially in the strategic energy

19 Since the 1990s, the United States has denied the Russian view that the George Bush administration had made such a promise.

20 TSYGANKOV, *Russia's Foreign Policy*.

industries, with the emblematic case of oil company Yukos, of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who was arrested and saw his company dismembered.

The new group in power combined liberal actors of Yeltsin's old guard and statists, represented by the Siloviki, members of the state security apparatus[21]. Foreign policy combined autonomy and pragmatic cooperation with the US, especially after 9/11, which created a convergence of interests in the fight against terrorism. However, the window of good relationship did not last long. In 2002, the US withdrew from the Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty which, as part of the nuclear containment agreements, was valued by the Russians as it dated back to the time they were a superpower. Russian opposition to the Iraq War, as well as the Rose Revolution in Georgia, distanced Russia from the United States. In 2004, there was a further enlargement of NATO – this time including former Soviet republics, the Baltic states[22] – and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, a sort of general rehearsal of the 2013 crisis. In each of these occurrences the Russians see the hand of the West, in a typical Cold War containment policy. Dialogue with Moscow was made difficult by the Western perception of power centralization in Russia, especially after the Beslan massacre in 2004, in addition to the deterioration of human rights, with the suspicious murders of journalist Anna Politkovskaya and dissident Alexander Litvinenko.

In a memorable speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2007, Putin accused the US, through NATO, of crossing all lines. The election of Dmitri Medvedev and Putin's move to the post of prime minister in 2008 coincided with the war against Georgia. The

21 SAKWA, Richard. *The Crisis of Russian Democracy*: The Dual State, Factionalism and the Medvedev Succession. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

22 There is a long legal controversy over the status of the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) in the USSR, involving the circumstances of their accession in 1940, as well as the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. ESTANISLAU DO AMARAL, *Usos da história*.

conflict with Georgia – a US ally that was promised future NATO membership – put Russia's relations with the West at their then worst level since the end of the Cold War. But the severe effects of the 2008 financial crisis on Russia demanded cooperation with the West. There were advances, with the Reset policy and the signing of the new START Treaty, symbolically in the city of Prague, where Obama had made a famous speech advocating the end of nuclear arms during the election campaign. Despite the momentary goodwill, the relationship would soon suffer further deterioration with the NATO intervention against Libya, a traditional Russian ally.

Vladimir Putin's third term began in 2012 and recovered an assertive tone, with a certain civilizational tone, the incorporation of traditional values and the role of the Russian Orthodox Church. There were a number of friction points, like the enactment by the USA of the Magnitisky Act, which precipitated Russia's ban on child adoption by US nationals, as well as Edward Snowden's asylum in Moscow and Russia's perennial objection to US plans to install missiles in Central Europe. In 2013, the Ukrainian crisis started with President Viktor Yanukovych's refusal to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union after traveling to Moscow. It eventually led to ruptured relations with the West and the reciprocal application of sanctions. The Russian annexation of Crimea, in reaction to the fall of Yanukovych, as well as the tense situation in Eastern Ukraine, brought geopolitics back to the agenda[23], along with the thesis of a new Cold War.

Nevertheless, the overlapping of crises in the world generates demand for coordination with the West, as demonstrated by the mechanism created in 2014 for the destruction of the Syrian

23 TRENIN, Dmitri. *The Ukraine Crisis and the Resumption of Great Power Rivalry*. Moscow: Carnegie Center, 2014.

regime's chemical weapons. The need for coordination, accentuated by the rise of the IS and a new form of terrorism, a theme that usually generates convergence between the US and Russia, may reduce the profile of the Ukrainian crisis on the international agenda. Russia's current foreign policy is in search of a new balance amidst the environment set up with the election of Donald Trump in the United States, which has led the major investigation of alleged Russian influence in the presidential election to the heart of the US internal political debate. The continuous deterioration in the relationship can give rise to the crossing of well-established red lines. NATO does not allow military action against its members – the Baltic countries are the main focus of concern here. Russia does not tolerate enlargements towards Georgia and Ukraine. In any case, the Ukrainian crisis has definitely transformed relations with the West, burying the high hopes of the immediate post-Cold War era.

2. Brazil-Russia relations

The construction of Russian identity in the post-Cold War era has opened up formidable possibilities for relations with Brazil, which in turn gained a significant partner. While it identifies Brazil among the countries destined to exercise a differentiated influence in the international system, the new dimension of emerging power reinforces Russia's desire to create privileged ties with Brazil. It is not surprising that relations have intensified significantly, particularly with the creation of the strategic partnership. Similarities between the countries are striking. As continental nations, Brazil and Russia are key players in their respective regions, aiming to play a global role with the main Western powers and countries like China and India. They share the quest for the development of their economies, which are still largely dependent on primary products and natural resources. There are, of course, important differences. Unlike Brazil, Russia's neighborhood is still characterized by conflicts in the post-Soviet space and elsewhere in Asia.

Whereas Russia is a major player in matters of peace and security with a limited scope in the economic sphere, Brazil mirrors the reverse image. It is a founding member of the IMF and the World Bank, and plays an influential role in the WTO – Brazilian Roberto Azevêdo being its current director general. The Russians joined the IMF and the World Bank in 1992. They acceded to the WTO only in 2012. This dissonance generates complementarities that have yet to be fully exploited, although Brazilian-Russian coordination has greatly increased in multilateral forums such as the UN, G20, and BRICS, whose very creation was led by both countries. In strictly bilateral terms, the strategic partnership has generated complex political coordination mechanisms that have created a multiplier effect in defense, spatial, educational, and cultural cooperation. After discussing the history of bilateral relations and multilateral coordination, we will study in detail the Brazilian-Russian relationship in the post-Cold War period.

2.1. Background

Brazil and Russia established diplomatic relations in 1828, but geographical distance limited the interaction between the countries in the nineteenth century[24]. In the early years, the Brazilian interest revolved around the recognition of the country and its territorial integrity. The typically realist Russian view of international relations placed Brazil outside the Moscow area of activity, since the Monroe Doctrine imposed additional costs on attempting to relate closer to Brazil, an undertaking of uncertain

24 BACIGALUPO, Gabriela. As relações russo-brasileiras no pós-Guerra Fria. *Rev. Bras. Polít. Int.*, v. 43, n. 2, 2000.

results anyway[25]. Noteworthy in the nineteenth century was the visit of Dom Pedro II to St. Petersburg in 1876. Expeditions of the Baron von Langsdorff, a Russian scientist and diplomat who, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was the link between czarist Russia and Brazil, to the point where he became the representative of the Czar in Rio de Janeiro in 1821.

Geographic distance was replaced by ideological detachment in the twentieth century. Brazil did not recognize the Bolshevik government and there were no diplomatic relations until 1945. The joint struggle against the Axis during World War II brought the countries closer, leading to the reestablishment of diplomatic relations in April of that year. The conservatism of the Brazilian government would, however, lead to a new rupture in 1947. The rupture, which resulted in the banning of the Communist Party in Brazil, was caused by comments from Russian newspaper Literary Gazette about a fight involving a Brazilian diplomat at the Moscow National Hotel, where the embassy was located.

The heated debate over the suspension of the relations gave rise to the discussion about their resumption in the 1950s, which led to the idea that approximation to the USSR could further Brazil's multilateral ambitions. Influential voices, such as Oswald Aranha, invoked the Brazilian self-image and the country's eternal impulse to play a more prominent role in the international system to defend the reestablishment of diplomatic relations[26]:

> *The real reason why we must deal with the Russians rests in international politics of the highest sense and is simply the result of Brazil's need to participate in world*

25 GUIMARÃES, Lytton. Brasil-URSS: os processos de mudança e as relações bilaterais. In: Guilhon Albuquerque, José Augusto (Org.). *Sessenta Anos de Política Externa Brasileira 1930-1990 – O Desafio Geoestratégico*. São Paulo: Annablume/NUPRI USP, 2000. v. III

26 ARANHA, Oswaldo. Relações diplomáticas com a União Soviética. *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*. Brasília, v. 1, n. 2, 1958, p. 25.

> *decisions with the influence that it has to exercise. In no way should we be excluded from this participation, because we are a country of enormous possibilities, which cannot fail to play an important role in the world community.*

President Juscelino Kubitscheck proceeded to the rapprochement between Brazil and Russia in 1958 by reestablishing trade relations. Then presidential candidate Jânio Quadros visited the USSR and was committed to the resumption, but his resignation postponed the reestablishment of diplomatic relations to November 23, 1961, by the hands of Prime Minister Tancredo Neves and Chancellor San Tiago Dantas. The military coup in Brazil in 1964, which precipitated a foreign policy more focused on the United States, and the rise of Leonid Brejnev in the USSR did not reverse the rapprochement. In the 1970s, the responsible pragmatism of Ernesto Geisel and his chancellor, Azeredo da Silveira, paved the way for the intensification of bilateral trade. Brazil would accumulate a surplus of US$ 1.7 billion in the 1970s and US$ 2 billion between 1980 and 1984, during the Figueiredo government[27].

In 1985, redemocratization in Brazil, with Jose Sarney's tenure as President of the Republic, coincided with the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev to the post of secretary general of the Communist Party of the USSR. Although under difficult economic conditions, the confluence of Sarney's opening agenda with the Soviet leader's reform (Perestroika) and transparency (Glasnost) platform contributed positively to bilateral relations[28]. Also in 1985, Brazilian Foreign Minister Olavo Setúbal visited the USSR and signed an agreement on political consultations. In 1987, Soviet

27 GUIMARÃES (2000), p. 408.

28 *Idem.*

Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze reciprocated in the first and last visit of a minister from the USSR to Brazil. The ministerial meetings paved the way for Sarney's visit to Russia in October 1988. In addition to agreements in areas such as space cooperation and energy, the leaders discussed multilateral issues and signed a declaration in favor of international peace and cooperation.

Brazil and Russia both experienced turbulence, especially economic turmoil in the 1990s. There were no visits at the presidential level, although both Fernando Collor de Mello and Fernando Henrique Cardoso visited, respectively, the USSR (1990) and Russia (1994) as presidents-elect. In 1994, Chancellor Celso Amorim visited Moscow, where discussions began on the creation of a bilateral partnership, and agreements were signed in the areas of defense, environment and political consultations. Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov reciprocated Amorim's visit in 1997. New agreements were concluded in culture, science and technology, and space cooperation, with the use of the Alcantara base for the launching of satellites with Russian vehicles. The late 1990s saw the creation of mechanisms that would anchor the future strategic partnership, which has produced results both in the multilateral and bilateral spheres.

2.2. Brazil and Russia in the multilateral sphere

The emerging power dimension in Russian identity has opened up formidable prospects for cooperation with Brazil in the multilateral sphere. Faithful to the Russian style of privileging select clubs, Russian officials discussed with Brazilian interlocutors the creation of a grouping that would bring together the major emerging powers. The initial ideas, which revolved around the traditional G format – in the present case, G4 or G5 – have evolved to take advantage of the BRICS concept coined in 2001 by economist Jim O'Neill of Goldman Sachs. The Russians, in fact, even express in public documents their self-conception as BRICS creators[29]. The meetings of the foreign ministers from Brazil, China, India, and Russia on the fringes of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in 2006 gave way to the 1st Summit in 2009 in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg, which reinforced the perception that Russia was instrumental in the creation of the BRICS. Brazil hosted the second Summit, in 2010.

Deteriorating relations with the US and Europe, with the consequent weakening of the Western school, has impacted Russia's view of the BRICS, as the group strengthens Russian autonomy as an alternative to integration into fora such as the G7/G8. An increase in the civilizational tone, accelerated by the crisis in Ukraine, has widened the space for non-Western partnerships. The Russians see in the BRICS, which brings together countries with which they maintain excellent relations, a way to reduce their representativeness deficit in global economic governance. The BRICS symbolizes, in addition, the multipolarity defended by the country, while simultaneously embodying its main vehicle for attaining this objective. The Russian concept paper on its BRICS presidency in 2015/2016, following the Ufa Summit, emphasizes the ambitious goals of transforming it from a forum of dialogue and coordination into a "full and common mechanism of strategic coordination." The Brazilian and Russian presidencies have been sequential in the BRICS and transitions have been made in an environment of cooperation between the two countries.

The economic and financial crisis, which began in 2008, led the G20 to the center of global economic governance by strengthening relatively powerful emerging powers that were not part of the G7/G8 system. The reform of the institutions of global economic

29 The official document "Concept of the Presidency of the Russian Federation of the BRICS in 2015-2016", endorsed by President Putin, begins with the statement that the group was "created from the initiative of the Russian leadership in 2006".

governance, in particular the IMF and the World Bank, formalized at the Seoul Summit in 2010, but with slow implementation, counts on the enthusiastic support of Brazil and Russia. The countries have also been acting together in opposition to some more orthodox positions in the G20, as advocated, for example, by Germany. This component is testament to the anti-hegemonic action in the G20 by Brazil and Russia, which hosted the group summit in St. Petersburg in 2013. The G20 is therefore the ideal forum for Brazil and Russia to attract other emerging powers to the shared anti-hegemonic formula that countries should be free to pursue their own paths towards economic development.

Brazil and Russia have also increased their coordination in the UN System, with a special reference to the Russian support for the old Brazilian desire to have a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. Interestingly, Russia, a permanent member of the council that inherited the seat of the USSR, had opposed, under the old Soviet mantle, that Brazil became a permanent member when the UN was founded[30]. Among other concerns, the Russians feared that Brazil would align itself with the United States in the Council. Although they are cautious about UNSC reform, fearing the body's loss of effectiveness, post-Cold War political convergence and strategic partnership have led Russians to an increasingly vocal support for the Brazilian case. In addition to the statements at bilateral and BRICS events, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov left no room for doubt in an interview with the Russian news agency TASS on the eve of the UN's 70th birthday in 2015[31]:

We think that developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America are under-represented in UN Security Council. That is

30 GARCIA, Eugênio Vargas. De como o Brasil quase se tornou membro permanente do Conselho de Segurança da ONU em 1945. *Rev. Bras. Polít. Int.*, v. 54 n. 1, 2011.

31 Interview by Minister Sergey Lavrov to the TASS news agency on September 14, 2015.

why we support applications of India and Brazil for permanent membership in Security Council.

A recent development is interregional cooperation. As key actors in their regions, Brazil and Russia are critical to bringing their respective regional mechanisms closer together. In September 2014, even before the entry into force of the treaty establishing the Eurasian Economic Union, a meeting was held in Moscow to explore forms of cooperation between MERCOSUR and the EEU. The blocks are currently considering a memorandum of cooperation. In addition, MERCOSUR and Russia have created the mechanism for political dialogue and cooperation, based on a document signed in Brasilia in December 2006. In a further dimension of this modality of cooperation, the Russian proposal resulted in the establishment of the Permanent CELAC-Russia Dialogue Mechanism, which was approved at a CELAC ministerial meeting in September 2013.

2.3. The strategic partnership between Brazil and Russia

The landmark of the strategic partnership was the 2002 visit of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso to Moscow, after the visits of Vice-President Marco Maciel to Russia in the year 2000, as well as Prime Minister Mikhail Kasianov's visit to Brazil in 2001. During President Lula's visit to the Russian capital in 2010, a comprehensive strategic partnership action plan was signed, and renewed in 2012 during the visit to Moscow by his successor, Dilma Rousseff. The new document anticipated initiatives in sectors such as defense, trade, and space cooperation. During two visits to Brazil by President Vladimir Putin in 2004 and 2014, economic cooperation was in the spotlight. On the first occasion, which was the first visit of a Russian president to Brazil, understanding was reached to raise bilateral trade to US$ 10 billion; on the latter, which coincided with the 6th BRICS Summit, an action plan for trade and investment cooperation was signed. In June 2017, President Michel Temer visited Russia. Agreements were signed in the areas of investment, customs cooperation, strategic dialogue, and political consultations.

The strategic partnership is unfolding in a mosaic of mechanisms, some preexisting, which, in addition to presidential visits, anchor bilateral relations. Political coordination is carried out by the High Level Commission (HLC), chaired by the Vice President of Brazil and the Prime Minister of Russia (or President of Government, in Russian terminology). As Gabriela Bacigalupo observed, the Russians have only maintained similar mechanisms with the USA, France, China, and Ukraine, illustrating their view of Brazil as a relevant international actor and regional power[32]. The operational body is the Intergovernmental Commission for Economic, Commercial, Scientific and Technological Cooperation (CIC). The CIC discusses new bilateral projects and the implementation of existing ones in the most diverse areas: defense, trade, finance, agriculture, investment, energy, space cooperation, science and technology, education, culture, and sports. The mechanism is chaired by the Brazilian Secretary General for External Relations and the Deputy Minister of Economic Development of Russia. HLC and CIC meet alternately in Brazil and Russia.

32 BACIGALUPO (2000).

Brazil-Russia strategic partnership

Year/Event	Presidential Visit	HLC	CIC
1999			I CIC (Brazil)
2000		I HLC (Russia)	
2001		II HLC (Brasil)	II CIC (Russia)
2002	FHC		
2003			
2004	Putin	III HLC (Russia)	III CIC (Brazil)
2005	Lula		IV CIC (Russia)
2006		IV HLC (Brazil)	
2007			
2008	Medvedev		V CIC (Brazil)
2009	Lula (BRICS)		
2010	Lula/ Putin (BRICS)		VI CIC (Brazil)
2011		V HLC (Russia)	VII CIC (Russia)
2012	Rousseff		
2013	Rousseff (G20)	VI CAN (Brazil)	VIII CIC (Brazil)
2014	Putin (BRICS)		
2015	Rousseff (BRICS)	VII CAN (Russia)	IX CIC (Russia)
2016			
2017	Temer		X CIC (Brazil)

The framework is complemented by different political consultation mechanisms. The foreign ministers of Brazil and Russia often exchange visits to discuss bilateral issues and the international agenda. In June 2013, Minister Sergey Lavrov met with Foreign Minister Antonio Patriota in Rio de Janeiro and in November of that same year, Minister Luiz Alberto Figueiredo traveled to Moscow for his first bilateral visit to a non-Latin American country. On the occasion, the 185th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Brazil and Russia was celebrated. The Political Commission is the mechanism for political consultations among the heads of the chancelleries on multilateral and global issues, such as the UN system, disarmament, and peace and security issues. Chaired by Ambassador Fernando Simas Magalhães and Deputy Minister Sergey Ryabkov, the last edition of the Political Commission was held in May 2017. Finally, the thematic department directors of the chancelleries hold consultations in various areas, such as human rights, transnational illicit acts, and international organizations.

2.3.1. Trade and Investment

The vertiginous political gain in density has yet to be matched in the economic-commercial area. Brazil is responsible for the biggest trade flow in Latin America with Russia, which was our 17th largest trade partner in 2015. However, the goal established in 2004 of raising bilateral trade to US$ 10 billion has not yet been reached. Mechanisms such as the Brazil-Russia Chamber of Commerce, the Business Council and the holding of forums and seminars have been encouraged by both governments. In 2015, trade totaled US$ 4.7 billion, only slightly more than a decade ago: US$ 4.4 billion. The recession in the two countries, whose growth rates were among the lowest in the world in 2015, led to a decrease of more than 30% in trade compared to 2014. Brazil has traditionally had a trade surplus with Russia. Despite the drop in exports compared to 2014, Brazil achieved a positive balance of US$ 200 million in 2015. The countries have discussed, through their monetary authorities, the trade of products in local currencies. Nevertheless, difficulties stemming from regulatory idiosyncrasies have not yet allowed the project to materialize.

Bilateral Exchange (US$ million FOB)

BRAZIL to RUSSIA	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Exchange	4,386	5,451	7,985	4,280	6,062	7,160	5,931	5,650	6,769	4,685	4,320
Exports	3,443	3,741	4,653	2,868	4,152	4,216	3,140	2,974	3,829	2,464	2,300
Imports	942	1,710	3,332	1,412	1,910	2,944	2,790	2,676	2,940	2,221	2,021
Balance	2,500	2,031	1,321	1,456	2,241	1,272	350	298	888	243	279

Source: MDIC/Aliceweb

Primary products predominate in Brazilian exports, especially meat, beef, pork, and chicken, accounting for 44% of Brazilian sales to Russia in 2016. A perennial subject in the bilateral relationship is the qualification of Brazilian slaughterhouses capable of exporting to Russia, which strongly opposes the use of ractopamine in animals. Next are sugars (12%), soy (18%), and tobacco (4.2%). Brazil, as a major agricultural power, imports a large quantity of fertilizers that in turn account for 48.6% of Russian sales, followed by aluminum (14.4%). As can be seen from the trade agenda, the challenge in Brazilian-Russian economic relations is not only to increase the flow of trade, but also to diversify sales on both sides, up to now largely concentrated in products with low added value. It should be noted, however, that this bilateral exchange reflects a reality of two countries not solidly connected to global high-tech chains.

The picture in the investment sector does not differ substantially from trade. Imperfect business environments, excessive bureaucracy, and regulatory complexities limit direct investment. But there are investments of the Russian oil company Rosneft in the exploration of natural gas and oil in the Solimões River Basin and the joint production of buses by the Brazilian company Marcopolo and the Russian Kamaz. The Sogrugestvo group has successfully processed and distributed soybeans in Brazil. Gazprom and Rosneft have representative offices in Rio de Janeiro. RZD International, which produces railway cars, is expected to invest in the expansion of the Brazilian rail network. More generally, the area of infrastructure is a possible source of Russian investment in Brazil. Reflecting the Brazilian export agenda, JBS-Brasil Foods and AB-INBEV have sought to enter the Russian market. The BNDES and the Russian Development and Foreign Economic Activity Bank (Vneshekonombank) signed a

Memorandum of Understanding in 2008 that allows credit lines to be granted in local currency.

2.3.2. Defense

There is a perception that the vast Russian military industry creates complementarities in the defense area, which could, through the Russian armaments sale, equalize the trade balance. The legal framework for bilateral cooperation is the Agreement on Technical-Military Cooperation, which was signed in 2008 and entered into force in 2010. It includes, among other areas, technology, research, logistics support, procurement of products and services, and training. Technical-military cooperation was reiterated in the 2010 Strategic Partnership Action Plan. During President Dilma Rousseff's visit in 2012, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed, a kind of "umbrella" for bilateral cooperation that covers the following fields, based on the principle of technology transfer: operation and maintenance of transport and combat helicopters sold by Russia to Brazil; modernization and re-equipment of the Brazilian Armed Forces; territorial surveillance and communication systems of the Brazilian Armed Forces; and military aeronautics.

In the context of the FX-2 fighter purchase program, however, Russia was deferred in its attempt to sell Sukhoi fighters. It is worth to mention the acquisition by the Brazilian Air Force in 2008 of 12 MI-35M helicopters from the Russian agency Rosoboronexport, in addition to a flight simulator and computerized training system. In recent years, the Brazilian acquisition of two batteries of the Igla anti-aircraft defense system and three batteries of the Pantsir S1 system, a project initially aimed at equipping the Brazilian Armed Forces, have been negotiated with a view to the 2014 and 2016 mega-sporting events. The severe budget restrictions that have plagued the Brazilian government in recent years have hindered negotiations, which involved an estimated amount of US$ 1 billion.

2.3.3. Space and Scientific-Technological Cooperation

Space cooperation is part of the Brazil-Russia technological alliance, a concept that was established during President Putin's visit to Brazil in 2004. The alliance is particularly relevant considering that Brazil and Russia are two countries in search of the sophistication of their economies. In 2005, space cooperation was the prominent topic of President Lula's visit to Russia. On that occasion, a contract was signed between the Russian Space Agency (Roscosmos) and the Brazilian Space Agency (AEB), which would allow the first Brazilian astronaut, Marcos César Pontes, to travel in March 2006 to the International Space Station on board the Russian Soyuz TMA-8 rocket. In the area of training, Masters-level students from the Aeronautical Technological Institute (Instituto Tecnológico Aeroespacial – ITA) participated in a training program in aerospace engineering in Russia.

Currently, the most successful case of space cooperation is the installation of stations of the Russian GLONASS satellite navigation system in Brazil. Initiated in 2008, the cooperation resulted in the first station of the system in Brazil at the University of Brasília, inaugurated during Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev's visit to Brazil for High Level Commission IV. In 2014, during President Putin's visit, agreements were signed for the installation of stations in Recife and Santa Maria. In March 2015, the Brazilian Space Agency and the Russian Space Agency (Roscosmos) signed a Memorandum for the installation, in Brazil, of a Russian optical observation system for the tracking and monitoring of space debris in Itajubá, Minas Gerais. The station was the first unit of this system outside Russian territory. Operated by Brazilian scientists, it will allow human resource training and an unprecedented contribution by a developing country to the clearing of space debris.

The technological alliance includes other scientific and technological initiatives. Also in the space field, where bases for cooperation were laid in previous decades, a possible Russian contribution is being discussed in the design of the VLS-1 satellite launch vehicle. In the academic field, there has been discussion on the possibility of sending Brazilian students to the Skolkovo Institute, an entity inspired by the Silicon Valley and created under the Medvedev government. Since 2010 a Memorandum of Understanding on Nanotechnology has been in force, focusing on equipment, regulation, nanotechnology applied to the health sector, and exchange of experiences between companies involved in the processes. An agreement signed between Russian entities and the Butantã Institute during President Putin's visit in 2014 provides for the development of immunobiological drugs used in the prevention of viral infections.

2.3.4. Energy Cooperation

Since 2013, a Russian proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Mines and Energy and the Ministry of Energy of Russia has been in negotiation, covering the following areas: exploration and production of oil and gas on land and at sea; creation and operation of natural gas transportation; storage and distribution infrastructure; generation of electricity from thermal and hydroelectric plants; and increased energy efficiency. At the last High-Level Commission meetings, the Russian side expressed its companies' interests in the next round of bidding for exploration blocks to be carried out by Agência Nacional do Petróleo (ANP), including in the pre-salt layer. In the field of electrical energy, the Russian company Power Machines operates in Brazil. The most well-known case of energy cooperation is Rosneft's participation in the exploration of gas and oil in the Solimões Basin. The Russians have sought forms of cooperation with Petrobras and use the company's structure to make the venture viable. On the occasion of President Putin's visit to Brazil in 2014, the two companies signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the monetization of gas produced in that region.

The Action Plan of the Brazil-Russia Strategic Partnership determines the search for forms of cooperation in the construction of future nuclear power plants in Brazil. The Agreement on Cooperation in Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy concluded in 1994 and the Memorandum of Understanding between the National Nuclear Energy Commission (CNEN) and the State Atomic Energy Corporation (Rosatom) of 2009 are milestones of nuclear cooperation. The areas of interest of the Russian nuclear power company (Rosatom) with Brazil are as follows: construction of a multipurpose reactor in Brazil; the development of safe technologies for the utilization of spent fuel; use of nuclear energy for medical purposes, including the mutual supply of isotope products; and training in the nuclear field. On the Brazilian side, the interests of CNEN are the following: the training of technical staff and research reactors. Rosatom opened an office in Rio de Janeiro in June 2015.

2.3.5. Culture, Education, and Sports

An interesting complementarity is generated by the widespread view that Brazil is rich in soft power resources. Prime Minister Medvedev has argued that the promotion of Russian national interest is hampered by the relatively scarce soft power resources compared to its broad capabilities in hard power[33]. Empowering this element of Russia through what they call "humanitarian" cooperation – covering culture, education, and sports – could reduce resistance against the country, especially in the West. Russian-Brazilian cooperation in this area is regulated by the Cultural and Educational Cooperation Agreement, signed in 1997. There is a special case in the field of culture: the only branch outside Russia of the Ballet School of the world-renowned Bolshoi Theater has been operating in Joinville since the year 2000. Brazilian professional dancer Mariana Gomes, in turn, became the only foreigner to be admitted to the principal company of the Bolshoi Ballet. Several Brazilian soap operas were successful in Russia, especially *A Escrava Isaura*, which made the actress Lucélia Santos a celebrity in that country.

In the field of education, the Russians expressed interest in the Science without Borders Program. During HLC IV, the Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in the Implementation of the Science without Borders Program was signed. There is complementarity, because the areas privileged by the program are those in which Russia shows renowned academic excellence, despite hindrances such as language barriers. Russia seeks to strengthen its presence outside the country precisely by expanding the number of foreign students willing to learn Russian language. The country sees itself as a point of attraction for foreign students: the post-Soviet space is the only region in the world where the universities of the West are turned down, with students preferring to enroll in Russian universities[34]. The

33 In the *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation 2013*, passed in Putin's third term, the concept of soft power emerges as a "comprehensive instrument for achieving foreign policy objectives," not without mentioning that soft power and the concept of human rights have been occasionally used "illegally" to exert pressure on sovereign states.

34 HOPF (2013).

National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and the Ministry of Education (MEC), together with their Russian counterparts, have been debating student exchange and the most appropriate institutions to welcome these students. The recognition of diplomas is another point of interest, since the Russians recognize the diplomas of USP and UNICAMP and demand equal treatment by Brazil.

The realization in Brazil and Russia of the Summer Olympic Games (Rio 2016) and the Winter Games (Sochi 2014), as well as two World Cups in a row (Brazil 2014 and Russia 2018) opened up space for cooperation in the organization of mega-sporting events. The Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Governance and Legacy for the Organization of Olympic and Paralympic Games and the FIFA World Cup was signed on the occasion of President Dilma Rousseff's visit to Moscow in 2012. The agreement establishes guidelines for Brazil and Russia to share practices and knowledge about the organization of Olympic Games and post-game funding of structures built for events, as well as their legacy and social benefits. Countries have exchanged visits from delegations in connection with mega-events.

2.3.6. Society

In a pertinent statement, the Russian newspaper *Ivetzia* stamped the headline of an interview with Fernando Henrique Cardoso, when he visited Russia: "Brazil – Tropical Russia"[35]. The former president referred to points in common between the two peoples, such as being "cheerful in character, romantic, spontaneous, and not very organized." In fact, it is often emphasized at high-level meetings that empathy between the Brazilian and Russian peoples is the ultimate foundation of the

35 The story is reported in *O Estado de S. Paulo*, edition of January 13, 2002.

strategic partnership. Tourism between the two countries could be boosted by the future realization of an old project, the direct flight, whose 15-hour flight time in the Moscow-Rio de Janeiro stretch is close to the maximum range for commercial aviation. For that, there are negotiations in progress to update the bilateral air services agreement originally signed in 1995.

Since 2010, visas are no longer required for stays of up to 90 days, a measure that facilitates the arrival of Russians in Brazil and of Brazilians in Russia. During HLC VII in 2015, Brazilian Minister of Tourism, Henrique Eduardo Alves, announced the opening of a Brazilian Tourism Office at the Brazilian Embassy in Moscow. From the entry into force of the partial visa exemption until the year 2014, the number of Russian tourists to Brazil increased by 130% to 37,000. In contrast, 26 thousand Brazilian tourists visited Russia in 2016, compared to 31 thousand in 2014. In the religious field, Patriarch Cyril I visited Brazil in 2016. He is the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, an important protagonist of the country's culture with 150 million believers. Cyril met with political and religious authorities, such as President Dilma Rousseff and Cardinal Archbishop Orani Tempesta of Rio de Janeiro, where he celebrated Mass at the feet of Christ the Redeemer.

3. Final considerations

Russian post-Cold War foreign policy addresses the complex redefinition of the country's identity, a process that is better understood through the concepts of the constructivist orientation.[36] In contrast to traditional IR theories, constructivism explains how the Soviet superpower identity gave place to the dual self-image of great and emerging power. In addition, Russia oscillates between its European or Eurasian identities, and

36 TSYGANKOV, *Russia's Foreign Policy*.

that has a direct bearing on its relationship with the West, the benchmark of alterity in Russian foreign policy since the Cold War. The continuing disenchantment with the West has led Russia to favor partnerships with other actors, imposing anti-hegemonic traits against what it often sees as an attempt by the United States to implement a unipolar world order in the post-Cold War era. The unipolar configuration would threaten Russia's position as a major power in the international system.

The redefinition of Russian identity has paved the way for deepening Russian-Brazilian relations which, previously conditioned by geographic or ideological distance, have flourished after the end of the Soviet Union. Although domestic instability in both countries prevented an effective interaction in the 1990s, there were ministerial visits and the creation of bilateral mechanisms. Political convergence has resulted in advances in multilateral coordination and bilateral interaction in a variety of areas, such as defense, space, education, cultural, and sports cooperation. Nonetheless, the strategic partnership has not yet borne fruits consistent with the size of the two countries in the economic dimension. Bilateral relations are conditioned by the course of foreign policy in Putin's third term, as well as the way in which Brazilian diplomacy is reoriented under Jair Bolsonaro.

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CHAPTER 5

BRAZIL-SOUTH KOREA RELATIONS

Gustavo Gerlach da Silva Ziemath[1]

Adriano Giacomet Higa de Aguiar[2]

Introduction

In 1959, when Brazil established relations with the Republic of Korea (South Korea), *Correio da Manhã*, a newspaper with wide circulation in Rio de Janeiro, reported on the growth of Brazilian soybean production[3]. According to the newspaper, Brazil, with the result of that harvest, reached the eighth place in the world in soy production. Although it represented a modest productivity for current parameters, the data in the report is surprising not because of the levels of the national production, but because of the presence of South Korea in the sixth position of the global ranking, with much higher results than those reached by Brazil

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3 *Correio da Manhã*, April 5, 1959. Edition 20252 (1).

– something unimaginable if we take as reference the current disparity in production[4].

This small fragment of the economic history of the two countries shows a dimension, if an impressionistic one, of the initial conditions in which relations between Brazil and the Republic of Korea developed[5]. Brazilian agriculture, which now supplies much of the globe, had not fully entered into the process of agricultural diversification and modernization, which characterized the 1960s and 1970s. At the time, the maintenance of rural complexes with low technological support, low productivity, and little diversity persisted. Similarly, the significant Korean production of soybean in the 1960s allows us to glimpse the importance of the agricultural sector in South Korea's economic composition, which at the time accounted for approximately 40% of the country's GDP.

These factors, associated with the geographic distance, the lack of historical ties connecting the two countries, restrictive trade policies, and the hitherto small number of South Koreans in Brazil outlined a relatively limited picture of potentialities on which bilateral relations could be developed. Fortunately, that image has changed a lot since then.

Over the next five decades, but mainly in the 1960s and 1970s, Brazil and South Korea underwent radical transformations in their economic and political structures, which enabled the two countries to rise to positions of global prominence in various areas, transforming the foundations and the potential of bilateral relations. Among these transformations, the following stand out: the industrialization process, agricultural modernization,

4 Available at: <http://www.usda.gov/oce/commodity/wasde/latest.pdf>. Accessed on: November 30, 2016.

5 Brazil was the first Latin American country and the eighth country in the world to recognize the Republic of Korea. The South Korean embassy was inaugurated in Brazil in 1962 and the Brazilian embassy in Seoul was established in 1965.

the democratization process, technological development, and a significant increase in the number of immigrants, particularly in Brazil[6].

If in the 1960s and 1970s the bilateral agenda was not remarkably substantial – either because of the geopolitical logic on the Korean peninsula that limited the international insertion of the Seoul government, or because of the logistical constraints for a closer rapprochement between East Asia and Latin America –, in the 1980s and 1990s Brazil-Korea relations have expanded significantly. The first milestone was the signing in September 1989 of a Memorandum of Understanding establishing a Joint Commission with the aim of developing economic, commercial, industrial, technical, scientific, and cultural cooperation. This agreement allowed the two countries to broaden the channels of cooperation and initiate reflection on the main areas with potential for dialogue. The first meeting of the Commission was followed by the first official visit of a Brazilian foreign minister to South Korea in 1991. On that occasion, then-Foreign Minister Francisco Rezek signed the Cooperation Agreement in the fields of Science and Technology, a forerunner of the partnership that would later be developed in this field. In the economic area, there was a growing interest in exploiting the bilateral trade potential, and in 1992 the Air Services Agreement

6 "[...] a group of 103 South Koreans arrives in the port of Santos in February 1963 and, in November of that year, another group of 350 people. These groups are located near Guarulhos and Mogi das Cruzes, in the state of São Paulo. The following year, two other groups, totaling 635 South Koreans, arrive in Brazil and settle in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. In the years 1965 and 1966, 1065 more Koreans arrive in Paraná and 3032 others, arriving between 1967 and 1970, remain in São Paulo. The largest number, 4028 immigrants, arrive in Brazil in the years 1971 and 1972 (8). After that, there are still another 752 between 1973 and 1979 and another 848 between 1980 and 1985." MASIERO, Gilmar. Relações políticas e econômicas entre o Brasil e a Coreia do Sul. *Carta Asiática*, São Paulo, 2000.

was signed, which established regular weekly flights between São Paulo and Seoul, facilitating the transit of people and goods[7].

Throughout the 1990s, other legal instruments were signed and official visits were carried out that gave density to the bilateral relationship. Important examples of this are the Business Travel Visa Agreement and the Memorandum of Understanding for the Establishment of Political Consultations, both from 1996, the same year that President Kim Young-San visited Brazil. The institutional and political conditions for the deepening of Brazil-Republic of Korea relations were thus laid.

The favorable political context created in the 1990s added to the positive economic development of the 2000s. The result of this alignment of propitious conditions was an escalation of the bilateral partnership to an unprecedented level. During the first decade of the 2000s, three presidential visits were made to South Korea, one during the administration of Fernando Henrique Cardoso and two during the administration of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva[8], and two of South Korean heads of state to Brazil[9]. During these visits, many instruments were signed revealing the synergy between the two states in sensitive areas, such as the Defense Cooperation Agreement (2006), and in areas essential for economic development, such as the establishment of the Joint Committee for the Promotion of Trade and Investment and Industrial Cooperation. As will be seen below, the economic moment at the

7 FACÓ, Gladys Ann Garry. *O Brasil e a República da Coreia: relações em mutação*. Thesis of the Course of High Studies, 1999. p. 81.

8 Former President Fernando Henrique was in South Korea in 2001, making the first state visit of a Brazilian president to the country. Former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva held an official visit in 2005, along with a large corporate delegation, and again visited the Republic of Korea in 2010 for a G20 meeting, in which he met with then-President Lee Myung-bak.

9 Former President Roh Moohyun made an official visit to Brazil in 2004 and President Lee Myung-bak in 2008. Lee was also in Brazil in 2012 on the occasion of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

time, with economic growth in both countries and an increase in international price of commodities, guaranteed commercial results that stimulated a more dynamic bilateral partnership.

More recently, the visit made by President Park Geun-hye to Brazil in 2015 has advanced Brazil-Korea relations even further. At the time, new instruments were signed in the environmental, energy, cultural, technological, and fiscal cooperation areas, revealing the continuous political will in both countries to further strengthen ties between their societies.

With the development of Brazilian and Korean societies, the indirect and diffuse ties of the early years of the relationship were replaced by relations characterized by clear and complementary bilateral interests. In the following sections, this article will deal with two of the areas that can be considered the pillars of Brazil-Korea relations and whose development processes, as we shall see, are closely intertwined. Trade and investment flows and cooperation in the scientific and technological areas have given substance to the bilateral relationship and, therefore, deserve to be analyzed in more detail throughout the article.

1. Science, Technology and Innovation

Drawing on another snapshot of the past to illustrate Brazil-Korea relations, *Jornal do Dia*, in August 1986, reported on a business mission to Japan and South Korea to obtain industrial expertise[10]. According to one of the organizers of the mission, South Korea was included as a destination because "after following in the footsteps of the Japanese model over the last ten years, it has today an economy that resembles in many aspects that of Brazil, however, with certain advantages in some sectors." At the time, South Korea, although it had not yet established itself as a major producer of

10 *Jornal do Dia*, Cuiabá, August 21, 1986. Issue 2567.

technology and knowledge[11], was already perceived by the national business community as a possible source of applied industrial knowledge. Korea's industrial development was approaching that of Brazil, as it was only beginning to produce endogenous technology in some specific sectors, with varying degrees of success. For the Brazilian businessmen interviewed by the newspaper, Korea was a preferential partner precisely because of its proximity in the levels of industrial and technological development:

> *Korean manufacturing processes and products are already a bit more sophisticated than Brazilian ones, but it is still possible for our industry to visualize their steps, whereas the distance to Japan is already quite large*[12].

If in Brazil the continuity of the technological development process was severely limited by the debt crisis and the economic difficulties that persisted until the mid-1990s; in Korea, it was a period of sharp increase in technology imports[13] and investment[14] in research and development. In 1997, when an economic crisis hit Asia, potentially impacting science and technology investments,

11 "The South Korean industrial process, which started with Park in the 1960s, had as its matrix both the expansion of the steel and metallurgical sectors and the imitation of what was produced in Japan and the USA. Imitating is not necessarily illegal and does not per se violate world ownership rules. In fact, this process was carried out in the RoK simply by copying what was done overseas without the need for research and development. Thus, knowledge was limited to small levels of industrial learning, sufficient to adapt the production system to the operational reality: the production of the copied object." BUGANÉ, Cynthia Altoe Vargas. A relação Brasil-República da Coreia em Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação: estratégias nacionais de desenvolvimento e perspectivas de cooperação bilateral. Ministério das Relações Exteriores – Instituto Rio Branco. LVII Curso de Altos Estudos.

12 *Jornal do Dia*, Cuiabá, August 21, 1986. Issue 2567.

13 "In the early 1990s, South Korea became the second largest buyer of technology from the US and Japan, acquiring it more than any other economy, except those two most economically developed countries and holders of technologies imported by the Republic of Korea." BUGANÉ, Cynthia Altoe Vargas, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

14 "South Korea has one of the most concentrated industrial structures in the world. Few and large business groups operate in the most diverse branches of economic activity." In: MASIERO, Gilmar. Empresas coreanas no Brasil: dificuldades e impactos da crise asiática. *Korean Journal of Latin American Studies*, Seul, Coreia, v. 1, n. 1, p. 1, 1998.

the South Korean government increased spending in the sector, which had many private investors, responsible for more than 70% of the resources spent in the area[15]. The government's decisive action allowed these expenditures to recover to pre-crisis levels by ensuring the continuity of the South Korean innovation system.

This fact, together with other factors like the continued process of expansion of the South Korean education system, state incentives for innovation, and the participation of the private initiative in developing knowledge and innovation, have allowed the country, industrialized later than Brazil and strongly affected by the tensions with its northern neighbor, to expand the level of complexity of the national productive chain. South Korea thus became a country of great potential for establishing scientific and technological cooperation with Brazil.

It is no coincidence that in 1991, during the visit of Foreign Minister Francisco Rezek to Korea, the Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Government of the Republic of Korea on Cooperation in the fields of Science and Technology was signed. The agreement created a Joint Commission on Science and Technology, which would have the prerogative to "select and determine priorities in the fields of cooperation, programs, projects and activities; evaluate and coordinate the programs, projects and activities carried out under this Agreement (...)".

Although the first meeting of the Joint Commission took twenty years to be held, it should be noted that during the first visit of a Brazilian foreign minister to the country, the area of science

15 "As private investment in R&D increased, so did the state's participation. If in 1981 the government accounted for 53% of investment in R&D, that figure ranged from 16 to 19% during the 1990s, increasing again to nearly 24% in recent years. In contrast, the private sector has been contributing over 70% of R&D investments." Telegram 1072, dated November 17, 2016, from the Brazilian Embassy in Seoul to the Secretariat of State.

and technology was already deemed meaningful. Since then, the attention dedicated to this field in presidential visits[16] became a recognizable pattern. In 2005, for example, during President Lula's visit to Korea, he highlighted the centrality of the area of science and technology in the broader spectrum of bilateral relations. The process was repeated and intensified with the visit of South Korean President Lee Myung-bak to Brazil in 2008, when ethanol and nuclear technologies were highlighted as priority areas. In the last presidential visit, that of President Park Geun-hye to Brazil, then President Dilma Rousseff highlighted that Korea is "a world reference in the production of knowledge, in the knowledge economy" and a preferred partner in this field.

The field of Science and Technology has given a fundamental boost to the relations between the two countries and continues to be complemented by a significant increase in trade and investment flows; the visible result of the relationship between the two countries. Achieving the potential for cooperation in this area largely determines the success of bilateral relations. This is due not only to the great potential for cooperation but also to the positive effects of successful partnership in the domain of other sectors, particularly investment and trade. The very designation of the co-operative process between the two countries, the "Partnership for the 21st Century," implied at the time of its creation not only

16 "In 1996, the first visit of a South Korean president to Brazil, Kim Young-sam, was made, which suggested, at the time, the creation of a forum to serve as an instrument for promoting cooperation. The suggestion, accepted by Brazil, led to the creation of the Commission for the 21st Century, nicknamed the 'Group of the Wise', in the following year. Composed of representatives from the private sector and academia, the group served the purpose of defining the cooperative logic in the scientific-technological fields between the two countries and also as a 3+3 pilot cooperation project. [...] then President Fernando Henrique Cardoso made a state visit to South Korea in January 2001, culminating in the signing of cooperation agreements for the peaceful use of nuclear energy [...]. On the occasion, the Minister of Science and Technology, Ronaldo Sardenberg, highlighted the Brazilian interest in intensifying cooperation in the areas of biotechnology, electronics, information technology, metallurgy, and clean technologies. The 'Special Partnership for the 21st Century' was also agreed." BUGANÉ, Cynthia Altoe Vargas, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

the idea that the renewal of partnerships in the Asian continent would be a feature of a foreign policy that was more modern and adapted to the so-called Asian Century, but also that South Korea could specifically constitute a new model of bilateral relationship for Brazil, focused on cooperation in areas considered cutting edge and founded on the axis of science, technology, and innovation.

What began as a top-down process largely conducted through high-level visits[17] of government officials has become, over the last ten years, a process led by numerous stakeholders, encompassing non-governmental actors. Although there was an initial effort to include new actors in the cooperative process, as in the "group of the wise"[18], for example, the agreements between Brazil and South Korea centered on state actors and were comprehensive in scope, but vague.

Starting in 2008, the scientific and technological bilateral initiatives began to unfold. Examples are the Memorandum of Understanding between NIPA and SOFTEX for the promotion of partnerships in the information technology sector; nuclear cooperation between INB and KEPCO Nuclear Fuel; and the Memorandum of Understanding between Serpro and ETRI for the development of software, among other initiatives. These developments revealed a growing sophistication of bilateral

17 "In the diplomatic sphere, it is observed that most of the activities originate in the upper levels of public administration, in the top-down sense, and few initiatives are registered when originated in the bottom-up context, as in the case of the venture in the semiconductor area between the companies Hana Micron and Altus" FUJITA, Edmundo, YOUNGSUN, Kwon, FINK, Daniel, Análise comparativa das trajetórias de produção de conhecimento entre o Brasil e a Coreia do Sul: tendências e possibilidades." *Mundo Afora: políticas de incentivo à inovação* #10, 2013, Ministério das Relações Exteriores.

18 "Composed of representatives from the private and academic sectors, the group served the purpose of defining the cooperative logic in the scientific-technological fields between the two countries and also as a 3+3 pilot cooperation project. Negotiations have been weakened over the past decade, partly because of difficulties in dialogue between the different agencies of the two countries.". BUGANÉ, Cynthia Altoe Vargas, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

relations in the area of science and technology. Cooperation ceased to be a potential and materialized through the exchange of experiences, access and exposure of researchers and academics to new networks, and more access to research infrastructure[19].

Symptomatic of the change is the fact that one of the first agreements of this new phase was signed between Embrapa and the Rural Development Administration (RDA) in 2008 and, the following year, technical visits were carried out, such as that of MCTI's Secretary of Informatics Policy to major research centers in Seoul, Daejeon, Asan and Incheon; that of the Secretariat of Informatics Policy (Sepin/MCT), and the inauguration, at the end of the year, of Labex Korea. South Korea also sent technical and exploratory missions to Brazilian research institutions, including the National Institute of Telecommunications (INATEL) and PUC-RS. Other side-by-side missions took place in the following years, giving substance to a type of differentiated partnership with Korea and to the ambition indicated in the Special Partnership of the 21st Century.

Another point highlighted by Fujita, Kwon and Fink, which exemplifies the significant increase in scientific cooperation between the two countries since the second half of the 2000s, concerns the advancement of scientific co-authorship between South Korean and Brazilian researchers. While one co-authored article was registered in 1991 between the two countries, in 2008 the number had surpassed 50 articles, a number that has not stopped growing and now exceeds 70 articles in co-authorship per year[20]. If we consider the production of articles with more than

19 FIKKERS, Derek Jan; HORVAT, Manfred. *Basic principles for effective international science, technology and innovation agreements*. Main Report. European Comission, Bruxelas, 2014.

20 FUJITA, Edmundo; YOUNGSUN, Kwon; FINK, Daniel, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

two authors, including Brazilians and South Koreans, the number exceeds 300 publications.

In this context, the First Meeting of the Joint Commission, held in Seoul in August 2011, was an opportunity to consolidate priority areas for Brazil and South Korea in the area of science and technology. Whereas Brazil wished to prioritize cooperation in the areas of Nanotechnology, semiconductors and software, nuclear energy, biotechnology, electronics, and clean technologies; South Korea indicated that it had a priority interest in the areas of biofuels, cognitive radio, optical communications, 4G networks, digital TV, nuclear energy, and mining.

During the Joint Commission, Memorandums of Understanding were made possible through the exploratory missions carried out in previous years and with the active work of the Brazilian Embassy in Seoul to explore partnerships and bring together potential collaborators. The 2nd Meeting of the Joint Commission on Science, Technology and Innovation was held just three years after its first edition, which seems to indicate a relative consolidation of the area. In fact, the 2nd Joint Commission was preceded by the "1st Brazil-South Korea Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation: new trends in nanotechnology research and development", with representation from academics and researchers, as well as South Korean and Brazilian companies. These events show the increase in ties between the two countries in Science and Technology.

The Joint Commission also had the merit of directing the subsequent cooperation efforts, among which the South Korean participation in the Science without Borders (CsF) program – the first East Asian country to join the program – stands out. Through the CsF program, South Korea has accepted more than 500 Brazilian students in more than a dozen Korean universities.

In addition to the recognized level of Korean universities[21] and indirect benefits of the exchange, like strengthening links between the two societies, most Brazilian students participated in trainee programs in technology companies, including large companies such as Hyundai, Samsung, and LG. For small and medium-sized enterprises that have established professional internship programs with exchange students, the initiative is an opportunity to facilitate the identification of investment possibilities in Brazil. In this sense, the results of these initiatives are not only restricted to the field of science and technology but, in a process that attests to the centrality of science and technology in bilateral relations, play an important role in other areas of growing dynamism, such as trade and investment.

The Brazilian perception that South Korea is willing to share knowledge horizontally in areas where Brazil has not yet reached the same level of development, coupled with more than twenty years of gradual buildup of S&T cooperation and the existence of institutional channels which ensure continuity of cooperation between the two countries, makes South Korea a preferred partner and an important ally in the S&T area. In addition, there is a high degree of complementarity between the two countries in the area, which further increases the potential of cooperation and the importance of continuing the cooperative process:

> *Brazil is part of a group of western nations, especially Europeans, with a portfolio of scientific competencies especially focused on the bioenvironmental sciences. South Korea, on the other hand, belongs to a select group*

21 "It is enough to verify that many of these [Korean] universities are on the list of the top 100 academic institutions in the world on the various international assessment lists." *In*: FUJITA, Edmundo, FINK, Daniel. Coreia sem fronteiras – notas sobre a globalização da educação e sinergias para o Brasil. *Mundo Afora: políticas de internacionalização de universidades* #9, 2012, Ministério das Relações Exteriores.

> *of newly industrialized nations with notable prominence in the areas of information technology, engineering, and materials science*[22].

Another model for the intersection of these two areas is the so-called 2+2 model, in which research institutes or universities and companies from both countries are associated in joint enterprise and research work[23]. A possible example of this model is the joint venture between Brazilian company Altus and Korean company Hana Micron at the Vale do Rio dos Sinos University, a project that will allow the development of the entire semiconductor production chain on national territory.

South Korea presents itself as a strategic partner for Brazil in the area of science and technology, fundamental for the country to further its scientific and technological development and raise its competitiveness in several sectors. In addition to being one of the most innovative countries in the world, South Korea is highly complementary to Brazil in areas of excellence and has shown great interest in horizontal cooperation not only at the highest level of government, which has been repeatedly demonstrated at ministerial and presidential visits for more than two decades, but also by the business and academic community, which is perceptible by the gradual and sustained increase in the joint production of articles, seminars and exploratory missions.

22 FUJITA, Edmundo, FINK, Daniel, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

23 "Some entities, however, defend the 2+2 model, [...] because it concentrates the scientific-technological activities in the direct university-company relationship. The inherent logic of this model is that the government may be more concerned with political and institutional issues and move away from the specific objectives of generating and disseminating technological-productive innovations. [...] One of the advantages highlighted by the Brazilian ambassador in Seoul, Edmundo Fujita, in the use of the 2+2 model is the reduction of the dreaded brain drain [...] which, in this case, is replaced by brain circulation." BUGANÉ, Cynthia Altoe Vargas, *op. cit*.

2. Trade and investment

2.1. Overview

According to data from the World Bank, the Republic of Korea now has the 11th highest gross domestic product (GDP) in the world and the 4th largest in Asia (behind China, Japan and India), amounting to approximately US$ 1.4 trillion[24]. Added to this picture of relevance in the international economy is the high dependence on foreign trade for the country's growth: international trade in goods and services now accounts for almost 50% of South Korean GDP[25], a figure significantly higher than that observed in the decade of 1960 (approximately 5%), when the process of internationalization of the economy of the country began.

These figures reveal the country's high vulnerability to international market fluctuations. An example of this is that in recent years, factors such as the slowdown of China's economy – Korea's main trading partner – and the European difficulty in achieving satisfactory levels of growth have led to a decline in the country's exports, negatively influencing its growth. In addition, a reduction in the international oil price in 2015 and 2016 has significantly affected the purchasing power of countries such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which export hydrocarbons and are major importers of South Korean industrialized products.

In order to reverse this scenario, the government has acted on two fronts. One of them is to encourage domestic consumption, through expansionary monetary policy measures and fiscal incentives for the growth of sectors like services. The other, of greater interest to Brazil, is the further development of the

24 Available at: <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/GDP.pdf.>. Accessed on: Nov. 12, 2016.

25 Available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NE.EXP.GNFS.ZS.>. Accessed on: Nov. 12, 2016.

country's exporting vocation, through the establishment of new Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and the strengthening of trade relations with global partners.

The Republic of Korea currently has 15 FTAs covering more than 50 countries, representing approximately 70% of the world GDP. Some of the main agreements have been negotiated with important economic partners: China, which entered into force in 2015; the United States, effective since 2012; and the European Union, in force since 2011. In addition, negotiations are under way with Japan, South Korea's second largest trading partner, and the government has considered moving closer to the Trans-Pacific Agreement and other plurilateral negotiations, such as the initiative of the Comprehensive Regional Economic Partnership, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

In addition to these ongoing negotiations, the Government of the Republic of Korea has shown interest in moving forward with other partners outside its region. Examples include negotiations on trade agreements with Central and South American countries like Colombia, where an agreement came into force in 2016; Israel, whose formal talks also began in 2016; and Iran, where President Park Geun-hye traveled in May 2016 with a delegation of more than 220 South Korean businessmen in order to further develop economic ties as international sanctions on Tehran's regime were lifted.

In terms of investment, the Korean government has shown signs that it will seek to promote them in coordination with incentives for foreign trade and acceleration of the domestic market. Korea is one of the twenty nations with the highest volume of direct foreign investment in the world[26]. This value,

26 Available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BM.KLT.DINV.CD.WD?end=2015&start=2010&year_high_desc=false.> Accessed on: Nov. 14, 2016.

however, has fallen in recent years, mainly because of the difficulty the country faces in maintaining high levels of economic growth. According to the OECD, Korea has less external investment than countries with smaller economies, such as Belgium and Spain[27].

In order to regain economic dynamism, the government has launched internal fiscal development initiatives for sectors with small and medium-sized enterprises in innovative sectors that are interested in internationalizing their activities. In addition to this, the government promotes policies that seek to further develop economic ties with potentially expressive markets. In 2015, for example, the government developed a "Look East Policy" to identify and explore new political, trade, and investment opportunities with Latin America. This initiative aims to meet objectives of diversification of exports, intensification of trade flows, and an increase of the stock of bilateral investments.

It is in this scenario of unfavorable trade and foreign investment for Korea – but with promising long-term prospects – that bilateral economic relations are developed with Brazil, an emerging market in the region that still has a great potential for business expansion. An emblematic aspect of this is that in early 2016, the Korean Agency for Trade and Investment Promotion (KOTRA) announced that China, Iran, Brazil, and Vietnam are the four strategic markets that can "rescue Korean exports." In this sense, the Agency announced that it will seek to bring Korean producers closer to potential importers in the selected countries, focusing on actions aimed at small and medium-sized enterprises, in line with the government's macroeconomic policy.

27 Available at: <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?QueryId=72055>. Accessed on: Nov. 12, 2016.

2.2. Bilateral scenario

Economic relations are one of the main pillars of the bilateral cooperation agenda with Korea. From the commercial point of view, trade began to increase in the last decade, following the processes of intense internationalization of the Korean economy and the diversification of Brazil's foreign partners. An analysis of the evolution of bilateral trade over the last ten years reveals a structural increase in the bilateral trade of goods, despite a conjectural reduction in recent years.

After stabilizing in the 1990s, bilateral trade expanded substantially from the mid-2000s onwards. Between 2005 and 2015, the trade flow grew more than 100%, jumping from US$ 4.2 to US$ 8.5 billion. It should be noted that the increase is even more significant if it is taken into account that, in the years 2011 and 2013, the trade surplus exceeded US$ 14 billion.

Among the main reasons for the expansion of bilateral trade is the growth of Brazilian exports to the world, in the context of the increase in the international demand for primary goods, as well as the rise in the presence of Korean products of high added-value products, such as cars and electronic devices, worldwide and particularly in Brazil.

It should be noted that, in spite of the considerable growth of bilateral trade in the last 10 years, some economic factors in recent years have halted this positive trend. Bilateral trade declined by almost a half in 2015, compared to the result of 2013, especially due to the reduction in Korean exports to Brazil, which decreased from US$ 9.4 to US$ 5.4 billion. Among the main reasons for this result, we can highlight both the generalized reduction of Brazilian imports in the period due to the slowdown in the Brazilian economy and the loss of dynamism of Korean exports in general, which in 2015 registered the lowest accumulated value of exports since 2011.

It is important to mention that, compared to other countries, South Korea is the third largest Brazilian trade partner in Asia (only behind China and, to a lesser extent, Japan)[28] and the seventh in the world, even if there is room for growth in bilateral trade. Moreover, South Korea was the second largest source of Brazilian imports from Asia in 2015 – even ahead of Japan – and the 5th largest source of Brazilian imports in the world. This shows that, despite the absolute reduction in bilateral trade in 2014 and 2015, the Republic of Korea continues to maintain its relative importance as a trading partner, especially vis-à-vis other countries with a similar economic profile, such as Japan.

When analyzing Brazil's relevance to the South Korean trade balance, Brazil was, in 2015, the 21st largest destination of South Korean exports and the 24th source of imports[29]. These data show not only a certain disproportion in the relevance of Brazil and Korea to the trade balance of one another, but also space for Brazil to increase its presence in the South Korean market.

It is noticeable that Brazil has lost space among the main South Korean trading partners in recent years, because of the temporary trade flow reduction. As an example, Brazil lost to Chile the position of largest Latin American exporter to South Korea and to Mexico the place of major destination of South Korean exports to Latin America and the position of South Korea's main trade partner in the region. It should be noted that Chile has a free trade agreement with the Republic of Korea, in force since 2004, and

28 According to data from ALICEWeb, of the Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services, Brazil's bilateral trade flows with South Korea have surpassed that with Japan, accumulated from January to October 2016.

29 Available at: <http://www.trademap.org/Country_SelProductCountry_TS.aspx>. Accessed on: November 10, 2016.

Mexico could further deepen its trade ties with the South Koreans in the coming years, if the Republic of Korea effectively becomes part of the Transpacific Agreement.

In addition to considering the evolution of the current trade, it is important to note that during the last 10 years, Brazil has always been in trade deficit. Brazil has accumulated these successive deficits (negative balances of US$ 4.7 billion in 2013 and 2014 and US$ 2.2 billion in 2015, for example), mainly due to the significant disparity of added value in the trade agenda.

Brazilian exports to the Republic of Korea are mainly made up of basic products, which accounted for 74.1% of the country's exports in 2015, mainly iron ore, cereals (especially corn), and soybean meal. It is also worth considering that the main manufactured product exported by Brazil to South Korea is ethanol, which represented, in 2015, almost half of the total exports of Brazilian manufactured goods to the Asian country (43%).

By 2015, manufactured goods accounted for 99.5% of total Brazilian purchases from Korea. The main products imported by Brazil were electric machines, car and mechanical machine parts. It is interesting to note that between 2013 and 2015, Korean exports of manufactured and semi-manufactured goods to Brazil suffered a significant contraction (which led to a substantial decline in the bilateral trade flow, as seen above), but Brazilian imports of Korean produce more than doubled in the same period, although their absolute value and proportion in Brazilian imports are extremely low.

It can be seen from the current scenario of bilateral trade that there are at least two central challenges for the future of the Brazil-Republic of Korea trade agenda. The first is to resume the dynamism of the bilateral trade flow, returning to the level of almost US$ 15 billion in the current trade, observed in the years 2011 and 2013, for example. In addition, the increase in trade must be accompanied by leveling the playing field in trade balance. If the objective of having surplus in trade balance is difficult for Brazil to achieve, given the profile of exports and imports, it is at least possible to make this balance less unequal. These challenges can be overcome by both increasing Brazilian exports of primary goods and by enacting policies that reduce trade barriers.

In this sense, some initiatives already underway can be highlighted. In 2016, for example, the Republic of Korea took important steps towards eliminating sanitary barriers and opening its market to pork from Santa Catarina – the only Brazilian state free of foot-and-mouth disease without vaccination. The mission of that state's government to Seoul was carried out to raise awareness among the Korean authorities of the importance Brazil attaches to the process of opening up the local market for pork produced in Santa Catarina.

In relation to beef exports, the South Korean market remains closed to Brazilian exports, due to sanitary barriers related to foot-and-mouth disease. There is, however, room to put pressure on local authorities to seek greater openness, as local beef production has become increasingly costly and beef consumption among South Koreans remains very high[30], making the market attractive for investments of large Brazilian companies in the sector.

In addition to these specific markets with high potential for Brazil, Korea is interested in starting negotiations on a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Mercosur. Exploratory talks were launched between the parties in mid-2016. The main obstacle to FTA negotiations with the Republic of

30 Available at: <http://www.cnbc.com/2015/10/01/high-hanwoo-price-boosts-skorea-beef-imports-australia-benefits.html>. Accessed on: Nov. 11, 2016.

Korea is the South Korean resistance to liberalize its agricultural market. Especially worrisome are the Korean non-tariff barriers to protect their agricultural sector. The lifting of sanitary barriers is a particularly complex issue, as it involves a legislative debate, and the government, although it has an interest in advancing free trade negotiations, has not shown any strength in the face of Parliament.

Brazil-South Korea trade balance 2005-2015 (Source: MDIC)

Year	Exports			Imports			Result
	US$ FOB (A)	Var.%	Part.%	US$ FOB (B)	Var.%	Part.%	Balance (A-B)
2005	1,896,606,887			2,326,778,317			-430,171,430
2006	1,962,513,782	3.47	1.42	3,106,334,562	33.50	3.40	-1,143,820,780
2007	2,046,635,980	4.29	1.27	3,391,409,128	9.18	2.81	-1,344,773,148
2008	3,133,506,837	53.11	1.58	5,413,084,430	59.61	3.13	-2,279,577,593
2009	2,658,290,692	-15.17	1.74	4,818,551,861	-10.98	3.77	-2,160,261,169
2010	3,760,122,477	41.45	1.86	8,421,951,971	74.78	4.63	-4,661,829,494
2011	4,693,867,506	24.83	1.83	10,097,365,170	19.89	4.46	-5,403,497,664
2012	4,501,090,479	-4.11	1.86	9,098,526,199	-9.89	4.08	-4,597,435,720
2013	4,719,969,854	4.86	1.95	9,491,936,441	4.32	3.96	-4,771,966,587
2014	3,831,244,201	-18.83	1.70	8,525,812,726	-10.18	3.72	-4,694,566,525
2015	3,122,212,836	-18.51	1.63	5,420,621,830	-36.42	3.16	-2,298,408,994

In terms of investments, bilateral relations also have significant potential for expansion, especially in the semiconductor, machinery and equipment, electronics, steel, and automotive sectors. The stock of South Korean investment in Brazil was US$ 4.3 billion in 2014 (the 19th largest investment stock in Brazil). During the last decade, however, the annual flow of investment seems to have followed a trajectory similar to that of the trade balance: after an upward trajectory since 2005, it began to decline in 2012. A sign that perhaps this negative conjuncture can be overcome is that in

2016 the flow of Korean annual investment in Brazil surpassed that of 2014 and 2015, reaching US$ 419 million[31].

Among the main Korean companies operating in Brazil are: Hyundai/KIA, in the automotive sector; Samsung and LG Electronics, in the consumer electronics sector; the CJ, in the area of chemicals; Hyosung, which industrializes latex; Doosan Infracore, in the area of heavy machinery, and Companhia Siderúrgica de Pecém, the largest Korean investment in Brazil and the result of a partnership with Vale and two South Korean companies.

On the Brazilian side, there is still no significant investment in the Republic of Korea. Nonetheless, BRF, Vale, Latam Airlines Group, Gol Linhas Aéreas Inteligentes, Ambev, and Odebrecht, as well as H.Stern, with a store in Seoul, are present in the country through representation offices.

As in trade relations, the present challenge is, on the one hand, to resume Korean investment in Brazil, to recover the level of the beginning of the decade and, on the other hand, to reduce the disparity in the volume of investments from one side to another, through mechanisms that facilitate the internationalization of Brazilian companies in the Republic of Korea.

South Korean companies are expected to reinvest in Brazil by participating in efforts to modernize the country's infrastructure and logistics chain. The new concession plan of the Brazilian government aims to attract foreign capital to projects that allow the country to overcome its economic bottlenecks. For Koreans, in view of the significant slowdown in domestic growth, the emerging Brazilian market can serve as a destination for the reallocation of their investments.

31 Available at: <https://www.bcb.gov.br/htms/Infecon/SeriehistFluxoInvDir.asp>. Accessed on: Nov. 9, 2016.

In view of the Brazilian interest in expanding the flow of investment between the two countries, the Republic of Korea was identified by the Brazilian government as a priority partner for the negotiation of an Agreement for Cooperation and Facilitation of Investments (ACFI). Brazil has sought to sign these agreements with several markets of potential interest for the internationalization of companies in the country, such as Angola, Chile, and Colombia, as it will ensure greater predictability and security for domestic investors.

It is worth noting, however, that the model of investment agreement adopted by Korea differs from the ACFI model, since it contains elements that constitute a strong obstacle, together with Brazilian legislation, to internal approval, such as indirect expropriation and "investor-state" arbitration.

Thus, Brazil and Korea are going through economic contexts that are not as favorable as they were some years ago, when bilateral trade results reached unprecedented levels. However, this is not necessarily a negative situation. It is an indication that there are challenges that can be overcome to recover the levels of bilateral partnership and expand them. Potential for a virtuous momentum exists, and bilateral trade promotion initiatives and bilateral institutional advances, such as the signing of new trade and investment facilitation agreements, will help overcome momentary problems and serve to promote bilateral trade and economic development.

3. Conclusion

Brazil-South Korea bilateral relations have radically transformed since their establishment in 1959. The low level of interaction in the early years of relations, influenced not only by distance, but also by the low trade flow between the two economies and the understanding of the existence of structural limits to the deepening of cooperation between the two countries at the time, was gradually replaced by the perception that the development of the two societies had a growing potential in various fields. The new dynamics of bilateral relations have manifested themselves in a more pronounced manner in two areas: trade and Science and technology.

The increase in bilateral trade and the multiplication of initiatives in the area of science and technology, although a result of the dynamics of development and modernization of the two countries over the last five decades, has reshaped the pattern of the relationship between the two countries in the last decade. Over the last ten years, the relationship between the two countries has flourished unequivocally, driven primarily by the materialization of initiatives in the field of science and technology, whose perspectives have been outlined since the creation of the Joint Commission in the early 1990s; and by the rapid increase in the bilateral trade volume, on a strongly upward trajectory until 2013, when it reached its record flow of more than US$ 14 billion dollars. Even the challenges to be overcome in the economic-trade sphere (such as the successive Brazilian deficits due to the countries' different productive structures), instead of limiting the potential of the partnership, have become catalysts for cooperation in new areas. The installation of large South Korean companies with a strong scientific-technological component, for example, helps to sophisticate the Brazilian productive chain and has an impact on the pattern of international trade in Brazil.

If the "Special Partnership for the 21st Century," an epithet that designates and qualifies the relations between Brazil and Korea, took a few years to fully express itself as an out of the ordinary partnership in Brazil's bilateral relations with the rest of the world, currently, relations have reached a level comparable only to Brazil's most traditional partners. The initiatives in the areas of science and technology, the recognizable complementarities in the most varied subjects, the significant increase of the trade flows, although tempered by conjectural decreases, associated to the investments in several key sectors of the Brazilian economy such as the automotive and semiconductor industries, make South Korea a central part of any national development strategy. The Asian century should therefore also be, for Brazil, a South Korean century.

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CHAPTER 6

STRATEGIC ASPECTS OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN BRAZIL AND NORTH KOREA

Eduardo Figueiredo Siebra[1]

Introduction: contextualizing the problem

In May 2009, Brazil opened a resident embassy in Pyongyang. The Explanatory Statement that proposed its creation argued that the purpose of the diplomatic representation would be to contribute to the rapprochement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) with the international community and open up new opportunities for Brazilian political, economic and commercial activity in the region.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had already been considering for some time the idea of opening a diplomatic representation in the DPRK. In 2001, while visiting the Demilitarized Zone, President Fernando Henrique Cardoso decided that Brazil should

1 Eduardo Figueiredo Siebra was born in Crato, Ceará. He holds a law degree (2006) and a master's degree in political science (2010) from the Universidade Federal de Pernambuco. He was admitted to the diplomatic career in 2010. In 2012, the made a study trip to China. In 2014 he was on a transitional mission to the Brazilian Embassy in Pyongyang. He has worked in the Education Issues Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2012 to 2017. He is currently assigned to the Brazilian Embassy in Beijing.

establish diplomatic relations with North Korea[2]. There was also a certain measure of "geopolitical curiosity"[3] for the DPRK on the part of the Asian Department in our ministry. Two factors, however, weighed on the decision to inaugurate the office: the opening of the North Korean embassy in Brasília in 2005[4], and the relative progress made during the period of South Korean's so-called Sunshine Policy[5].

In spite of these antecedents, the opening of the embassy coincided with an expansive moment in our foreign policy. In 2009, when the Lula administration's diplomacy was in full swing, Brazil expanded its presence in the world through an effort that signaled not only a desire to establish new channels for dialogue, but also the intention to demonstrate to international society that our country would be able to play a leading role in big global issues[6]. Taking such a leading role in big politics seemed to be almost a prerequisite for pushing forward the intended reforms of international governance mechanisms – especially the UN Security Council.

2 The information contained in this paragraph was transmitted to me by our ambassador to the DPRK, Roberto Colin. I cannot thank him enough for his valuable support during the drafting of this article and also for having inspired my intellectual interest in North Korea for the first time.

3 The expression is by Ambassador Edmundo Fujita – who was head of the Asia Department – with whom Ambassador Colin had the opportunity to discuss the background to the opening of the embassy.

4 At the time Brazil tried to adopt a policy of reciprocity, opening embassies in the countries that opened representations in Brasília.

5 The Sunshine Policy was a South Korean diplomatic strategy implemented between 1998 and 2007 that aimed to improve relations with the north through unilateral concessions. Although it may have produced significant bilateral cooperation initiatives, its effectiveness has been disputed by South Korean public opinion following the conduct of nuclear tests by the DPRK. The government of President Lee Myung Bak in South Korea, which started in 2008, marked the beginning of the end of this policy. The Explanatory Memorandum on the opening of the embassy in Pyongyang explicitly mentions the Sunshine Policy as one of the justifications for the opening.

6 The idea that Brazil had become a global player has also been strongly emphasized by academia in recent years (see, for example, VISENTINI, 2013, p. ix, 111 and 147).

As well as the Brazilian participation in the negotiations of the Iranian nuclear issue, the opening of the Brazilian embassy in the DPRK seems to indicate a stage of a broader process of expansion of our global presence. The Korean issue, after all, only indirectly affects Brazilian interests[7], and the concrete prospects for bilateral cooperation with the DPRK still appear comparatively of little substance[8]. It should also be emphasized that during the Lula government 40 new embassies were opened. The establishment of the embassy in the DPRK could be interpreted as an aspect of this expansion, and not a one-off explicable decision.

Having a diplomatic representation in the capital of one of the most geopolitically sensitive countries in the world poses specific strategic issues to Brazil. North Korea is not any interlocutor: with a per capita GDP comparable to that of Sub-Saharan African countries[9], a highly centralized economy, and a terrible record of human rights violations[10], the country nevertheless has nuclear capability and is able to counter interests of the main military powers of the planet.

Although it is argued that Brazil has a global vocation and should therefore be able to dialogue with the most different actors, the terms of our cooperation with the DPRK deserve some reflection. Our current political and budgetary situation makes it especially important to propose a balance. It is quite true that,

7 More about this in section 6.

8 According to data published by SECEX/MDIC, bilateral trade with the DPRK from January 2000 to May 2015 accounts for 0.0575% of Brazil's trade with the world. Available at: <http://pyongyang.itamaraty.gov.br/pt-br/relacoes_brasil-RDPC.xml>.

9 Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html#kn>.

10 Marzuki Darusman, UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the DPRK, said in 2014 that there were still 80 to 120,000 political prisoners in the country's detention system. Available at: <https://nacoesunidas.org/coreia-do-norte-possui-cerca-de-100-mil-presos-politicos-aponta-relatorio-da-onu/>.

like the defense and administration of justice, foreign policy is a long-term state activity. It would be a dangerous mistake – for both analysts and foreign policy makers – to simply ignore the impact on our diplomacy brought about by the shifting of political emphasis that occurred in Brazil from 2011 to 2016. In 2009, when our economy was thriving and our external performance was expanding, it was easier to justify to the public opinion the existence of our embassy in Pyongyang. Today, we can no longer evade questioning.

What, in our current diplomatic and administrative context, is the strategic relevance of our embassy in the DPRK? How can Brazil benefit from its existence? Is our dialogue with North Korea ethically defensible? Considering our current priorities and operational possibilities, would it be advisable to continue bearing its maintenance costs? The answer to these questions is by no means obvious, and it is legitimate for certain sectors of public opinion to raise them. The scenario of the fiscal crisis the Brazilian state is facing is so severe[11] that the argument for the eventual closure of some of the diplomatic representations opened during the "Lula Era" does not seem so narrow.

Much prudence is needed, however, in addressing such proposals. Even discounting the ideological dimension of the debate, making a decision which ignores the national interest in a medium- and long-term perspective could be precipitous and represent, in practice, a waste of political or economic opportunities.

The diplomat, as a career civil servant, needs to look beyond governments and think from a state perspective. In suggesting a

11 As I write these lines, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has released an estimate that Brazil will only have a primary surplus again in 2020. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/external/ pubs/ft/fm/2016/01/fmindex.htm>.

balance of relations between Brazil and North Korea, for example, diplomats cannot restrict their analysis to visible conjuncture elements: they need to explore aspects of reality that may have future developments, and weigh them taking into account what the structural basis of our diplomacy is.

Most of the arguments that can be raised against the maintenance of a Brazilian embassy like the one in the DPRK are based on a simple cost-benefit calculation, where the density of bilateral relations – measured mainly in terms of trade – is compared to administrative costs. Even admitting that this line of reasoning may have its measure of managerial sobriety, the truth is that it fails as far as it ignores three key aspects of the debate: (1) the geopolitical importance of the DPRK in East Asia and its impact on the agenda of some of our key partners; (2) the possible scenarios for the evolution of the Korean question, and the potential opportunities that may arise for Brazil as they unfold; and (3) the impact of our diplomacy on North Korea in our structural diplomatic guidelines.

The objective of this text is to propose a reflection exercise on the strategic dimension of the relations between Brazil and the DPRK, in order to identify subtle elements of axes 1), 2), and 3) that can weigh in favor of a political appreciation of the embassy in Pyongyang. Without ignoring the weight of budgetary considerations, I intend to try to identify less obvious aspects of the problem that may bring elements into the evaluation. To do so, I will rely not on academic arguments, but on my own professional experience at the embassy[12], as well as on the prolific dialogue I had the pleasure of establishing during my visit to North Korea

12 In June 2014, I spent 45 days working at the embassy. Despite the brevity of the period, the experience allowed me to get a glimpse of the North Korean reality, since I was able to travel unhindered in the capital of the country. The experience also allowed me to reflect on the spot on some aspects of our bilateral relations with the DPRK.

with ambassador Roberto Colin – possibly the greatest Brazilian specialist on the DPRK.

1. Interlude: the human dimension and the political imaginary

Some caveats need to be addressed before moving forward. In discussing the geopolitics of such a country as the DPRK, we run the risk of presenting it as a Prussian strategist would have, with his mustache bent over the theater of operations. North Korea, after all, might well be a geopolitical abstraction invented by Raymond Aron to illustrate the balance of terror[13]. Another temptation is to interpret the country in Orwellian terms: at first glance the thesis that the DPRK is the theoretical concretization of the political nightmare prophesied in 1984 and Animal Farm – a dystopia in which central political power holds absolute control over all aspects of the lives of its citizens – seems credible.

Such conceptions express some measure of truth[14], but they are oversimplifying and divert the focus from what should be the central element of any discussion about the DPRK: we are talking here about the fate of twenty-five million human beings – most of whom are innocent of any political crimes.

In proposing an analysis on the subject, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the political directions of the DPRK directly impact

13 To those who doubt the assertion, I recommend checking the analytical framework formulated by the author on the Korean question in his classic *Paix et Guerre et les Nations* (ARON, 2004, p. 759). Curiously, the author also states, a page before introducing the section « *I. De la dissuasion unilatérale à l'équilibre de la terreur: Les événements de Corée furent um point tournant: ils précipitèrent la transformation en blocs militaires de deux ensembles européens* » (idem, p. 470).

14 The novel 1984 (ORWELL, 2003) describes the North Korean state very well: it also has its Big Brother, its newspeak, its doublethink, and even its Ministry of Love (which would correspond to Bo wi bu, or National Security Agency). Andrei Lankov says that the 1960s DPRK is the closest we have ever came to an Orwellian dystopia (LANKOV, 2015, p. 62). The novel alone is not, in my estimation, entirely adequate to describe North Korea because, as I intend to demonstrate below, the country is larger than its state.

– and almost always in a bloody way – on the well-being of a huge contingent of people.

Another risk we need to guard against is that we enter into a fanciful projection of exotic alterity – not unlike that which was criticized by Palestinian humanist Edward Said in his classic Orientalism[15]. Because it is a closed society, not integrated into the process of capitalist globalization, and on which reliable information is difficult to obtain, the DPRK is often the object of absurd assumptions of the Western imagination. After discounting exaggerations, even well-intentioned information vehicles usually get carried away by reports that are based on little more than a caricature.

Against the North Koreans weights the rancidity of the psychology of antagonism. There is a misleading tendency to confuse the North Korean state with its society. This is because of the country's own political elite, which strives to convince both the international community and the inner public that the country's population is a homogeneous bloc – a huge revolutionary army, ready to give its life for the communist cause. This idea of a monolithic society or regime is biased, and serves rhetorical purposes.

The starting point of our analysis, therefore, must be that the North Korean experience, being essentially human, has, as such, different layers of complexity and meaning. We need to exercise caution even when discussing the motivations and actions of the country's rulers. As pointed out by the report of the UN Commission

15 "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'. Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind', destiny and so on" (SAID, 2004, p. 2-3).

of Inquiry on Human Rights in the DPRK, there are indications that the North Korean regime has departed from the values on which it claims to be founded, and today it preserves relative privileges based on repression and manipulation[16]. However, to completely disqualify the country's socialist experiment as an opportunistic journey through power is to oversimplify the basic historical problems[17].

The lack of knowledge about the real conditions of life in the DPRK is so staggering that I do not feel safe to advance in the analysis before qualifying certain assumptions which are still prevalent:

Assumption (a) *The population of North Korea lives paralyzed in a kind of political nightmare, frightened by army rifles, manipulated by ideology and ignorant of the outside world*

North Korea is one of the most repressive political regimes in the world[18]. From an early age its citizens are subjected to ideological indoctrination; society is militarized and divided into castes or *songbun* (LANKOV, 2015, p. 43-44); art is at the service of political orthodoxy; the economy, although giving indications of reform, is still strictly controlled; dissidents are persecuted and subject to "re-education" – when they are not sentenced to political prisoner camps in the north of the country – citizens are deprived of the most elementary civil rights. Except perhaps for the better

16 About the luxurious lifestyle of the current leader, Kim Jong-un, see (LANKOV, 2015, p.160).

17 Comparatively, the economic privileges of the North Korean elite are quite modest when compared to the pattern of consumption of developed countries. Economic inequality in North Korea has, in fact, deepened with economic openness: before all were equally poor, today those who know how to profit from the informal economy stand out. See (idem, p. 137).

18 By 2014, the report of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the DPRK recorded crimes against humanity committed systematically, as a state policy. The full report is available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIDPRK/Pages/ReportoftheCommissionofInquiryDPRK.aspx>. For a personal and sentimental account of what life is for the common citizen of the DPRK, the book In Order to Live: A North Korean Girl's Jorney to Freedom (PARK, 2016) is quite informative.

related members of the party, economic and food deprivation is still a reality for the inhabitants of the DPRK[19].

That said, I can state, with a clear conscience, that the characterization of North Koreans as dehumanized by the manipulation of political sentiments is not true. Few things shock the first-time visitor to Pyongyang as much as the banality of daily life on the streets. Despite the many soldiers, the prevailing climate is normalcy, not terror[20]. It is clear that Pyongyang is a model city, which does not reflect the real conditions of life in the countryside[21] (PARK, 2016, p. 81). Still, it is shocking to the foreign visitor to see how far away the city is from the Stalinist nightmare generally painted by the Western media. It should be understood that we do not intend here to minimize the burden of the regime on the conscience of the citizens, who are obliged to do heavy "voluntary" work and to participate in tedious sessions of self-criticism and indoctrination in the *Inminban*[22] (LANKOV, 2015, p. 42). North Korean poet and dissident Jang Jin-sung even qualifies the country as an "emotional dictatorship," in which the government tries to annihilate the individuality of its citizens by controlling their feelings (PARK, 2016, p. 64). Still, from what I witnessed on the streets of Pyongyang, I am convinced that outside

19 According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Hunger Map, in the period 2014-2016, 41.6% of the DPRK population was undernourished. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/hunger/en/>.

20 I would like to refer you to the personal testimony I wrote about my visit to Pyongyang. Available at: <https://jovensdiplomatas.wordpress.com/2014/09/24/pyongyang-honeymoon-ou-o-poder-da-banalidade-domestica/>.

21 According to the 2008 census, the population of the city was approximately 3 million, while the DPRK had, according to the World Bank, almost 25 million inhabitants. See: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>.

22 The *Inminbans* are socialist units in which the neighborhoods are organized. One of its functions is to keep alive the revolutionary fervor, to supervise the activities of each one of the citizens, and to divulge central directives of the regime. For a description of the system, see (LANKOV, op cit, p. 40-42).

the areas monopolized by political orthodoxy, the North Korean mind preserves more independence than what is supposed.

The North Korean state may have succeeded in annihilating political dissent, independent art, and even the religiosity of its people, but it could not and will never eradicate the domestic dimension of life. Despite the ideological fervor induced, the main concern of the North Korean population is to survive under the harsh conditions imposed on it (see PARK, 2016, p. 70-71). Without openly questioning central power, Koreans conduct their business with the means available, seeking to obtain income and consumer goods in a variety of ways, in the shadow of the central resource distribution system.

It should also be noted that Pyongyang has been going through a boom in private enterprise since the new leader, Kim Jong-un, came to power in 2011. Liberalizing reforms have been taking place since the 1990s famine (LANKOV, 2015, p. 121-125) but the change gained momentum with the transition of leadership (MELCHIONNA *et al.*, 2015, p. 172). Today the *jangmaedang* – markets where farmers can sell their production for profit – are already a reality in the lives of North Koreans. There are innumerable private enterprises – mostly run by middle-aged women, who are allowed by the regime to leave their place of work – as well as shops selling goods outside the socialist distribution system. Strong currencies – such as dollar and euro – are widely accepted.

Finally, the question of how much the Koreans really know about the outside world is controversial, as there are few sources of reliable information about this. Certainly, access to news from abroad is still limited, but the flow of cultural products smuggled across the border into China, particularly DVD players and pirated discs (LANKOV, 2015, p. 104-105) is notorious. Although it is a serious transgression, many North Koreans watch South Korean soap operas and American films (PARK, 2016, p. 69 and 121) and have glimpses of what life is like in other countries.

Assumption (b) *North Korean leaders are irrational and would be willing to destabilize the region or even initiate a nuclear conflict to achieve their goals*

This is a favorite subject of Western press. It is common to see the Korean leaders portrayed as political maniacs, willing to push the red button that would trigger the apocalypse. There is no small dose of naivety in this elaboration. Andrei Lankov, one of the most sober-minded analysts of North Korean politics and society, asserts in all certainty: “North Korea’s leadership is quite rational, and nothing shows this better than its continuing survival against the odds” (LANKOV, 2015, p. xiii).

During the second half of the twentieth century, the country’s leaders knew how to benefit from ambiguity in their relations with the main powers of the socialist bloc – Russia and China. Without ever being fully committed to one side, the DPRK used the Sino-Russian rivalry to take advantage of the two partners and ensure its autonomy (MELCHIONNA *et al*., 2015, p. 96-97). North Korean nuclear policy is also a rational survival strategy based on the assessment that without this deterrent the regime would not have had a chance of surviving the difficulties of dismantling the socialist bloc. The aggressive discourse generally adopted in moments of crisis is a rhetorical performance for obtaining concessions. Even in the worst crises, the point of no return was never crossed, and the leaders softened their tone after gaining some advantage (LANKOV, 2015, p. 184-191).

It should be stressed that we are not justifying the regime's behavior here. A rational attitude is not necessarily defensible from the moral point of view[23].

Assumption (c) *Political Adherence to the Regime is based on fear and indoctrination*

This is a partially true but simplifying statement. The DPRK regime depends on propaganda and repression to survive. For the North Koreans, however, the communist regime represents, in a way, national autonomy. The traditional society of the country began its process of modernization and industrialization under Japanese imperialism (Holcombe, 2011, p .246). The communist regime was established in opposition to the dominance of traditional elites (yangban) and foreign invaders, and socialism is therefore a defining element in its national identity.

The official narrative, of which one could previously find evidence in the country's history, continuously lost its connection with reality as economic contradictions worsened and the original aspirations of the Communist project were unfulfilled. The ruling class then became a prisoner of the farce it had created: it could not abandon the official discourse, because it was one of the pillars of the regime, or allow a process of openness that could, if it escaped control, amount to its own annihilation. It had to maintain its position of relative privileges within the system. This paradoxical opportunism is not due to a special clumsiness of the North Korean leaders: it is a result of the contradictions of communism itself, which failed to concretize its historical destiny.

23 Here one might perhaps wonder: if leaders are so rational, why do they not adopt reforms in Chinese fashion, promoting the opening of the country for their own benefit? Although this discussion is beyond the scope of this paper, it should be noted that the North Korean political elite is the hostage of its own history and decisions. The rigor with which the regime imposed communism on the population was an essential element of its survival. It is by no means clear whether the members of the Workers' Party of Korea would be able to maintain control of a process of economic openness that presupposed some measure of political openness.

Political propaganda and indoctrination play a major role in shaping the government's support base. Still, the claim that the communist regime is the guarantee of survival of the North Korean nation sounds less absurd when evaluated from within the country than from outside. It would be foolhardy to disqualify popular support as superficial or simply false. The respect that the North Koreans have for their leaders is intense, sometimes touching, and feeds on the chronicle of resistance of this people to foreign interventions.

2. Politics with a capital "P": the Gordian knot of East Asia

The division of the Korean Peninsula is a historical tragedy with geographical roots. The full extent of this disgrace is only fully understood when considered on a broader temporal scale.

Some observers have noted, in a somewhat impressionistic way, that the Korean territory – surrounded by water on three sides and with uninhabited mountainous regions to the north – is "almost an island" (BUZO, 2007, p. 2). Although at some historical moments the Korean kingdoms have incorporated parts of Manchuria (HOLCOMBE, 2011, p. 105), Korea's peninsular character played a decisive role in shaping the political unity and national character of its people. The lasting influence of Chinese political thought also favored centralizing administrative tendencies (BUZO, 2007, p. 6). To the contrary, for example, of the countless kingdoms and ethnicities that make up the patchwork of Manchuria's history – and which eventually became embodied in Chinese identity[24] – Korea was able to maintain a prolonged political stability and preserve its sense of cultural identity. The

24 Even the Manchu language of the fearsome conquerors of China and founders of the Qing Dynasty is today almost a dead language (HOLCOMBE, 2011, p 171).

Korean dynasty Joseon, for instance, lasted five centuries, longer than all the Chinese dynasties since the unification of the Middle Countries by Qin Shi Huang.

If the peninsular character of Korea, on one hand, favored the ethnic unity of Korean people and allowed for a measure of isolationism in some of its historical periods – which led European missionaries in the nineteenth century to call the Joseon dynasty the "Hermit Reign" (HOLCOMBE, 2011, p. 176) –, on the other, it has made the country a natural bridge between the Eurasian continent (*i.e.* China and Russia) and the Pacific Ocean (*i.e.* Japan). The idea of isolationism – one that could be applied with reservations to the Joseon dynasty – masks Korea's complex political and cultural relations with its neighbors. Despite their uniqueness, the Korean kingdoms have long been within the sphere of influence of Chinese civilization (*ibid.*, p. 22)[25] and have acted as a link between it and the Japanese archipelago. Some historians even speculate that in periods of instability in the continent, Korean immigrants were responsible for something so important as the transmission of writing (*i.e.* Chinese characters) to Japan (HUFFMAN, 2010, p. 11-12). Koreans also played a key role in spreading Buddhism to the Japanese archipelago (Holcombe, 2011, 78, 109-110).

The same geographic projection that allowed it to act as a cultural bridge condemned the Korean territory to be a militarily crucial zone and stage of foreign battles. Mongol emperor Kublai Khan prepared his ill-fated attempt to conquer Japan after having invaded the Korean peninsula. When Daimyo Hideyoshi Toyotomi, who had unified Japan, decided to advance his personal project of

25 It should be recalled that, before the invention of the Korean alphabet (Hangul) by King Sejong the Great in 1443, Chinese characters were the only form used to record the Korean language in writing. Even today, despite widespread use of Hangul, South Korean schools teach, in optional courses, 1800 Chinese characters. North Korean schools teach 2,000 Chinese characters to their students (HANNAS, 1997, p. 71 and 67).

conquering the Ming Dynasty, he began by invading Korea, bringing terrible suffering to the local population (HUFFMAN, 2010, p. 56). Korean territory was also a central strategic element in the first Sino-Japanese war in the nineteenth century (HOLCOMBE, p. 211-212), and in the Russo-Japanese war in the early twentieth century, which allowed the expansion of Japanese imperialism to the mainland – initially through the peninsula and then through Manchuria (*ibid.*, 244). At the end of World War II, the great allied powers – Russia and the United States – showed themselves to be fully aware of the strategic sensitivity of the Korean territory when they failed to reach an agreement that would allow for the reunification of the country.

As a kind of northeastern pivot zone[26], the geography of Korea allowed, on the one hand, its cultural homogeneity and, on the other, condemned the country to constant apprehension about possible foreign invasions. This strategic sensitivity remains as true as ever: whoever controls Korea is in a strategic position to launch an offensive against China, Japan, or the Russian Far East. A unified Korea under the umbrella of the South could, even today, be a grave concern for regional actors: it would be a strategic threat to China (BRZEZINSKI, 1997, p. 190), which would be confronted with the possibility of American troops stationed on its border; it might displease a militarily dependent Japan; and even bother Russia, which might prefer to keep a regional ally and buffer zone near its Pacific projection area.

The official North Korean discourse emphasizes the role of communist guerrillas in liberating the country from Japanese rule. Notwithstanding the importance of these struggles, it is

26 "Korea, the geopolitically pivotal state in Northeast Asia, could again become a source of contention between America and China, and its future will also impact directly on the American-Japanese connection" (BRZEZINSKI, 1997, p. 190). For a geopolitical definition of "pivotal area", see (VESENTINI, 2009, p.18).

hard to ignore that the independence of Korea and the division of its territory into two ideologically antagonistic countries was the direct result of external intervention. The 38th parallel, which does not reflect any preexisting geographic or cultural reality, was quickly drawn on a Pentagon wall map (BUZO, 2007, p. 48; HOLCOMBE, 2011, p. 295), and surprisingly accepted by the Russians as a border. This cartographic abstraction, which should have only indicated the temporary occupation of the country after the end of World War II, ended up representing a lasting political fracture. Kim II Sung, who was to become the Great Leader of the DPRK, returned to Korea on the Pugachev steamer bearing the insignia of a captain of the Soviet Army (LANKOV, 2015, p. 4).

Although it is not our intention to delve into the complex modern history of Korea, it is necessary to point out the weight that the international determinants derived from the geography had on the destiny of the nation. After the sufferings of the Japanese occupation, the Koreans – who had for centuries maintained a prosperous, refined, and peaceful civilization – were divided as people and were imprisoned in a conflict that, at least in the early stages, was not theirs. It would be a gross misjudgment, however, to interpret the history of Korea in the second half of the twentieth century as mere local reverberation of the Cold War. Very quickly, the leaders of the two new countries took over the coordination of internal political processes (BUZO, 2007, p. 67-68) and adopted international lines of action that did not necessarily correspond to the interests of their external sponsors.

In North Korea, Kim II Sung took the care, in the early years of the regime, to purge the leaders directly influenced by Moscow and to establish his command on loyal sectors (MELCHIONNA *et al.,* 2015. p. 50). He also stimulated the formulation of an autochthonous orthodox ideology to justify the desired autonomy (and so Juche was born, a collection of anthropocentric tautologies that gave local colors to Marxism[27]). If the separation of Korea into two countries was a political and historical crime of the superpowers, the Koreans, as they took control of the conflict, became co-responsible for escalating tensions. The Korean War, for example, was an attempt at national reunification initiated by the north, with Soviet and Chinese endorsement (BUZO, 2007, p. 72). The conflict took on international proportions when the United States, realizing that a Korean peninsula controlled by the Communists would be a threat to Japan – and consequently to its security perimeter – decided to intervene under the UN framework. After a carnage, which claimed over one and a half million lives (BUZO, 2007, p. 82), the situation on the peninsula reverted almost to the *statu quo ante bellum*, with small territorial portions at the border changing sides. Its most significant development was to have definitively convinced the USA of the strategic importance of its military presence in Korea.

The fact that the division of the peninsula has lasted to the present day is a strong indication that the Korean issue has become an issue of the Koreans – with regional and global impacts. The conflict survived the geopolitical phenomenon that spawned it: the Cold War. Today, the elements that most count against reunification are local: in the north, an entrenched political elite, hostage to its own historical choices; in the south, a government intimidated by the warmongering rhetoric of its neighbor, and an electorate increasingly alienated from the sense of national unity, less and less willing to bear the economic cost of reunification (LANKOV, 2015, p. 195).

27 "The leader plays the decisive role in providing the motive force of historical development. [...] Only when the people are led by a leader can they have correct strategy and tactics and develop society. The wise leader leads the revolution to success by unusual wisdom and stratagem in any difficult circumstance. This proves that the leader plays the decisive role in hewing out the destiny of the people in social development" (JO, 1999, p. 25).

We need to be careful at this point. Most attempts to explain the survival of the North Korean regime and the division of the peninsula are nothing more than rationalizations *a posteriori*. The fall of the DPRK has been predicted by experts for at least twenty years. North Korea is one of the longest socialist experiments, and its state has, despite the difficulties it imposed on the people, achieved a significant measure of internal and external stability. The reasons behind this reasonable success transcend mere political, military or economic discussion. Reducing the history of the DPRK to the result of the repression and doctrinal manipulation of elites, or even a local reflection of broader international conflicts, is to ignore the anthropological and philosophical dimension of the problem. Marxism – this fruit of the European enlightenment[28] – has found fertile soil in the Korean mentality and inspired local forces in the historical development of the country.

The basic historical problem cannot be so easily discarded: not every communist was an *apparatchik*, and for a long time, with a sincere conviction – and plenty of violence along the way – an egalitarian ideal of society was sought. The economic failure of the regime unleashed a complex political dynamic in which militarism and ideology were compounded to perpetuate the rhetoric of a permanent state of emergency.

Therefore, it should be noted that one cannot attribute the resilience of the North Korean regime to a single explanatory factor, and some elements can be highlighted. The first of these was the Songun policy, or "military first," adopted in the mid-1990s, when the country was experiencing one of the worst food crises in its history (MELCHIONNA, 2015, p. 147). The regime reacted to this tribulation by tightening and transferring the

28 "The communist regimes were established in pursuit of a utopian ideal whose origins lie in the heart of the Enlightenment" (GRAY, 2008, p. 52).

economic resources available to strengthen the armed forces. The second element, which can be interpreted as a derivation of the first, was the resumption of the nuclear program. From the point of view of a regime in crisis, this was a desperate, but efficient, move. With this element of deterrence, the DPRK has become less vulnerable to the pressures of its rivals and has been able to sustain what is possibly the main rhetorical element of orthodoxy: the preservation of national autonomy.

This survival also came with a curse: the nuclear strategy paralyzed the balance of forces on the peninsula and contaminated the terms of the negotiations. With such a blatant threat hovering over the lives of its citizens, the South Korean government started to question initiatives of rapprochement that had been promoted during the Sunshine Policy period, hardening the tone of negotiations. Nuclear tests also paralyzed the six party negotiations (involving South Korea, North Korea, the United States, Russia, China, and Japan) and prevented them from continuing to act as a forum for the deliberation of security issues in the peninsula.

Today, the Korean issue is a nuclear standoff, and its ramifications impact the geopolitical interests of the world's largest military powers. So here is the question: can (or should) Brazil have a say in this issue?

3. Perspective for Brazil's performance

The element most emphasized by the official discourse of the North Korean regime in justifying its international stance is the attitude of its arch-enemy: the United States of America. According to political orthodoxy, both the nuclear program and the missile tests have a defensive character. With almost 30,000 troops on the peninsula, the United States, in fact, carries out annual joint military exercises with South Korea next to the Demilitarized Zone (LANKOV, 2015, p. 170). North Korean orthodoxy, for whom the Korean War never ended, finds in this hostile attitude the justification for its claims that the country is in a state of permanent threat. The North Koreans use this narrative to legitimize what Andrei Lankov calls the "Diplomacy of Survival" (*ibid*., p. 179). In a dangerous rhetorical game, the regime alternates between threats and withdrawals to try to get the most out of foreign aid.

It is clear that the hostile American stance towards the DPRK finds justification in the attitudes of the regime. The Korean War began on the initiative of Kim II Sung (Holcombe, 2011, p. 297). As catastrophic as it may have been to the local population, without the American intervention South Korea would have been incorporated into its communist neighbor. In addition, during the 1990s, US diplomacy made significant efforts to engage the DPRK and paralyze its nuclear program, resulting in the signing of a Framework Agreement in 1994 (LANKOV, 2015, p. 185). From 1996 to 2001, when the food crisis in the country was more acute, the United States, South Korea and Japan – the "mortal enemies of the North Korean people," according to the official discourse – donated a total of 5.94 million tons of food (*ibid*., p. 186). Even so, in 2002 US intelligence found evidence that North Koreans were in breach of the 1994 Framework Agreement, enriching uranium clandestinely, and in 2003, after a hardening of the tone on both sides, the DPRK formally withdrew from the Treaty of Non-Proliferation (*ibid*., p. 189).

With the arrival of the neoconservatives in the White House during George W. Bush's administration, the American stance of "waiting to see" was consolidated: as the internal collapse of the regime was supposedly inevitable, a policy of appeasement could, in fact, prove to be counterproductive, by allowing survival to the government. Inspired by this interpretation, Americans suspended most of their humanitarian aid and penalized financial institutions operating in the country (*ibid*., p. 188). Under pressure, the regime hardened again, and began a new round of nuclear and missile tests. Currently, peace talks on the Korean peninsula area are in a vicious circle fueled, on the one hand, by the North Korean "survival diplomacy" and, on the other hand, by the American position of non-engagement. This double intransigence prevented the six-party talks from reaching definitive results (*ibid*., p. 189, 282)[29].

In official speeches, Americans have referred to the DPRK as a criminal state – using expressions such as outpost of tyranny, axis of evil and rogue state (MELCHIONNA *et al.,* 2015, p. 178). While arguing that human rights violations committed by North Korea justify such rhetoric, the strategy of demonizing the regime – and presenting the rivalry between the USA and the DPRK as a struggle between good and evil – may lead to very serious diplomatic difficulties.

This is a strategic issue with ethical implications. If, on the one hand, the argument that it is not possible to negotiate with those committing crimes against humanity seems defensible, on the other it cannot be ignored that maintaining the status quo in the Korean peninsula means condemning the population of an entire country to live in very harsh conditions. To assume, *a priori*, that the establishment of negotiations with a criminal political class is morally unacceptable amounts to, in practice, perpetuating a situation that imposes terrible pressures on the lives of twenty-five million people. A humanism more concerned

29 This paper was written in 2016, before the high level contacts between North American president Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un started.

with the coherence of its principles than with the concrete effects of a policy runs the risk of becoming hypocritical.

It is known that the American diplomatic rhetoric, with its puritan bias[30], is selective in its moralism: it has never been an impediment to wars being waged in the name of economic interests (see SOARES, 2008, p. 276) or alliances with regimes that, while transgressing human rights, were strategically important[31]. Specifically in the case of the Korean question, the American claim to virtue ignores a fundamental lesson in foreign policy, voiced by Morgenthau in his classic Politics Among Nations. He taught that: "Good motives provide security against deliberatively perverse policies, but they do not guarantee the moral correctness and political success of the policies inspired by it" (MORGENTHAU, 2003, p. 9). In other words, foreign policy makers need to be concerned about the outcome of their decisions, for it is these consequences that have an impact on people's lives and reality.

Despite technological limitations of the missiles that could carry its warheads, North Korea can be considered a nuclear power. This fact practically makes the reunification of the peninsula by military means unviable (LANKOV, 2015, p. 232). There remain, therefore, two alternatives to the conflict: a) an internal collapse of the regime triggered by power disputes or a popular uprising; and (b) gradual opening, controlled by the Workers' Party of Korea in partnership with the international community.

30 The religious roots of American foreign policy were perceived by John Gray, professor of European thought at the London School of Economics. He says: "For many Americans the sense of national mission has not translated easily or automatically into active support for overseas military intervention – they had to be persuaded to enter the two world wars, for example – but the belief in a special mission that inspired the Puritan colonists has persisted" (GRAY, 2008, p. 159). In another section, the author states: "In claiming a foundation in a universal ideology, the United States belongs with states such as post-revolutionary France and the former Soviet Union" (*Ibid.*, p. 155). For an extensive historical assessment of the essentially moralistic character of American diplomacy see (KISSINGER, 1994).

31 And here comes to mind Saudi Arabia.

American strategists seem to consider alternative (a) unavoidable, and based on this assumption, adopt a posture of "strategic patience" (MELCHIONNA *et al.,* 2015, p. 176). Even if they were right in the medium or long term, the collapse of the regime could prove to be much more traumatic than expected, and could trigger a refugee crisis or destabilize the balance of power in Northeast Asia. Lankov notes: "As every historian knows only too well, every revolution fermented, every independence declared, every liberation achieved brings a significant measure of disruption and chaos." (LANKOV, 2015, p. 259). In the case of the peninsula, if chaos got out of control, a security problem of such magnitude could arise that, comparatively, maintaining the status quo would seem more desirable.

Option (b), therefore, seems "less unacceptable," to borrow an expression from Andrei Lankov (*ibid*., p. 269). Thus, it must be recognized that the engagement of the North Korean political elite is a key aspect of solving the problem.

With American weapons trained on them and the constant internal threat of a popular uprising, it would be, to say the least, astonishing that North Korean political elites suddenly became convinced of the moral necessity of easing hostilities without first being given assurances that they will keep their heads on their shoulders in a scenario of reunification. Without exempting them from any responsibility for their crimes, it must be recognized that, without incorporating the rationality underlying the decisions of the rulers of the DPRK into the analysis, a compromise would be practically impossible.

The real key to the solution of the Korean crisis is, in theory, in the hand of United States, which alone could give DPRK rulers assurances that they would survive an opening process. It is unlikely, however, that US foreign policy makers will radically change their discourse, so much as to opt for a long-term and consistent line of action[32]. Thus, the space of dialogue that supposedly could remain would be the six-party talks, which bring together all the actors directly affected by the division of the peninsula. As already mentioned, these negotiations did not achieve their objective of denuclearizing the DPRK and are now suspended, mainly because of North Korean intransigence on the nuclear issue.

Are we facing a dead end? In the same way that analysts tend to interpret North Korea as a Cold War fossil, there is also a tendency to approach the Korean question according to classical geopolitical conceptions (see BRZEZINSKI, 1997, p. 165 and 190). There is no doubt that the presence of atomic weapons causes the security dimension to gain prominence in the debates, but when discussing the DPRK the nuclear issue is handled by diplomats and analysts almost as a fixation (LANKOV, 2015, p. 180). By limiting the analysis to the security dimension, the key players in the Korean issue have difficulty seeing beyond the deadlock. Even the six-party negotiations were conditioned by military apprehensions.

Interlocutors like Brazil have the comparative advantage of having no security interests in Korea. This, on the one hand, favors dialogue with the DPRK, which has no reason to distrust the underlying intentions and, on the other, favors out-of-the-box thinking, *i.e.* exploring engagement initiatives that are not limited to traditional power politics. It is clear that the possession of armaments has not lost its relevance, but as José William Vesentini has shown, contemporary geopolitics has incorporated new concepts and new dimensions of the projection of state influence are now considered by analysts (see VESENTINI, 2009, p. 25-29).

32 Recent developments proved that my 2016 estimations about this point were wrong.

The importance that countries such as Brazil may have is to contribute to breaking the regime's isolation, creating links between the people of North Korea and the world and fomenting deconstruction of the "state of siege" rhetoric. This must be done not as a veiled attempt to subvert the country by exposing it to external reality, but rather as an exercise in engagement based on the perception that international cooperation has transformative powers.

It is unclear whether these new elements that could be brought about by denser cooperation between Brazil and the DPRK would necessarily contribute to the country's opening, but they could create conditions for the slow and gradual dismantling of the conflict narrative. Exposing young North Koreans to the world through technical, academic or sports cooperation could also play a key role in transforming mentalities. With this in mind, we imagine that we have answered one of the questions that we proposed in the introduction: our presence in the DPRK is ethically defensible because it aims to broaden the ties between the country and the world, breaking its isolation and allowing slow but steady flows of benefits to reach its people. It is now necessary to define the parameters in which this action can be exercised, in order to evaluate how it can serve the Brazilian national interest.

4. The terms of the Brazilian presence in the DPRK[33]

The *sine qua non* of Brazilian diplomacy in the DPRK does not mean to omit commenting on the regime's violation of human rights. Brazil should support and endorse the investigations,

33 The proposals in this section reflect perceptions that were developed and implemented during the time that Ambassador Roberto Colin led the Embassy in Pyongyang. Despite the budgetary constraints characteristic to the period, Ambassador Colin was able to initiate and follow up on many of the directives I am now presenting. He is, in fact, the real author of the strategic plan for Brazilian action in the DPRK, and here I will merely incorporate his conceptions into the argument that I have been developing.

conclusions and possible new resolutions made by UN multilateral mechanisms, in particular the Human Rights Council. This is necessary not only to justify our diplomatic action *vis-à-vis* domestic and foreign audiences, but also to show the North Koreans that any proposed partnership presented by Brazil is not in any way a sign of condescension to transgressions. Given this caveat – which should serve as a moral landmark for Brazilian diplomacy in the DPRK – Brazil should systematically and continuously present proposals for cooperation, especially in the agricultural, technical, sports, cultural, and, eventually, academic areas. It would also be opportune to stimulate bilateral trade, especially our sales of food products to the country.

Much resistance on the part of the North Korean leadership is not to be expected. The isolation they imposed on the country is not something they want for themselves, but a necessity imposed by the conditions in which they must exercise their political power. In bilateral meetings, DPRK officials have already indicated that they value the dialogue with Brazil and would certainly appreciate this potential for cooperation in key areas.

Resuming food donations – through UN World Food Program – could be the first step in reshaping our strategy for the DPRK[34]. It is true that one can argue that these donations help to prolong the survival of the regime and can be unevenly distributed to the most favored castes. Still, the food insecurity situation in the DPRK – which uses only 16% of its arable land (MELCHIONNA *et al*., 2015, p. 104) – is still serious and justifies international help. From the Brazilian perspective, the resumption of donations would have to be strategically thought of as an aspect of trust building, and could be conditioned not to political demands – which could turn out to be counterproductive – but rather to a North Korean commitment

34 Donations were made in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

to engaging in other forms of international partnership proposed by Brazil.

The agricultural and technical areas are especially important because they are also of interest to the North Korean side. Initiatives such as the ABC/Embrapa training course in 2011, when North Korean technicians received training in Piracicaba and Londrina, could be resumed. Educational cooperation also has much potential to be explored, by allowing young North Koreans to come to Brazilian educational institutions. Even if it were concluded that the inclusion of the DPRK in official Brazilian academic mobility programs – such as PEC-G and PEC-PG – could encounter difficulties of technical nature, the arrival of students could be administered through interinstitutional partnerships. Especially promising would be the possible cooperation between the Pyongyang University of Science and Technology (PUST) – a private institution, funded with capital of South Korean and American Christians – and a Brazilian university[35].

Cultural diplomacy could also play an important role in bringing people together and allowing small flows of information to reach the country's population. Although control over the content of the material being disseminated is still very strict, Brazil could take advantage of opportunities like the Pyongyang International Film Festival to allow exposure of North Koreans to non-politicized Brazilian cultural products. The Institute of Languages of Pyongyang could also act as an important channel, not only for the diffusion of the Portuguese language in its Brazilian variety, but to allow a greater flow of information to the country through the dissemination of material produced in Brazil.

35 Two North Korean PUST students came to Brazil in March 2015 to take an MBA. Their studies were funded by the Korean community of São Paulo, which certainly has a role to play in the further development of ties between Brazil and the DPRK.

There are also promising prospects in the sports field. Brazil could partner with the Pyongyang International Soccer School, where 100 students aged 8 to 16 live in semi-boarding schooling. A partnership with some major Brazilian team could be fostered enabling these children to travel to Brazil[36].

Bilateral trade, in turn, could be stimulated through missions of Brazilian entrepreneurs to the Pyongyang International Trade Fair. In recent years, with the expansion of the North Korean middle class, business opportunities have grown significantly, especially in the food sector[37].

Any of these aspects individually would not suffice to guarantee Brazil the position of a privileged interlocutor in the peninsula. To do so, it would be necessary to capitalize politically on the initiatives, through a high-level dialogue instrument, allowing Brazilian diplomacy to express its vision of the geopolitical dimension of the Korean question. Relaunching the Mechanism of Political Consultations between Brazil and the DPRK – established in 2007, and with meetings held in 2008 and 2010 – would be an indispensable step in the eventual revaluation of the bilateral relations between Brazil and North Korea.

The proposals I have mentioned do, of course, involve a budgetary cost. In the way they have been described, partnerships seem to be of more direct interest to the Koreans than to Brazilians. The justification for this cost, in fact, cannot be deducted from its direct benefits, but from its success as a punctual manifestation of broader diplomatic guidelines.

36 Sports initiatives of this nature were explored during the administration of Ambassador Colin.

37 Recently, an agreement was signed between the DPRK and ABIPEC for the import of beef directly from Brazil.

5. Defining the national interest

Classical geopolitics defines international politics as a struggle for power (MORGENTHAU, 2002, p. 49). In this sense, power would be the control of men over the mind and actions of other men (*ibid*., p. 51). The national interest is narrowly defined in terms of power (*ibid*., p. 6), and projected on the constituent elements of that power, *i.e.* territory, natural resources, industrial capacity, military preparation, population, etc. (*ibid.,* p. 215).

The concept of political power, however, is contested, and its definition has been broadened since Morgenthau published his classic (MATTERN, 2008, p. 691). The idea of soft power (NYE, 2005, p. 5) has already been definitively incorporated into diplomatic jargon. Even more important were the theoretical contributions according to which power is expressed diffusely by discourses that create social meaning. International politics, according to this non-essentialist line, is the product of meaning-generating processes (MATTERN, 2008, p. 694-695).

It would be naïve to think that the new definitions of political power have rendered classical elements of power – such as military capability – irrelevant. They do, however, make a real contribution to the practice of international politics by demonstrating that there are ways for a state to project its international influence without relying directly on intimidation. These are conceptions especially relevant to a country like Brazil. Despite its continental dimensions, demographic, economic and cultural weight, Brazil is not a great military power. Our pretensions to have a voice in issues of high politics[38] – as would be the case if we were to have a permanent seat in the UN Security Council – depend on our ability to convince the international community that the "geopolitics of

38 High politics covers issues that are vital to the very survival of a state.

dialogue" can be effective. What would be at stake, in the event that Brazil decides to have a more active diplomacy in North Korea, is nothing less than the very credibility of this conception of power.

Given this, it would be a strategic misjudgment to confuse the Brazilian Embassy in Pyongyang with just one of the 40 embassies opened during the Lula Era. I would venture even the bold assertion that the Korean question is, by its unique characteristics, the only issue of politics in which Brazil could today have a direct and active participation without appealing to the dimension of international law. That is, a Brazilian diplomatic protagonism in North Korea would be a fire test for the claim – so often repeated in the Lula Era – that Brazil can play a global leadership role. This reason – which concerns axis (3) listed in the introduction – would in itself already justify the embassy's political valorization.

There are, however, other arguments that add up. As I pointed out in section 3, North Korea is a keystone of the North East Asian geopolitical board. Without considering it, the balance of power between China, Japan and South Korea is simply unintelligible. It is also an essential aspect of US and Russian foreign policy.

The United States, China, Japan, South Korea and Russia are key interlocutors for Brazil. China, for example, as well as being a member of BRICS is our largest trading partner. With Japan we have traditional bonds of friendship, and important political and economic relations. South Korea gains prominence in our Asian agenda, and because of its characteristics, it has the potential to become an increasingly important partner. Russia is also part of the BRICS, and has already shown signs of turning into one of the main protagonists of 21st century geopolitics. The United States needs no comments.

It is clear that our diplomacy in North Korea has no direct impact on the trade aspects of our relations with the countries listed. It would also be an exaggeration to think that it is in our interest to incorporate into Brazilian strategic considerations the security problems of these partners. What the diplomatic presence of Brazil in the DPRK has the potential to do is to *value the political weight of the Brazilian interlocution in East Asia*.

This reason – concerning axis (1) – is possibly the strongest argument in favor of the strategic valuation of our embassy in Pyongyang. East Asia is not the future: it is the present[39]. The fate of Brazil as a nation is inevitably linked to that of this region that is densely populated, industrialized and consumer of primary products. We must be careful, however, not to become the passive object of historical processes conditioned by economic factors. The discourse of South-South cooperation here can be profoundly misleading, especially with regard to our relations with China – which, for most of its history as one of the world's major economic and cultural centers, expects deference from its "younger brothers."

For Brazil, defining a long-term state strategy for our relations with East Asia is essential. The embassy in Pyongyang should be seen as a key aspect of the political construction of this strategy.

Finally, let us remember the words of Andrei Lankov: "There is little doubt that in the end, the current North Korean regime is doomed. [...] Unless North Korea successfully reforms, this will spell ruin for Pyongyang before too long" (Lankov, 2015, p. 259). In an eventual scenario of economic opening – or collapse – how will Brazilian interests be represented? DPRK is literally besieged by some of the world's most technologically advanced societies, and it is only a matter of time before the country and its economy are integrated into this appealing reality called East Asian capitalism.

39 The future is India.

The resulting trade opportunities are difficult to assess, but they will certainly be large, especially for primary products – in the event that the South decides to invest in the industrial development of the North. Having an embassy in Pyongyang may allow us to anticipate the effects of this process and to think about lines of action that are in keeping with our interest. The political capital that we acquire with our North Korean diplomacy – always defending engagement and the end of antagonisms – can also prove to be a comparative advantage (and thus we include axis 2).

Just having an embassy in Pyongyang, however, is not enough. It is necessary to think strategically, in Brasilia, about the use that will be made of it. If well used, it can prove to be a true diplomatic asset.

6. Conclusion: What we have learned from Tehran

In the introduction of *Memórias da Política Externa Ativa e Altiva,* former Foreign Minister Celso Amorim says, referring to the narratives on the process that led to the Tehran Declaration on May 17, 2010[40], and on the Brazilian policy toward Arab countries:

> *Elas (essas narrativas) compõem também, no que tange ao nosso país, o quadro de uma travessia – de uma inibida "potência média", confinada à sua própria região – ao status de ator global, reconhecido e incentivado por uma grande variedade de países que interagiram conosco* (AMORIM, 2015, p. 11)[41].

40 Signed by the chancellors of Brazil, Turkey, and Iran, the Tehran Declaration was a Turkish-Brazilian attempt to find a negotiated solution to the Iranian nuclear crisis – outside the institutional mechanism of the UN Security Council – and thus prevent new international sanctions applied to the country.

41 "These narratives compose, with regard to our country, the framework of a crossing from a position of an inhibited 'middle power', confined to its own region, to the status of global actor, recognized and encouraged by a great variety of countries that interact with us".

According to Ambassador Amorim, few situations have so well illustrated the potential of our international political performance, as well as the process that culminated in the Tehran Declaration (*ibid*., p. 14). As he himself remarked, it is still too early to judge the historical significance of the statement (*ibid*., p. 88). Yet, it is emblematic that on June 9, 2010 – that is, a few days after the agreement – the UN Security Council approved a new round of sanctions for Iran as punishment for its nuclear program.

Ambassador Celso Amorim notes that resolution 1929 (2010), which approved the sanctions, did not detract from Brazil and Turkey's efforts to find a solution through dialogue. He interprets that the negative critics registered in the Brazilian media for the initiative are due, in part, to an aversion of the national public opinion to involvement with the "big game" (*ibid*., p. 103).

Former Chancellor Luiz Felipe Lampreia thought differently. In his book *Aposta em Teerã: O Acordo Nuclear entre Brasil, Turquia e Irã,* the ambassador states that:

> *A tentativa do Brasil de mostrar sua força baseou-se, a meu ver, em uma misperception (percepção equivocada), para usar uma expressiva palavra inglesa. Com uma atuação in loco do presidente Lula, o Brasil tentou ser protagonista de uma iniciativa maior no plano internacional. Os pressupostos brasileiros eram um equívoco. Resultavam do que, em grego clássico se chamava húbris, um conceito que pode ser traduzido como "excesso de autoconfiança"*[42] (LAMPREIA, 2014, p. 100).

42 "Brazil's attempt to show its strength was based, on my view, on a misperception. With in loco performance of president Lula, Brazil tried to be protagonist of a bigger initiative on international stage. Brazilian assumptions were a mistake. They resulted from what, in classic Greek, is called hubris – a concept that could be translated as an excess of self confidence."

Although Ambassador Lampreia's terms are tough, it is significant that an effective solution to the Iranian nuclear issue was only reached through negotiations involving the permanent members of the UN Security Council, Germany, and the European Union. The Vienna Agreement of July14, 2015 is a reminder that dialogue alone cannot replace the "hard" politics based on the classical elements of power.

The case of the Tehran Declaration must therefore serve as a lesson for Brazilian foreign policy. It would be rash to conclude, based on Lampreia's remarks alone, that we bit off more than we could swallow in trying to expand our international role during the Lula era. On the other hand, it would be foolhardy not to recognize that soft power has its limitations.

We cannot think of extremes. Brazil does have an international vocation, and the greatest proof of this is the great receptivity of many of the diplomatic initiatives carried out during the Lula administration. But megalomania is the opposite of the inferiority complex – the "underdog complex" that President Lula himself criticized so much. The success of Brazil's international leadership in the twenty-first century will depend on our ability to properly define its scope.

It is in this spirit that we should reflect on our diplomacy in North Korea. Although it is unlikely that Brazil's action will lead to a major breakthrough in the Korean question, we have ample room to put into practice the fundamental principles of our foreign policy in defense of dialogue, multilateralism and universalism.

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CHAPTER 7

NO LONGER SO FAR AWAY: SOUTHEAST ASIA'S GROWING IMPORTANCE FOR BRAZIL

Rafael Alonso Veloso[1]

When Sukarno, then president of Indonesia, made the first visit of an Asian Head of State to Brazil, in 1959, one could hardly imagine how two developing countries separated by half the globe would be able to build a meaningful relationship. In an international context influenced by the "Bandung spirit," however, Sukarno assessed that "Brazil and Indonesia may be the last large territories of the world still incompletely explored and economically tapped", noting subsequently that the two countries "hold a promise for the future"[2]. At that time, the Southeast Asian political map was still taking shape, with the independence of former colonies unfolding and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) still to be founded in 1967.

1 Rafael Alonso Veloso joined the Brazilian Foreign Ministry in 2008, having worked in the Asia and Oceania Division II (2009-2010), Asean and Timor-Leste Division (2010-2015), and the Embassy in Malaysia (2015-2018). He currently serves as a second secretary at the Brazilian Embassy in Slovakia.

2 Câmara dos Deputados do Brasil. Speech delivered at the Brazilian National Congress in May 1959. Available at: <https://www2.camara.leg.br/atividade-legislativa/plenario/discursos/escrevendohistoria/old/1956-1961>. Retrieved on 6 July 2019.

Different political and economic circumstances have slowed down the establishment of strong ties between Brazil and Southeast Asia in the following decades. Brazil's relations with the region only began to gain momentum in the 1990s. By this time, several Southeast Asian countries had experienced remarkable economic growth, with an increasingly active integration to international trade, while Brazil was beginning a process of economic opening. Although the financial crisis that swept Southeast Asia in 1997 – from an economic and political point of view – temporally affected the further development of relations with Brazil, it can be said that this process has remained consistent since that decade, though not linear.

Several facts illustrate this. Until 1990, Brazil had only 7 bilateral agreements in Southeast Asia; today there are more than 60. There was no mechanism for regular bilateral meetings; currently there are about 15, among those active or in a planning stage. In 1990, Southeast Asia accounted for 2.3% of Brazilian foreign trade; in the first half of 2019, this figure had reached 4.9%. Despite the remarkable strengthening of ties and proliferation of interaction channels, Brazil's relations with Southeast Asia are still characterized by a large potential for intensification.

Efforts to strengthen relations with Southeast Asia are justified for many reasons. For one thing, it is part of the overall process of universalizing Brazil's relations, strengthening our credentials as a global actor, at a stage in the globalization process whereby geographical distances are more relative. It is a politically stable region with strong prospects for economic growth and steady willingness to interact with external actors. No less important, it is a region with objectives and characteristics often similar to those of Brazil, creating various niches conducive to mutual gains through cooperation.

Projecting for the future the factors that led to the beginning of this intensification process, it is plausible to note that the upward trend will continue over time. While Southeast Asia has today more weight in the world stage than it had a few decades ago – in the most diverse aspects – in the coming decades its weight can be expected to be even greater.

1. Identifying trends and constructing future scenarios

As China began to rise to the highest positions of the world's economic rankings, it became commonplace to assert that the 21st century will be the Asian century. No less than other regions of the continent, Southeast Asia has all the predicates to be part of this context of ascension in the global scenario.

Since overcoming the 1997 crisis, the ASEAN countries have sustained very high economic growth rates, generally above 5% a year. Even countries that have reached a medium-high level of development, being subject to the so-called "middle income trap," do not present signs of a sharp reduction in their growth rates. This suggests that the economic growth of these countries has a dynamic of its own which is favorable to productivity increase, being able to remain steady even after the so-called catch-up stage, when expansion is based on the integration of underutilized production factors into low-return activities.

Evolution of GDP per capita, purchasing power parity (US$)[3]

Country	1980	2000	2020
Indonesia	1,254	4,665	14,893
Philippines	1,891	3,404	10,130
Vietnam	437	2,066	8,683
Thailand	1,610	7,397	21,610
Myanmar	-	1,079	7,254
Malaysia	3,310	12,839	34,285
Cambodia	-	1,084	4,985
Laos	602	2,080	9,122
Singapore	8,887	41,178	107,605
Timor-Leste	-	2,007	5,617
Brunei	-	67,030	90,105
Southeast Asia	**1,340**	**4,605**	**14,760**
Brazil	**4,900**	**9,127**	**17,325**
World	**3,290**	**8,102**	**19,524**

Source: International Monetary Fund. *World Economic Outlook Database*. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2019/01/weodata/download.aspx>.

As the table above shows, the IMF predicts that per capita GDP in Southeast Asia, at purchasing power parity (PPP), will be very close to that of Brazil by the end of this decade: whereas in 1980 the per capita income of the region was only 27.3% of Brazil's, in the year 2000 this proportion had risen to 50.5% and by 2020 it is expected to reach 85.2%. In 1980, Southeast Asia accounted for 3.3% of the world's total purchasing power (sum of GDP/PPP); by 2020 this proportion is expected to double to 6.6%. Equally telling is the fact that, according to the IMF, while Indonesia's total GDP (PPP) totaled only 31.8% of Brazil's in 1980, by 2020

3 International Monetary Fund. *Report for Selected Countries and Subjects*. Retrieved July 6, 2019. Some calculations were made by the author based on the statistics.

this figure should reach 109.8%[4]. Going further, the consultancy firm PricewaterhouseCoopers estimates that, by 2050, Indonesia will be the fourth largest economy in the world, surpassed only by China, India, and the United States, and immediately ahead of Brazil. Malaysia's GDP (PPP) per capita would be higher than those of Japan and France, while Thailand's would not be very far from Italy's and would be higher than that of any major Latin American economy[5].

ASEAN should continue to be particularly benefited by the Chinese economic growth, due to several factors. In addition to geographic proximity, the migration of certain industries from China to regions with lower wages such as Vietnam and Indonesia is intensifying; a large part of the economic elite of all Southeast Asia is of Chinese origin and maintains strong connections (*guanxi*/bamboo network) with economic actors in China; the increase in private consumption in China, which is part of the economic transition underway in that country, should be reflected on the increase of imports of final goods from neighboring countries with low production costs; and several works are planned to expand the transport and power generation infrastructure in Southeast Asia, many with Chinese financing, increasing the physical interconnectivity of Southeast Asia internally and with its surroundings.

One of the megaprojects that are part of this process is the "One Belt, One Road Initiative", which aims at enhancing the interconnectivity of all Eurasia. According to political scientist Francis Fukuyama:

4 *Ibidem*.

5 Pricewaterhouse Coopers. *The world in 2050*. Available at: <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/economy/the-world-in-2050.html>. Retrieved on July 6, 2019.

> *One Belt, One Road is different: its purpose is to develop industrial capacity and consumer demand in countries outside of China. Rather than extracting raw materials, China is seeking to shift its heavy industry to less developed countries, making them richer and encouraging demand for Chinese products*[6].

The newly created Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, of which Brazil is a founding member, is expected to have a stake in infrastructure expansion investments in the region.

Southeast Asia's good prospects for economic growth are also influenced by its proximity to India, which has recorded strong GDP growth rates and is expected to wield a bigger influence in the coming decades. One should also note the political stability and low conflict occurrence that characterize the largest countries of the region. Indeed, a core tenet of ASEAN is the so-called "ASEAN way", which stands for a method of solving issues among members seeking compromise and avoiding confrontation.

Demographic trends are also an important factor to be considered in the effort to predict the future profile of Southeast Asia and how Brazil should interact with the region:

6 FUKUYAMA, Francis. *Exporting the Chinese Model*. Project Syndicate, 2016. Available at: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/onpoint/china-one-belt-one-road-strategy-by-francis-fukuyama-2016-01>. Retrieved on July 6, 2019.

Population of the countries of Southeast Asia, in millions (in brackets, the proportion in relation to the world population)[7]

Country	1950	2015	2030
Indonesia	69.5 (2.76%)	257.6 (3.51%)	295.5 (3.47%)
Philippines	18.6 (0.74%)	100.7 (1.37%)	123.6 (1.45%)
Vietnam	24.8 (0.98%)	93.4 (1.27%)	105.2 (1.23%)
Thailand	20.7 (0.82%)	67.9 (0.92%)	68.2 (0.80%)
Myanmar	17.5 (0.69%)	53.9 (0.73%)	60.2 (0.71%)
Malaysia	6.1 (0.24%)	30.3 (0.41%)	36.1 (0.42%)
Cambodia	4.4 (0.18%)	15.6 (0.21%)	19.0 (0.22%)
Laos	1.7 (0.07%)	6.8 (0.09%)	8.5 (0.1%)
Singapore	1.0 (0.04%)	5.6 (0.08%)	6.4 (0.07%)
East Timor	0.4 (0.02%)	1.2 (0.02%)	1.6 (0.02%)
Brunei	0.05 (-)	0.4 (-)	0.5 (-)
Southeast Asia	**164.7 (6.52%)**	**633.4 (8.61%)**	**724.8 (8.52%)**
Brazil	**54.0 (2.14%)**	**207.8 (2.83%)**	**228.7 (2.69%)**

Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division. *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables*. Available at: <http://esa.un.org/ unpd/wpp/publications/files/key_findings_wpp_2015.pdf>.

Like Brazil, Southeast Asia experienced population growth rates higher than the world average between 1950 and 2015 – both regions increased 32% in proportion to the world population. In the first half of this period, the population growth of both regions was similar to that of Africa, which led to the conclusion that the "Third World" was experiencing a "population explosion".

This picture has rapidly been reversed. Today, the fertility rate in Brazil (1.74) is lower than in Russia (1.82), for example, and many

7 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division World Population Prospects. *The 2015 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables*. Available at: <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/publications/files/key_findings_wpp_2015.pdf>. Retrieved on May 16, 2016.

other Western countries. In Southeast Asia, the rates are generally slightly higher than in Brazil (2.22 on average), with a downward though irregular trend[8, 9]. At the same time, fertility rates in Africa and countries between the Middle East and Pakistan – except for Iran in particular – did not fall at the same rate, making these two regions the only big parts of the world with an expected higher share of the world's total population in the coming decades, while there is a slight drop in the percentage of the population living in Brazil and in Southeast Asia, as shown in the last column.

However, two demographic factors tend to favor Southeast Asian prospects for economic expansion, in spite of the sharp reduction in population growth. The first is related to the fact that the rate of urban population in the region is still relatively low. The existence of different official definitions of an "urban area" in each country renders comparison difficult, but it is reasonable to conclude on the basis of national statistics that roughly half the Southeast Asian population lives in the countryside, where there is a strong rural exodus. The second factor refers to the age pyramid of the region. The high fertility rates of previous decades are reflected in a large proportion of people of working age today and in the near future, a "window of opportunity" which will eventually close.

Other general trends, often noticeable on a global scale, may be taken into account in an attempt to imagine what Southeast Asia will look like in the future and how these factors should affect relations with Brazil. During a panel organized in Kuala Lumpur in

8 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Population Prospects 2019*. Available at: <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Fertility/>. Retrieved on July 6, 2019.

9 The fertility rate in the Philippines, which is falling rapidly, is almost twice those of Thailand and Singapore, which are stable. It has slightly risen in Vietnam over the last 20 years and is slowly falling in the other countries, including Indonesia.

April 2016, entitled "ASEAN and the next 50 years," representatives of renowned think tanks highlighted the likelihood of China's even greater preponderance in the economic, political, and military fields at a time when the United States "rebalances" its presence in the region. They also underlined the effects of climate change, which are still being clarified – the fact that the Indonesian government started to build a large eagle-shaped island in front of Jakarta, to serve as a barrier to flooding from the sea, at the cost of US$ 40 billion, demonstrates the importance of environmental concerns for the region.

Among the other likely trends are the increasingly rapid and capillary flow of information and cultural productions; the fluidity of virtual people to people contacts; the elevation of the educational level and the broader command of the English language – now widely used in Southeast Asia, even in countries with no historical link to English-speaking countries –; the increasing promotion of interreligious dialogue; and the improvement of cooperation mechanisms in the fight against terrorism and piracy.

From the economic point of view, the weight of the services sector can continue to grow, both in relation to GDP and in the current account of the balance of payments. The promotion of small and medium-sized companies has shown results, with an increasing share of this segment in foreign trade. With the deepening of trade, regional and global integration arrangements, intra-firm trade should continue to be vigorous. Even with increased automation, rising incomes and the estimated reduction in the proportion of the working-age population should continue to stimulate immigration – or emigration, depending on the case – of low-paid labor in a number of countries in the region.

With China's growth slowing down and its economy increasingly focused on household consumption, as opposed to fixed investment, the price of various commodities tends not to recover to the extraordinary levels seen some years ago – some of which are important items of exports from Brazil to Southeast Asia, which also exports various commodities, especially Indonesia. Though it is extremely hard to make any prediction, many analysts have pointed out that oil prices in particular may not rise much above inflation over the coming decades, because of the large volume of known reserves, the emergence of other sources, and the encouragement of renewable energies – it is no coincidence that Malaysia and Brunei have accelerated efforts to reduce their economies' dependence on oil and gas exports, also bearing in mind the limits of the known reserves.

Southeast Asia has been engaged in expanding regional arrangements for trade liberalization. ASEAN itself has been in a long process of institutionalization and intra-bloc liberalization, a landmark of which was the creation of the ASEAN Community in December 2015, which establishes, in the economic sphere, measures for the standardization of technical parameters and the elimination of obstacles that still delay regional integration. ASEAN already has free trade agreements with China, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand, with which it negotiates a broader arrangement named the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

ASEAN does not have a common external tariff and its members have the autonomy to negotiate trade agreements that are not related to the bloc, so that there are several bilateral free trade agreements between members of the bloc and countries in other regions, and many others are under negotiation. In 2018, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Brunei (from ASEAN), along with Canada, Japan, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Australia, and New Zealand established the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for

Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), after the USA withdrew from the original Transpacific Partnership (TPP). Notably, MERCOSUR currently negotiates a free trade agreement with Singapore.

Based on this attempt to find out how Southeast Asia's dynamics will play out in the near future, it can be argued that the region has solid credentials to assume an even greater position and importance in the world, as it now has a greater prominence than in the near past, including to Brazil. Therefore, it is important to take this big picture into account in the search for closer ties with the region, since greater benefits in the future would be drawn the sooner it is done, so that we will be in a better position to explore the opportunities that will arise, as they already have arisen. Relations between Brazil and Southeast Asia appear to have reached concrete density and potential that justify a focused strategic approach, going beyond generic analyses that consider these relations solely within the broader framework of relations with East Asia (usually overwhelmed by the importance of China).

2. Promotion of greater mutual knowledge

In 1999, Professor Henrique Altemani de Oliveira noted that:

> *The expansion of this relationship [between Brazil and Asia] is, however, hampered by a mutual lack of knowledge. That is, although Latin America has an idea of the products it wishes to acquire in the region, it does not know its cultural systems in general, encompassing economic, financial and commercial practices. On the other hand, this Asian region is also unaware of Latin American organizational culture, leading to disagreements* (OLIVEIRA, 1999, p. 95).

If this statement was valid for Asia as a whole, including countries to which Brazilians have greater exposure, such as

Japan, China and South Korea, it was no less valid, as it continues to be for Southeast Asia. In general, in this region, Brazil is still superficially associated with few icons, especially soccer and carnival. The size and even the location of Brazil are often unknown, as well as the country's social formation and degree of economic and technological development – often underestimated. Likewise, in Brazil, it is still common to imagine Southeast Asia as an underdeveloped and conflict-prone region.

Overcoming these largely inaccurate or outdated stereotypes would be an important part of the effort to awaken the societies of both regions to the vast potential of mutually beneficial opportunities in the areas of business, academia, tourism, and artistic production. In addition, greater contact between such distant populations helps promoting knowledge about different traditions, which fosters mutual respect and the culture of peace. Southeast Asia is one of the world's most socially and culturally diverse regions, from a religious, linguistic, historical, political, and even economic point of view.

One of the most efficient means of raising mutual knowledge is through tourism. In addition to the promotion of tourism itself, by means of holding or participating in events, for example, other government initiatives directly stimulate closer contact between the two regions. Brazil has partial visa exemption agreements for tourism purposes with Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and, most recently, Indonesia. Agreements on air services are in force with the first four of those countries (the one with Vietnam is pending parliamentary approval), laying the legal basis for the establishment of commercial airlines between the two regions, as well as cooperation arrangements, possibly including shared codes. These initiatives have proved useful in fostering tourism and business ties between Southeast Asian countries and Brazil.

Some circumstances should favor a considerable medium-term increase in travel flows between Southeast Asia and Brazil. The very demographic growth, discussed in the previous session, should lead to a natural increase in the number of tourists. Not least, the expected increase in the income of the population of these countries should be reflected in this process, as already seems to occur among Brazilians: income increase has caused, in a first stage, a greater number of regional trips or to nearby countries, but, in a second moment, more and more people seem to have the interest and financial conditions to make long-distance trips.

Another important front in improving mutual knowledge is cultural contact. In several South East Asian countries, some Brazilian cultural expressions, such as *bossa nova*, *capoeira*, and Brazilian *jiu-jitsu*, are reasonably well-known. The big names in the history of Brazilian football are often remembered, and several Brazilian players are prominent in local teams. Contemporary Brazilian pop music, with its upbeat rhythms, has become fairly popular in nightclubs, often being the only foreign genre played in a language other than English and Spanish. There are certainly ample opportunities to be explored, including from a commercial point of view, such as the touring of popular Brazilian artists, contracts between football clubs and those of other sports for the training and exchange of players, promotion of brands of sports products associated to the image of Brazil, and expansion of restaurants specialized in Brazilian cuisine.

In the academic world, initiatives for a closer focus on the relations between Southeast Asia and Brazil are still incipient, although there are already a number of forums for debate involving civil society, with a broader scope, encompassing East Asia as a whole. Within this larger scope, the University Network of the Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC) can be cited, as well as the Latin America-Asia-Pacific Observatory, and the activities of cooperation between universities and Brazilian think tanks with Asian counterparts. With regard to relations with Southeast Asia specifically, there are still few promising initiatives, such as the partnership between the Getulio Vargas Foundation and the ASEAN Foundation, established in 2012, and the studies that Brazil's Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) has developed in collaboration with institutions in Vietnam, in previous years. Some universities in the region have Portuguese language lectureships with Brazilian professors. In the future, a seminar or academic forum dedicated specifically to relations between Brazil and Southeast Asia could be planned, focused on attracting segments of civil society to unexplored opportunities. Likewise, it would be important to encourage greater university exchange. There are relatively few Brazilian students and professors in institutions in Southeast Asia today, and Brazilian exchange programs are still incipient in this region.

Some recent actions, both on the part of Brazil and countries in Southeast Asia, allowed the enhancement of mutual knowledge among opinion and policy makers. In 2012, Brazil invited diplomats from all ASEAN countries to participate in a course specially designed for those professionals, with lectures and visits to organs and companies. Giving greater publicity to the areas of excellence in Brazil such as research on agriculture, aeronautics, and tropical diseases, in order to raise the general perception of Brazil in a region where the country is still relatively little known, proves to be a very positive action. On the other side of the globe, Singapore invites people from other countries to learn about the country's most successful policies through the S R Nathan Fellowship, in which Brazilian authorities have already participated. Thailand is very active in organizing missions of Brazilian journalists to the country, and there are initiatives with a similar objective within FEALAC. Scholarship programs and specific missions are also organized by other countries.

The visits of parliamentary delegations have become more common in recent years, especially from Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Timor-Leste. In particular, Brazilian social policies have attracted great interest from legislators from some countries in the region. Also in recent years, a number of parliamentary friendship groups have been set up to stimulate dialogue between the National Congress and lawmakers from ASEAN countries.

There are at least two sister cities in Brazil and ASEAN countries: Rio de Janeiro and Batangas (Philippines) and Manaus and Banjarmasin (Indonesia). Initiatives of this type, which could be further developed, can serve as instruments for the cultural and historical dissemination of the cities of each party, with a multiplier effect in promoting mutual knowledge.

3. Continuous improvement of the institutional framework

Brazil maintains diplomatic relations with all ten ASEAN members and Timor-Leste and has resident ambassadors in eight of the eleven countries (the exceptions are Brunei, Cambodia and Laos), which also have resident embassies in Brasilia. Brazil's relations with these countries had a similar profile to that of countries of considerable size but very distant from each another: they have always been generally friendly, without considerable friction, but with much unexplored space. In recent decades, relations have gained a lot of substance, especially through greater political dialogue and the search for new markets. Brazil's relations with those countries can then be characterized by an upward line, in which "pioneering" initiatives taken at the base, such as exchanges of high-level political visits or trade missions, bear fruit in later actions, progressively providing an autonomous dynamic with greater involvement of executive institutions and private actors.

As mentioned in the introductory section, Brazil has now more than 60 agreements with Southeast Asian countries, mostly signed in the last decades. With Indonesia in particular, Brazil established its only Strategic Partnership in the region during a presidential visit in 2008, and in the following year both countries adopted a detailed action plan for implementing this partnership. Implementing all such agreements, especially those involving bilateral cooperation and dialogue, is certainly a great challenge, which requires creativity and practical sense in view of each party's capacity to execute them.

In July 2018, MERCOSUR officially launched negotiations with Singapore on a possible free trade agreement, an instrument that may generate very palpable effects for both parties. Previously, Brazil and Singapore had signed, in May 2018, an agreement to avoid double taxation (awaiting parliamentary approval) and Brazil had removed Singapore in January that year from its list of countries considered to have a "favored taxation" system (similar to a list of tax havens), a major breakthrough in bilateral relations with the potential to unlock substantial investments from a country that is among the main sources of FDI in the world.

Some agreements provide for the establishment of bilateral political dialogue instances, to be convened periodically. This type of arrangement offers the greater benefit of engaging several agencies and private entities in a coordinated manner to deal with specific bilateral issues, such as mines and energy, agriculture and livestock, trade and investment, among others. As priority themes of common interest are identified, it is natural to create more such mechanisms, which are useful for deepening political dialogue, for planning cooperation actions, or for promoting trade and investment.

Although Brazil's relations with Southeast Asia already have some channels of their own, even at the technical level, high-level political visits still hold chief importance. The most recent Brazilian official presidential visits were held as long ago as in 2008 (Indonesia, Vietnam and Timor-Leste). In 2014, President Dilma Rousseff visited the port complex of Singapore during a technical stopover. In 2018, President Michel Temer planned twice to visit five countries in Southeast Asia, but had to cancel the trip due to the domestic political agenda. On the other hand, in recent years, Brazil has received visits from the heads of state or government of Timor-Leste (2011 and 2008), Philippines (2009), Indonesia (2008), and Singapore (2008). Visits from foreign ministers and other ministers have been more frequent. Foreign Minister Aloysio Nunes visited the region in both years of his incumbency: in 2017, he visited Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam; in 2018, Indonesia, Thailand, and, again, Singapore.

The intensification of high-level political contacts, in addition to solidifying friendship between countries, has the important role of laying the foundations for new initiatives and accelerating the implementation of previously conceived ones (the expected "deliverables" of a visit), contributing to the improvement of the institutional framework of each bilateral relationship. The fact that the Brazilian then foreign minister visited the region twice over the last two years and that the president planned twice to travel to the region (and not even in the context of a multilateral summit) is a strong sign that Brazil is increasingly aware that Southeast Asia is no longer a faraway corner of the world.

There is also an increase in our capacity for diplomatic action *in loco*. In 2010, the resident Embassy of Brazil in Myanmar was created – an action considered very timely and even visionary, since it was taken shortly before that country surprised the world with one of the swiftest processes of political opening in recent times, which placed us in a privileged position for observation and political dialogue. Recently, several Brazilian embassies in Southeast Asian countries have had their diplomatic staff beefed up, as a result of the relocation of personnel to adapt to the new circumstances. At the beginning of 2014, the first Brazilian defense attaché office in the region was set up, based in Jakarta, and its official operations were also extended to Thailand and Vietnam. These recent changes reflect the growing perception that Southeast Asia occupies – and should occupy – a position of increasing importance in our "radar".

Lines of action to deepen Brazil's relations with Southeast Asia are also discussed in forums and mechanisms of regional scope, which have, in general, been created quite recently. The oldest (and perhaps for this reason the most comprehensive one) is the aforementioned Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC), which gathers 36 countries, 20 from Latin America and 16 from East Asia. More specific mechanisms and channels for political dialogue have been created subsequently, notably the MERCOSUR-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (2008). The Latin America-Asia-Pacific Observatory, created in 2012 under the aegis of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), offers an interface with academia. In the context of business involving private sector, in 2004 Singapore established the Latin Asia Business Forum (LABF), which takes place biennially in the country. Brazilian businessmen in Singapore joined forces with members of the local private sector to create the Brazil-Southeast Asia Chamber of Commerce in 2014, focusing on the promotion of events and publicity of opportunities. The MERCOSUR-

ASEAN Chamber of Commerce, headquartered in Uruguay with subsidiaries in five other countries of the two blocs, has helped promote trade and investment missions.

One challenge for Brazil and Southeast Asia's relations is to make the results of the discussions carried out in the regional forums impact on concrete and sustained actions over time. Efforts in this direction have been made, such as the creation of FEALAC's "Vision Group." Another point that deserves attention is the need to define clearly the scope and mission of each relevant mechanism, avoiding double efforts and maintaining coordination, as the mechanisms overlap geographically.

As can be seen from the format of some of the bi-regional mechanisms mentioned above, Brazil is commonly seen by ASEAN within the larger context of relations with Latin America or with MERCOSUR. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind the developments in the relationship between the Latin American neighbors and the ASEAN countries, in order to keep up with regional trends, maintain the dynamism and avoid being "left behind". Brazil has often pioneered in Latin America in actions with an aim to give more dynamism to its relations with the region, such as the adherence to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia in 2012, and the appointment of an ambassador to ASEAN in 2011. On the other hand, special opportunities are created by some of our neighbors' free trade agreements or joint regional groups with ASEAN countries, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), which also lead us to seek new links with the region in order to prevent being a partner of lesser significance.

This brings us back to Brazil's constant need to plan strategically and in a coordinated way its relations with Southeast Asia, by anticipating tendencies and shaping its development with an active role. For this purpose, it is very important to listen to the various actors, such as members of the academic and business fields as well as the very diplomatic personnel, which have an interest in the issues that constitute our agenda with those countries. Examples of this type of exercise are the coordination meeting of heads of diplomatic missions, chaired at the secretary-general or minister level, the Foreign Policy Dialogues held in 2014, and efforts to bring the Ministry of Foreign Affairs closer to civil society through social networks.

One of the main channels for establishing good relations with Southeast Asia is through the development of a cooperation agenda. There is strong convergence with the countries from ASEAN in this regard, which is reflected in the themes of bilateral agreements signed since the last decade, including those relating to technical cooperation (4 agreements); renewable energies (3); social issues (3); education (2); sports (2); agriculture (2); science and technology (2); cooperation between diplomatic academies (1); defense (1); and health (1).

With Timor-Leste, the cooperation agenda is quite extensive and with continuous implementation through programs implemented with the support of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC). Some possibilities for cooperation with countries in the region are particularly promising. The fight against tropical diseases, especially those transmitted by the mosquito *Aedes aegypti*, is a common challenge of both Brazil and Southeast Asia, and there are important scientific innovations being developed in countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines in this regard. The private sector engagement in the promotion and development of ethanol fuel is another point of great convergence of interests as Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia, for example, have large productions of sugar cane and rely on the importation of hydrocarbons.

Taking into account the existence of several fields in which Brazil and the countries of that region have accumulated good technical capacity and the shared objective of raising their profile of cooperation in other regions, possibilities for trilateral cooperation are beginning to be discussed, and should increase in the future. In Africa, in particular, several countries face challenges already known in Brazil and Southeast Asia, due to climatic, geographical, or even social similarities. In some cases, cooperation can also be seen as an opportunity for Brazil to improve its technological domain, through exchange of experiences and knowledge, and also to develop private partnerships, such as offering specialized consulting services to promote local economic activities.

Brazil has also sought to strengthen its contacts with Southeast Asia through the multilateral sphere. The similarities between the objectives and challenges of Brazil and those countries, especially regarding the pursuit of economic development, combating poverty, access to medicines, and the protection of biodiversity, make it natural for them to seek coordination to tackle major issues of global concern. Recent history has shown that happening in the context of the G77, the "G20" in the WTO, and the Group of Megadiverse Countries. For this reason, mutual support is common in multilateral bodies, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

As Southeast Asia's economic clout increases worldwide, one can expect it to attract greater global attention and some of its countries to seek a leading role in the most relevant mechanisms where their core interests are discussed. Thus, it is even more relevant to boost dialogue with the countries of Southeast Asia on traditional issues, from peacekeeping to trade liberalization, and on increasingly pressing issues such as the environment and the fight against terrorism.

Discussions around the South China Sea issue are closely followed around the world – and Brazil is no exception – as it also involves interests of countries outside the region, such as the use of trade routes. As an important economic partner and political interlocutor of the East Asian countries, Brazil is interested in continuing to follow the discussions between ASEAN countries and China on the establishment of a Code of Conduct on the South China Sea, an important measure aimed at preventing attitudes which could wear out good relations between the countries of the region.

4. Formalization of Brazil's relations with ASEAN

Established in 1967 by five of the current ten members, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is Asia's most comprehensive regional integration mechanism that promotes intra-bloc multi-thematic cooperation and occupies a central position in dialogue mechanisms involving countries in East Asia and other regions (the so-called "ASEAN centrality" is a core concept for the members).

The most important mechanism within this broad context is the East Asia Summit, which annually convenes the heads of state or government of the ten countries of the group and eight of its ten "Dialogue Partners" (USA, China, Russia, Japan, India, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand – the European Union and Canada are not members of the Summit, despite being ASEAN dialogue partners).

The "Dialogue Partner" category is ASEAN's highest level of dialogue with extra-regional countries. Consultations between ASEAN and its dialogue partners take place at least once a year at the foreign minister level, as well as bilateral summits at the head of state/government level. Each of the ten dialogue partners is assigned a coordinator among the ten ASEAN members, alternating every three years. In addition to the consultations at the highest level, meetings of senior officials and working groups are frequent. Dialogue partners maintain a comprehensive cooperation agenda with ASEAN, which is usually set out in five-year action plans, and most of these countries have a resident ambassador exclusively accredited to ASEAN, in Jakarta.

At the end of 2015, ASEAN concluded a new phase of internal institutionalization, with the formation of the "ASEAN Community," based on political and security, economic, and sociocultural pillars. With this, the Association plans to deepen regional integration, with greater engagement with the population, more direct channels of cooperation, conclusion of the elimination of trade tariffs, and liberalization in the fields of services, investment, and labor flows, among other objectives. One of the main topics of discussion in the Association today is Timor-Leste's intention to become its 11th member. If ASEAN confirms Timor-Leste's admission, which may occur in the coming years, the country will be an intersection between the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) and that Association.

The dialogue between Brazil and ASEAN as a bloc is part of a fairly long process of gradual approximation and intensification of contacts. In 1995, President Fernando Henrique Cardoso met with ASEAN's Secretary-General, Ajit Singh, who was to visit Brazil in 1997 – Ajit Singh had been Malaysia's ambassador to Brazil in the previous decade. In 1996, a working lunch was held between the ministers of economic affairs of MERCOSUR and ASEAN in Singapore, when Brazil was represented at the level of Secretary of International Affairs of the Ministry of Finance. The latest phase of this effort to build a bi-regional agenda began during an informal meeting between MERCOSUR and ASEAN foreign ministers in 2007, on the sidelines of a FEALAC meeting in Brasilia. The following year, the first MERCOSUR-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting was held in Brasília, with the co-chairmanship of Brazil and Thailand. In 2009, authorities from both groups met in New York. An immediate challenge in this area is to renew the momentum of the bi-regional dialogue, which would be reflected in particular in the holding of new high-level sessions and in the conclusion of a simple and feasible action plan, which was discussed at the 2009 meeting.

In addition to the bi-regional track – with MERCOSUR –, Brazil itself has pursued closer links with ASEAN as a bloc. Since then, several meetings were held by senior representatives of the Brazilian government with the secretary general of the Association, in order to analyze the different opportunities for intensifying relations. In 2011, Brazil participated, for the first time, at the level of foreign minister, in the ministerial segment of the ASEAN Summit in Indonesia, a few months after having appointed an ambassador to the Association – a position held by the ambassador to Indonesia, cumulatively. In 2012, the most concrete step so far in this process was taken by Brazil: the entry into the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia – TAC, now with 37 signatories –, which signaled the willingness of the country to build a dense and mutually beneficial relationship with the region. Brazil was the first Latin American country to enter the Treaty, with Chile and Argentina joining later.

As a relevant actor in the most diverse array of global topics, it is natural for Brazil to remain engaged in improving the profile of its relationship with Southeast Asia, whose agenda still holds great unexplored potential. From an institutional and political perspective, Brazil faces the challenge of effectively building an agenda for dialogue and cooperation with ASEAN as a whole, in addition to the traditional bilateral agendas maintained with its individual members and the long-awaited MERCOSUR-ASEAN action plan. This regional approach may prove to be very useful in the development of common interest initiatives in Brazil and in several countries of that region, from renewable energies and forest monitoring to sports, as it would bring about gains in scale. Actions in this direction are being taken, such as the identification of the most promising fields of cooperation and the subsequent discussion of formal arrangements for interaction in these areas.

An important step that could be taken in the future, with the crystallization of a formal relationship with ASEAN, is the attribution to Brazil of the status of Dialogue Partner of the Association. Much has been discussed within ASEAN on a review of the moratorium that the bloc has been implementing since 2000 to the granting of this status to more countries. Alternatively, Pakistan has been a "sectoral dialogue partner" since 1993 and ASEAN has over the past few years granted this status to other countries – Norway (2015), Switzerland (2016), and Turkey (2017) – and conferred to Germany the status of "development partner" in 2016, thus raising to a total of 15 the number countries or supranational entities with a special status. Brazil has particularly favorable characteristics to take up an enhanced status, given its economic weight and its global performance, with a prominent role in multilateral forums and in cooperation and dialogue groups – such as the BRICS, which has among its members three ASEAN dialogue partners. The upgrade of the institutional profile of Brazil's relationship with ASEAN would place their connected agendas within a clearer framework, with regular meetings and more defined cooperation projects. It would additionally elevate Brazil's credentials to participate in specific dialogue mechanisms related to ASEAN, which have been increasingly relevant within the Asia-Pacific geopolitical arena.

5. Identification and fulfillment of the economic and commercial potential

Perhaps many would be surprised to learn that seven ports in Southeast Asia have annual cargo traffic in TEUs higher than that of the Port of Santos, the busiest port in Latin America[10]. Likewise, it is startling that five airports in Southeast Asia – in Singapore, Jakarta, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, and Manila – have annual passenger traffic figures higher than that of Guarulhos Airport, the second largest in Latin America[11]. The number of foreigners visiting Thailand (35 million) and Malaysia (26 million) in 2017 was higher or similar to the figures for countries with which Brazilians are more familiar, such as Japan (29 million)[12]. These remarkable facts can only lead to the conclusion that the population of Southeast Asia is deeply integrated with the outside world, trading intensely with other countries and receiving or carrying out a large volume of tourism and business visits – and having enough income for such trips.

Although the aggregate population of ASEAN countries is three times larger than Brazil's, ASEAN's extra-bloc trade is

10 American Association of Port Authorities. Available at: <http://aapa.files.cms-plus.com/PDFs/WORLD PORT RANKINGS 2009.pdf>. Retrieved on May 16, 2016.

11 Airports Council International. Available at: <https://aci.aero/news/2019/03/13/preliminary-world-airport-traffic-rankings-released/>. Retrieved on July 5, 2019.

12 World Tourism Organization. Available at: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284419876>. Retrieved on July 5, 2019.

about five times larger than Brazil's foreign trade[13]. Considering ASEAN's good prospects for growth and its strong integration into international trade, Brazil may increasingly see the region as an important partner in its ambition to raise foreign trade as a percentage of its gross domestic product. While the ratio between foreign trade and nominal GDP was 24.2% in Brazil (in 2017), in ASEAN this figure is around 85%, with the lowest ratio being for Indonesia, at 39.6%. The intensification of trade with ASEAN has also contributed and should further contribute to the diversification of Brazil's trading partners, which has been very positive for mitigating the effects of the latest economic crises. Considering that 76% of the ASEAN countries' foreign trade is carried out with countries outside the bloc – a rate that has remained relatively constant – the willingness to diversify trading partners seems to be a feature shared with Brazil.

As the following tables demonstrate, trade between Brazil and ASEAN has strongly expanded in recent decades, although this trend has not been consistent over the last few years. In the 1990s, this expansion was solely due to the overall growth of Brazilian foreign trade, so that ASEAN's share of Brazil's global trade actually fell slightly from 2.3% to 2.1%. Yet in the 2000s this picture changed dramatically, as the growth in Brazil's trade with ASEAN was much higher than that with the rest of the world, increasing the grouping's share in Brazilian trade to 3.5% in 2010. Recently, although bilateral trade in 2018 was still below the record high figure registered in 2014, ASEAN makes up 4.9% of Brazil's global trade. If it were taken as a country, ASEAN would already be Brazil's fourth largest trading partner, just behind Argentina and ahead of large traditional partners like Germany and Japan.

13 Calculations based on data available on ASEAN's website at <http://www.asean.org/ storage/2016/01/statistic/table18_asof21Dec2015.pdf>. Retrieved on May 16, 2016.

Brazil-ASEAN Trade, in US$ millions

Year	Export	Import	Brazilian Balance	Total
1990	1,039	132	907	1,172
2000	921	1,373	-451	2,294
2010	6,606	6,767	-160	13,374
2011	9,344	8,399	945	17,744
2012	10,214	8,332	1,882	18,547
2013	9,022	8,805	216	17,827
2014	11,349	8,624	2,725	19,974
2015	10,703	7,303	3,399	18,007
2016	10,616	6,004	4,612	16,621
2017	11,125	7,470	3,655	18,595
2018	11,614	7,801	3,813	19,415
2019 (first half)	5,663	3,810	1,853	9,473

ASEAN's participation in Brazil's foreign trade

Year	Export	Import	Total
1990	3.3%	0.6%	2.3%
2000	1.7%	2.5%	2.1%
2010	3.3%	3.7%	3.5%
2011	3.6%	3.7%	3.7%
2012	4.2%	3.7%	4.0%
2013	3.7%	3.7%	3.7%
2014	5.0%	3.8%	4.4%
2015	5.6%	4.3%	5.0%
2016	5.7%	4.4%	5.1%
2017	5.1%	5.0%	5.0%
2018	4.9%	4.3%	4.6%
2019 (first half)	5.2%	4.5%	4.9%

Over the last ten years, ASEAN's share of Brazilian foreign trade has grown mainly on Brazil's exports – which are largely agricultural commodities such as soybeans, sugar and corn, iron ore, and crude oil. As a result, Brazil has recorded significant surpluses in its trade with ASEAN.

Keeping this strong expansion of Brazil's trade with ASEAN may prove to be more challenging in the future than it has been up to now. ASEAN accounts for roughly 5% of Brazilian foreign trade, a percentage which is already equal to that of ASEAN's share of world trade (considering its extra-bloc trade). Likewise, Brazil accounts for 1.04% of ASEAN's extra-bloc trade, virtually the same as Brazil's share in world trade, which is 1.05% (2017). It is as if Brazil and ASEAN had already reached a trade relationship of "normal" intensity, with more and more energy being demanded to sustain the increase in the commercial profile maintained by both parties.

Although an overview of Brazil's trade with ASEAN is useful, it should be borne in mind that each country of the Association has its own rules and characteristics in its trade relations. Negotiations for access to the meat market, for example, are held bilaterally – with each country, not ASEAN –, resulting in a more complex and diffused process of market access – Brazil is authorized to sell meat to most ASEAN countries, for example, but not to Indonesia, a matter currently handled by the WTO dispute settlement mechanism in the case of poultry. It is important, therefore, to analyze the trend of Brazil's trade with each member of the bloc.

Evolution of trade between Brazil and ASEAN members

Country	2009	2016	2017	2018	Growth 2009-2018	Brazil /total*
Vietnam	564,424,111	2,999,482,019	3,918,707,734	4,254,860,221	654%	0.92%
Singapore	1,956,148,095	3,253,995,194	3,380,635,735	4,225,951,151	116%	0.48%
Malaysia	2,036,158,773	3,027,468,449	3,924,084,590	3,548,793,808	74%	0.95%
Thailand	2,402,740,479	3,058,687,318	3,356,657,228	3,534,760,641	47%	0.73%
Indonesia	2,138,109,872	3,429,885,092	3,123,025,270	2,807,490,072	31%	0.96%
Philippines	614,919,518	631,462,711	691,404,155	933,479,127	52%	0.43%
Cambodia	12,670,206	30,328,704	37,431,800	49,894,996	294%	0.14%
Myanmar	9,206,998	187,204,947	148,784,962	46,524,782	405%	0.50%
Laos	242,392	1,273,006	2,439,861	4,651,255	1819%	0.03%
Brunei	636,615	794,466	931,398	1,187,256	86%	0.01%

* Denotes the proportion of that country's trade with Brazil in relation to the global trade of the same country in 2017 (the latest year with the required data available).

Among the five countries with which Brazil has a more substantial trade in ASEAN, trade growth over the last 10 years has ranged between 31% and 654% and with three of them it was higher than the growth in Brazilian global trade in the period, which was 50%. With these five countries, Brazil already trades a similar amount to that traded with several South American countries, including in MERCOSUR. The spectacular growth in trade with Vietnam stands out and is mainly due to a strong increase in the sale of corn and other basic products from Brazil and in the growth of Brazilian purchases of machines produced in Vietnam, mainly telephones – a sector that has grown rapidly in that country. The other five countries also recorded very significant growth rates in general, but these figures should be considered carefully because of the low base value.

As can be seen in the last column, the importance of Brazil in the total foreign trade of each country varies considerably. Factors such as the degree of economic complementarity, the existence of intra-firm trade, and the trade profile of each country (as a re-exporter of manufactured goods, for example) help explain these differences. But the data is to some extent suggestive of the potential in each country for the intensification of trade relations with Brazil by means of trade promotion policy. Based on this, commercial intelligence studies can be performed identifying products intensely exported from Brazil to the world and intensely imported by a certain ASEAN country, but which Brazil has not yet exported to that country – some years ago the Brazilian government carried out similar studies with regard to Indonesia and Vietnam. In light of the results, trade missions with a specific focus on the greatest potential sectors could be organized, including business seminars and roundtables. The case of Myanmar seems to deserve special attention for this type of initiative, given the recent political opening of the country and the attendant integration into external trade and investment flows, the strong economic growth prospect, the broad potential consumer market, and Brazil's low share of Myanmar's total foreign trade (0.5%). The surge in trade with Myanmar in 2016, driven almost exclusively by sugar sales, did not take root, but revealed the great untapped potential. This type of initiative could also contribute to the necessary efforts aimed at diversifying Brazilian exports to the ASEAN countries, which are now very concentrated in some basic products – corn, soybeans, sugar, iron ore, etc.

Among high added value sectors, aircraft, defense and weapons are some of those in which Brazil has gained more space in the region but where there is still ample growth potential. The sector of medicines and health devices should show a strong increment in demand, due to the increase in income and urbanization, while the average age of the population rises. Even in sectors where Brazil has no comparative advantage in their lower price segments, there is increasing potential for products in specific segments that value quality and originality – competitive advantages –, as in fashion and cosmetics industries, in view of the strong rise in the level of income in the region and the spread of the "Brazil brand," which also refers to beauty, health, and cheerfulness. It should also be taken into consideration the probable growth in demand for services, due to the growing internationalization of this sector and the rise in income and urbanization. The participation of small and medium-sized companies in foreign trade is expected to increase in the region, which encourages the continuous improvement and dissemination of existing online tools that facilitate contact between buyers and sellers, without the need of physical movement to carry business out.

The consolidation of the ASEAN countries as important trading partners and with good potential for trade growth and diversification creates a more favorable environment for setting up instances that facilitate articulation between businesspeople from all parties. As mentioned, the Brazil-Southeast Asia Chamber of Commerce, in Singapore, and the MERCOSUR-ASEAN Chamber of Commerce, based in Montevideo, have been created in recent years. Business events such as forums, seminars, and trade shows with specific topics may become more common. Since 2004, Singapore has been holding the Latin Asia Business Forum; between 2009 and 2012, three editions of the ASEAN Latin American Business Forum were held in Bangkok and Jakarta; in 2011, Brazil held the seminar "Brazil-ASEAN: Round Table on Trade and Investment," on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit, in Bali. Initiatives of this nature may become more regular, as well as interest in the creation of a Brazil-ASEAN Business Council or similar instance may be discussed with entities representing the private sector. These discussion arenas involving the private sector would be added to those promoted by the respective governments, such as the meetings of trade and investment promotion mechanisms, now established with Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. More Brazilian companies could also promote their products and services with their own facilities in the region – there are already about 20 Brazilian companies with offices or plants in Southeast Asia, mostly in Singapore.

To be sure, the expansion of bilateral trade is not determined simply by the efficiency of trade promotion activities. The country's economic structure (comparative advantages, complementarities, exchange rate, logistics infrastructure, bureaucracy, interest rates, industry diversification, technology, productivity gains, fixed investment rate), the rules that facilitate bilateral trade (trade liberalization or preference arrangements, tariff scheme), and the tools relating to trade remedies and market access (dispute settlement mechanisms, compliance with market economy principles, elimination of non-tariff barriers, anti-dumping measures) are equally or even more preponderant factors.

With regard to these points, it is important to bear in mind the changes in the institutional framework of the trade relations of Southeast Asian countries with other countries whose companies compete with the Brazilian ones – after all, trade involves competition –, such as trade liberalization arrangements. As mentioned, ASEAN has free trade agreements with China, South Korea, Japan, India, Australia, and New Zealand, most of them in force since 2010, and negotiates the RCEP; several ASEAN countries maintain and negotiate various bilateral free trade agreements; and some of these countries are also part of the CPTPP.

It would be positive to develop studies and consultations on the possible Brazilian interest in a trade agreement with ASEAN. After the MERCOSUR-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in 2008, the Brazilian delegation told the media that it would still be early to negotiate a free-trade deal between the two blocs, but this would not be ruled out[14]. Since then, MERCOSUR has become more active in negotiating free trade agreements and ASEAN seems a natural counterpart to be considered, given its massive market and relative proclivity for liberalization. Depending on the conditions of such arrangement, it could be an opportunity to enhance access in relatively closed markets (like Indonesia in the case of agribusiness). The launch of negotiations between MERCOSUR and Singapore (the most economically liberal of the ASEAN members), in July 2018, is a step in this direction and may ultimately increase the interest of both regions in a broader arrangement.

With Timor-Leste, the only country in Southeast Asia that is not a member of ASEAN, bilateral trade is still very small (7.9 million in 2018), concentrated on the side of Brazilian exports, which, despite the low absolute value, account for 1.1% of total Timorese imports. As the country's official language is Portuguese, it can be considered a facilitating factor for the penetration of Brazilian companies, especially those with potential for the provision of services in areas such as transport engineering, in which the country has heavily invested.

6. Investment Promotion

Southeast Asia should also be an increasingly important partner for Brazil in terms of investments. According to UNCTAD, Singapore was the tenth largest source of Foreign Direct Investment

14 Mercosul e Asean deixam de lado negociação comercial. *O Estado de São Paulo*. November 24, 2018.

(FDI) in the world in 2014, and Malaysia ranked 17th, only behind countries in Europe, North America and Northeast Asia (though for 2017 they had fallen to 16th and 30th respectively, but Thailand emerged as 20th)[15]. Singapore is the fourth country with most assets held by sovereign wealth funds (GIC and Temasek, which have offices in São Paulo) and Brunei, Malaysia, and Timor-Leste have relevant oil-based funds. More and more countries in the region have opened commercial or investment offices in São Paulo. Companies from Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia have made investments in Brazil, many of which have been carried out in recent years. These investments, although they already make up a considerable volume and contribute to the development of Brazil in strategic sectors such as transport and energy, may be just the beginning of a denser relationship in this field, as these countries seek to diversify their investment portfolio, currently more concentrated in neighboring or developed countries.

With new concessions, including through the Brazilian Government's Investment Partnerships Program, new opportunities have attracted the attention of ASEAN investors. A first step in this direction was taken in 2013, when Rio de Janeiro's international airport (Galeão) was awarded to a consortium that includes the Singaporean company Changi, manager of Singapore's airport, which is consistently ranked the best in the world according to Skytrax consultancy. There are good opportunities for other investments in areas such as oil and gas, palm oil, auto parts, mechanic and electronic devices, telecommunications, real estate, and hospitality.

15 UNCTAD. *FDI Statistics*. Available at <https://unctad.org/en/Pages/DIAE/FDI%20Statistics/FDI-Statistics.aspx>. Retrieved on 6 July 2019.

Southeast Asia has also proven to be a favorable environment for the internationalization of Brazilian companies. The largest investments to date have been made in the mining and logistics sector by Vale, in the form of an acquisition (in 2006 in Indonesia) and also a greenfield investment (transshipment terminal operational since 2014, in Malaysia).

Factors such as a market-friendly business environment, legal certainty, income growth, and proximity to China and Muslim countries have led some Brazilian companies to find in Southeast Asia a good platform to make inroads into the broader Asian market through the establishment of local production facilities, as it has recently been the case in sectors such as processed foods and electric engineering. The sugar-alcohol and agricultural machinery sectors are promising, given the recognized Brazilian experience in the area and the search in the region for productivity gains to meet rising demands. The engineering sector could benefit from ambitious infrastructure and connectivity projects in the region, ranging from hydroelectric plants in Laos to highways and ports in Timor-Leste. The internationalization of Brazilian companies, promoting outward FDI flows and services, has the collateral benefits of helping to elevate the Brazilian industry's competitiveness, reducing the companies' risks through diversification of markets, promoting trade, and enhancing Brazil's credentials as a prominent actor in the region.

Conclusion

Brazil's relations with Southeast Asia are undergoing a vigorous (though sometimes faltering) expansion, and the foundations underlying this process allow us to project that this trend may continue in the future. Embedded between China and India, two economic hubs with extraordinary strength, Southeast Asia is expected to occupy a prominent place in the world economic scenario. As a large developing country, sharing similar challenges with the countries in the region, Brazil has powerful reasons to strengthen its ties with Southeast Asia, in search of mutual benefits. This process takes place in a gradual but increasingly accelerated manner, as shown by the remarkable increase in bilateral trade and investments side to side, the intensification of political and technical contacts, the multiplication of bilateral agreements and the opening of new channels for dialogue and cooperation.

The challenges of Brazil's relations with Southeast Asia can be summarized by looking at the three pillars of the ASEAN Community. From the sociocultural point of view, it is crucial to promote greater mutual knowledge, through studies and discussions with an exclusive focus on Southeast Asia, the encouragement of more people-to-people contacts, and the fulfillment of opportunities in the artistic and cultural area, among other fronts. From the political point of view, high-level contacts will continue to be essential, at the same time as the various channels for dialogue and cooperation already established will become more condensed and eventually more relevant when Brazil raises its institutional profile with ASEAN. From the economic point of view, the continuous expansion of trade flows at the levels experienced in recent years will require increasingly focused actions, such as commercial intelligence and business missions studies, which could also contribute to the diversification of our agenda, which is today concentrated on some basic products. Mapping out in advance how scenarios should evolve and using its adapting capacity, Brazil could forge an increasingly beneficial and solid partnership with Southeast Asia.

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CHAPTER 8

BRAZIL AND AUSTRALIA: BEYOND THE TYRANNY OF DISTANCE

Henry Pfeiffer[1]

There is a tendency to consider geographic distance as the great barrier to the strengthening of Brazil's political and economic relations with Australia. This is an argument that echoes with the Australians, who only recently, with the displacement of the planet's economic axis to the Pacific region, began to abandon the idea that they live in a land far from everything. The Australians coined the concept of "tyranny of distance" to refer to the limitations that the geographical location of the Australian continent imposes on the international relations of their country. Distance is certainly an objective fact that may hinder profound relations between countries, but it is an insufficient argument to explain the unfulfilled potential of the relations between Brazil and Australia.

In times of sufficient economic prosperity and surpluses of political power, the foreign policies of both countries were capable

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to go beyond their respective spheres of traditional partnerships and create moments of great ambition for their bilateral relations. Political will, however, is a fragile pillar to rely on when there are not sufficient links between the civil societies in order to allow private citizens, companies, and organizations to seize the opportunities created by government action. While technological advances have reduced the inhibiting force of geographic distance over the decades, the fulfillment of the potential of the bilateral relations remains hampered due to the still prevailing mutual ignorance between Brazilians and Australians.

1. History

During the voyage of the First Fleet, which left the United Kingdom in 1788 to establish the first European colony in Australia, the sailors of the 11 ships under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip had the privilege of being able to land in Rio de Janeiro during the passage of the fleet by that port. The Portuguese authorities rarely allowed to foreign seamen the opportunity to observe the port of Rio, but Captain Phillip had sailed with the Portuguese Navy a few years earlier and was a good friend of the then Viceroy of Brazil, the Marquess of Lavradio, who cordially received his crew. For days, visitors were able to purchase vast stocks of cachaça, which filled the storages of the First Fleet as it continued its journey to the new land. With the fleet depleted of rum by their time of arrival in Botany Bay, an area now part of the city of Sydney, the first Europeans to settle in Australia, whether free men or convicted to exile, celebrated their first nights in their new home toasting with glasses filled with the typical Brazilian distillate.

Rio de Janeiro continued to be a main supply port on the route between the UK and Australia for decades. Despite Brazil contributing with several goods for the colonization of

Australia, political relations were only established decades after the formation of the Commonwealth in 1901. Consular relations already existed before World War II and the two countries signed their first bilateral act in 1939, a trade agreement by which they agreed not to devote discriminatory treatment to one another's products. Only in 1945, however, was the diplomatic relationship formally established.

Australia established its legation in Rio de Janeiro in 1946, its eighth mission established abroad and the first in South America. Brazil reciprocated the gesture that same year when it established its mission in Canberra. The initial approximation of the two countries stemmed from both being among the "average powers" that collaborated in the Allied war effort against the Axis, but the bilateral relations barely advanced beyond the initial exchange of diplomatic missions.

In 1950 Brazil and Australia signed their second bilateral act, a trade agreement that provided, from the Brazilian perspective, export quotas for cotton, coffee, pine, wood, and carnauba wax, as well as import quotas for machinery (agricultural, mining, road construction, laundry, carpentry, weaving, compressor, hydraulic pumps), electrical appliances, car parts, barley, and wool. Australia was then identified as one of the best markets for Brazilian wood, and cotton emerged as Brazil's main export product to that country. The agreement, however, was a result of the importing euphoria at the end of President Dutra's administration in Brazil, when the country had an excess of capital in the immediate postwar period, and Australia was only one among several countries with which Brazil signed similar understandings. After the exhaustion of Brazilian monetary reserves in the early 1950s, Brazil denounced the agreement in 1954. The note by which Brazil communicated its decision further stated that the Brazilian government hoped to examine, until December 31, 1954, "new means of regulating and increasing exchanges between Brazil and Australia", but for the rest of the decade no concrete initiative had taken place. This first attempt set the standard that other Brazilian initiatives for Australia would follow for decades to come: a policy set in times of economic euphoria that is then abandoned in the face of the retraction caused by fiscal imbalance.

Although always friendly, the relationship remained discrete during the 1950s and 1960s. The interest shown by Australia in the Latin American countries at the time of the formation of the United Nations waned and the region was not a priority for its foreign policy anymore. Brazil also showed no interest in Oceania. The Legation in Canberra, which also had cumulative representation before the government of New Zealand, was then headed only by ministers of the diplomatic career. It was only in the early 1970s that the Brazilian government would try to seek a more active relationship with Australia. To this end, Brazil had elevated the Legation in Canberra to Embassy status, nominated for the first time an Ambassador, Miguel Osório, to head it, established a trade promotion section in the Embassy, and planned the establishment of a Consulate-General in Sydney.

The excellent performance of the Brazilian economy between 1968 and 1973, the "Brazilian economic miracle", did not go unnoticed in Australia. Although that cycle of growth was already doomed in the mid-1970s, it solidified an impression in Australia that Brazil was a key "Third World Leader," since even after an economy slowdown in 1974, Brazil still seemed to sustain a growth rate of more than 6% per year. On the other hand, the negative impact on Brazilian foreign trade caused by the oil crisis pressured Brazil to seek new economic partnerships in order to recover the growth rate of the "miracle" years. Australia, a developed country in the western capitalist block, was an ideal prospective partner from the point of view of the military administrations that then governed Brazil. This confluence of interests led Brazil to propose to Australia an ambitious bilateral program in order to realize the "enormous potential of useful exchanges" between the two countries, as emphasized by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, Douglas Anthony, in a message to Brazil issued in 1972.

A goal was set to create the Brazilian Center in Sydney, which would initially be comprised of the Consulate-General of Brazil and a representative office of "*Banco do Brasil*" (Bank of Brazil), later to be expanded to also include offices of Brazilian tradings and of a joint financing company to be established in partnership between Brazil and Australia. All of these institutions would be concentrated in a central address of great prestige in Sydney, and the tradings would have, in addition, their own customs warehouse in the Port of Sydney. In regards to bilateral acts, Brazil proposed to Australia the negotiation of a comprehensive framework agreement to explore the great potential of exchanges between the two countries, in order to create an enduring and growing trade flow.

The framework agreement recognized the similarities between the economies of Brazil and Australia, but aimed to promote the view that the two countries complemented each other, rather than being direct competitors in international trade. The breadth of the framework agreement, an innovative idea unparalleled in Australia's foreign policy practice, caused some apprehension among the Australians, which led Brazil to propose the fragmentation of the original act into three agreements, one for trade, another for finance and taxation (with the main objective of avoiding double taxation between the two countries), and a third one for scientific and technological cooperation. Brazil hoped to have at least the trade agreement ready for signature on the occasion of the visit of the Secretary General of Itamaraty – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil –, Ambassador Ramiro Saraiva Guerreiro, to Canberra in July 1978.

The Brazilian economic downturn, however, became increasingly apparent in the second half of the 1970s, and the continued decline in Brazil's performance was accompanied by a decline in the interest of Australia, which was also experiencing poor economic performance. Near the end of the negotiations on the trade agreement and the definition of the content of the Australia-Brazil joint declaration, Brazil already noticed that the counterproposals received from the Australians represented "a dilution of the substance of the declaration and, certainly, of the commitment to collaboration." The final text of the agreement contained fewer objective commitments and more general recommendations than desired by the Brazilian side. The creation of the Brazil-Australia financial company, for example, was no longer a goal to fulfill, it became just an idea to be analyzed and never made it off the drawing board afterwards.

Although less ambitious than Brazil, the Australian government attached great importance to the more limited objectives of the trade agreement. Among Australia's main intentions were the increase in the export of coal to Brazil (still nowadays the main product that Brazil imports from Australia) and the reduction of the competition of the steel exports of each side in third countries. Less than a year after the signing of the agreement, Australia invoked the first meeting of the Joint Commission ("comista") established by it. Brazil hoped to take advantage of the "comista" to reintroduce in the bilateral dialogue the major commitments which were not dealt with in the agreement, but was frustrated by the agenda proposed by the Australians, who granted “mere routine treatment” to such subjects. The Brazilian side developed the impression that Australia had signed the trade agreement and convened the commission only to fast track discussions with Brazil to lessen the competition of commodities exported by both countries. Under this negative impression, the 1st “comista” yielded poor results, the second meeting was not held within the foreseen period, and, at the dawn of the 1980s, the moment of greater governmental ambition on Brazil-Australia bilateral relations had ended.

The 1980s were a period of weak bilateral interaction between Brazil and Australia. Political and economic difficulties on both sides, and South America’s growing priority in Brazilian foreign policy, eroded most of the lasting impacts of the initiatives proposed to Australia during the 1970s. Throughout the decade there were no new meetings of the joint commission and no progress in the negotiation of the Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology proposed by Brazil in 1980. The trade agreement was never invoked by Brazil, and negotiations on extradition and legal cooperation in criminal matters, proposed by Australia in the second half of the decade, were not successful (an extradition agreement was only signed in 1994, and the agreement on legal cooperation in criminal matters was only signed in 2014). The only remaining institution of the previously ambitious Brazilian Center in Sydney was the Consulate-General. The representative office of “Banco do Brasil” operated for a few years solely in search of loan opportunities to Brazil and was not able to apply for the license to open a full branch in Australia when it had an opportunity to do so in 1985, closing completely shortly thereafter in July 1988. Although trade flows continued to modestly increase, and Australian companies started to operate in Brazil during the 1980s (mostly in the mining sector and in services associated with it), in political-diplomatic terms the bilateral relations between Brazil and Australia remained very modest through the whole decade, and would have been very inexpressive had it not been for the then growing interaction and partnership between the two countries in the context of multilateral trade negotiations.

Australia led the initiative to propose to other Asian and Latin American agricultural exporting countries the formation of a block to prevent the United States and the European Community from removing the reform of agricultural trade rules from the agenda of the Uruguay Round of negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which began in 1986. The countries invited to the group's inaugural meeting in the city of Cairns contributed to the formation of the most eccentric but most cohesive coalition seen in multilateral trade negotiations to date. The group aggregated developed and developing countries, rival countries and competitors in the export of commodities, and many expected that it would not endure due to the conflicting interests of its members. Brazil, at first, was reluctant to join the group, having hitherto maintained its own system of protection and agricultural subsidies, and possibly only attended the meeting to accompany its neighboring countries in the name of the idea of Latin American solidarity, which during the 1980s was becoming increasingly prominent in the country's foreign policy. During the course of the Uruguay Round, however, Brazil unilaterally reformed its system of subsidies for agricultural production and trade, and eventually became the most active member of the Cairns group alongside Australia.

Brazil's confidence in the Cairns Group was consolidated after Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, the "developed countries" of the group, committed to support the demands of the developing countries for "special and differential" treatment in agriculture.

Previously, these three countries had opposed such special prerogatives for developing countries, and this change of stance testified the cohesion of the Cairns Group to all participants of the Uruguay Round. In practical terms, Brazil and Australia acted as the leaders of the group and were able to force the inclusion of agricultural topics in the agenda of the Uruguay Round. This success had a very positive influence on each country's perception of the other. The discovery of several possible common interests in multilateral issues, not only in the area of trade but also regarding the environment, provided the basis upon which Brazil and Australia would begin to rebuild their bilateral dialogue from the 1990s onwards.

Contrary to what was observed during the 1970s, when the bilateral relationship was characterized by ambitious plans to be implemented in the short term, the process that started in the 1990s adopted more modest initial goals. The initial milestone of this new bilateral moment was the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding on Political Consultations, which proposes that regular meetings are to be held between senior officials of the foreign affairs ministries of the two countries. After the failure of the previous joint commission, this denomination was not adopted by the new mechanism, and the meetings took place under the plain title of "Meeting of Political Consultations". Unlike the "comista", which was extinguished due to the lack of perceived interests, the first meetings of political consultations benefitted from the need of the two countries to coordinate their actions in the context of the intense multilateral agenda observed in the 1990s. Bilateral issues, however, gradually earned more attention with each edition of the Meeting, eventually becoming the dominant topics during the late 2000s. Although the intervals between some editions were not regular, until the present day the mechanism of political consultations continues to serve as the basis for high-level meetings between Brazil and Australia every two years on average.

The bilateral agenda in the 1990s was dominated by unfolding multilateral discussions. The theme of the environment gained prominence during the preparation and execution of Rio-92, and remained an important topic for Brazil due to the legacy of the conference and the proliferation of environmental conventions. Brazil and Australia hold very biodiverse territories, house contain several unique plant and animal species, and are points of passage in periodic migrations of various aerial and marine animals. By virtue of these characteristics, conservationism has always been a point of convergence of the interests of Brazil and Australia in environmental discussions. Bilateral contact has been strengthened by the need to promote, in multilateral forums, international support for the conservation of endangered species and natural resources, without, however, excluding the possibility of rational exploitation, in accordance with the principle of sustainable development.

In the topic of international security, the priority given to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction after the end of the Cold War made Australia echo in its contacts with Brazil the same apprehensions manifested by the United States and most of the Western European countries until Brazil acceded in 1998 to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. By this time, the end of the Uruguay Round and the creation of the WTO had reinforced multilateral trade as the main area of communion of interests between Brazil and Australia, whose partnership on this topic was strongly established after years of cooperation within the Cairns group, which remained active until the Doha Round as the strongest coalition lobbying for better conditions for agricultural trade.

Like the matters of environment, security and international trade, the other topics of discussion between Brazil and Australia in the 1990s and in the first half of the 2000s were generally reactions to the issues of the multilateral agenda. Even though Ambassador Celso Amorim made the first visit of a Brazilian Foreign Minister to Australia in 1994, no bilateral agreements or initiatives were adopted. This modest agenda nevertheless allowed for the establishment of a routine in the diplomatic relationship that did not exist until the beginning of the decade of 1990 and managed to maintain regular contacts between high representatives of both countries. Following the stabilization of the Brazilian economy during the 1990s and a new cycle of strong economic growth in Brazil during the 2000s, these routine contacts with Australia were the base upon which a new momentum to bilateral relations has emerged, especially since 2008, when Ambassador Celso Amorim, again in the position of Foreign Minister, made a new ministerial visit to Australia and established an excellent dialogue with the labor government of the then Prime Minister, and soon afterwards Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kevin Rudd.

The affinity of the governments of Brazil and Australia led both to raise, in 2010, the status of the bilateral relationship to the symbolic level of an enhanced partnership and to adopt a plan of action to implement initiatives on issues such as cooperation on science and technology, trade and investment, cultural promotion, technical cooperation, and educational exchanges. Although it was not an international treaty per se, the Brazil-Australia action plan had the scope that Brazil intended to give to the ill-fated framework agreement in the 1970s and represented the beginning of a second period of great ambition in the relations between the two national governments.

As in 1973, Brazil was experiencing a period of economic euphoria in 2010. Although it did not experience "miraculous growth rates" as in the early 1970s, the Brazilian economy displayed a seemingly strong performance in comparison to the rest of the countries during the financial crisis of 2008. However, as in the mid-1970s, the economic growth in the early years of the 2010s would prove unsustainable, but this fragility would not become apparent until 2014. In turn, Australia also resisted the effects of the 2008 crisis. It was one of the few developed countries that did not experience a recession and it would only experience significant negative impacts when the performance of the Chinese economy, its main export market, showed signs of decrease around 2013. As in the beginning of the 1970s, the coincident dynamism of the Australian and Brazilian economies encouraged the two countries to go beyond their geographic sphere of influence and traditional partnerships, and this momentum led to the adoption of the plan of action and the enhanced partnership.

Despite the similarities between the periods of strong bilateral initiative, in 2010 there was already a growing interaction between private individuals and entities in Brazil and Australia, which was practically inexistent in the 1970s. The actions implemented during the 1970s were based exclusively on the political will of the two national governments, and with the end of that will in the early 1980s, the gains of the bilateral approach of that decade were lost. In 2010, however, there were already a significant number of Brazilian students in Australia, the investments of Australian companies in Brazil had diversified beyond the mining and associated services sector, Brazilian companies had begun to invest in Australia, and advances in communication and transportation technologies had reduced the difficulties caused by geographical distance. The most successful initiatives of the plan of action of 2010 were those aimed at bridging the gap between the societies of Brazil and Australia. There was not much improvement on the trade of goods, but there was a substantial increase of capital exchanges, favored by the complementary capabilities of the Brazilian and Australian economies. The strengthening of contacts between the armed forces of both countries remained unfulfilled, but student exchanges became the most prominent aspect of bilateral interactions. The Brazilian and Australian governments were able to develop strictly governmental initiatives, such as technical cooperation to implement a rainwater harvesting project in Haiti, but it was the interest of the societies of the two countries rather than the political will of the governments that determined the most successful areas in the bilateral approach.

The balance of the enhanced partnership between 2010 and 2012 was considered positive, and Australia proposed raising the bilateral relations to an even higher status in June 2012. At the Rio+20 conference, Prime Minister Julia Gillard made the first visit of an Australian head of government to Brazil, and on that occasion the two countries declared themselves strategic partners. The Memorandum of the Brazil-Australia Strategic Partnership foresees more ambitious goals in areas where the enhanced partnership has achieved positive results, such as education and investment, has maintained the goal of strengthening some areas where there was incipient advance, such as science and technology, and renewed the commitment in some topics where not much was achieved, such as promotion of contacts among the militaries. Its scope is smaller but more realistic than the 2010 action plan. After 2012, however, the progressive weakening of both economies, the growing fragility of President Dilma Rousseff's government in Brazil, and the election of the Liberal-National Coalition to replace the Labor government in Australia reduced once again the political momentum of the two countries' rapprochement. President Dilma Rousseff made the first visit of a Brazilian head of state to Australia in November 2014, but the relationship between the national governments has showed little dynamism since 2015, even if it did show some good results, like the adoption of the framework agreement on cooperation in science and technology in 2017, approximately 40 years after the idea of such an agreement was presented by Brazil to Australia.

2. Challenges

Between current initiatives and ideas yet to be implemented, the bilateral agenda between Brazil and Australia is reasonably varied. The following topics do not represent an exhaustive list; nonetheless, they are the subjects of greater visibility between the two countries during the decade of 2010, and will likely shape the future of the bilateral relations.

2.1. Educational Cooperation

Education is considered a major component of Australia's export agenda. This sector provides the country with earnings of about US$ 17 billion per year and, between 2013 and 2014, has become the fourth biggest source of revenue among Australia's exports, ahead of tourism services, gold and oil exports. Australia is the third largest global destination for foreign students, surpassed only by the United States and the United Kingdom, and it presents distinct advantages for Brazilian students over the other English-speaking countries. The greatest practical advantage is the synchronization of school calendars. As in Brazil, the school year in Australia ends in December, with major vacations in January and July, which avoids the loss of an entire school semester until the Brazilian exchange student can start a course, a common occurrence in the case of exchanges in the countries in the northern hemisphere. Additionally, Australia has characteristics that favor the settling of Brazilian students in that country. Australia's climate is, among the English-speaking countries, the most similar to Brazil's, especially in the state of Queensland, which lies at the same latitude as the Brazilian Southeast. Typically, Australians are very informal, which helps newly arrived students to feel at ease. Thanks to these factors, Australia has progressively increased its attractiveness for Brazilian students.

The number of student exchanges has risen spontaneously and grown steadily since the second half of the 2000s, but this trend was accentuated after the entry of Australian universities into the "Science without Borders" program, implemented by the Brazilian government. Between 2011 and 2015, the number of enrollments of Brazilian students in Australian courses has doubled, from 11,000 in 2011 to approximately 22,000 in 2015, of which about 7,000 were enrollments by "Science without Borders" students. Brazilians are currently the sixth largest community of foreign students in Australia and the only group of non-Asian origin to be among the 10 largest consumers of Australian educational services.

These numbers consolidated the area of educational cooperation as the most successful axis of Brazil-Australia relations. In the context of the greater challenge of rapprochement between Australian and Brazilian societies, no public policy developed in the first 70 years of bilateral relations has produced results as positive as the Science without Borders Program. Despite being responsible for only little less than a third of the total number of Brazilian enrollments in Australia, the participation of Australian universities in the program increased the publicity of educational opportunities in that country among the entire student community in Brazil. The impression made by Brazilian students in Australia has been very positive, their interaction with Australian society has become the main avenue for spreading Brazilian culture, and the reporting of their experiences in Australia upon their return to Brazil is a fundamental contribution to the dissemination of the knowledge about that country within Brazilian society.

The flow of students between Brazil and Australia does not depend on the political will of the national governments, but efforts to strengthen it are one of the most effective ways to promote bilateral relations. In 2015, Brazil and Australia welcomed the importance of their cooperation in education and expressed their desire to expand it to establish exchanges between teachers and researchers. A new program in the mold of the "Science without Borders" (terminated in 2016) and the greater publicity of Australia as a student destination is a surefire way to gradually reduce the lack of mutual knowledge between Australians and Brazilians, with positive external effects such as increased awareness of opportunities in areas ranging from trade to scientific and technological cooperation.

2.2. Science and Technology

The signing of a framework agreement for cooperation in science and technology was a goal proposed in the 1970s which finally came to fruition in 2017. Another significant development was the renewal of the partnership between the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) and the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) in 2019.

Brazil and Australia have an innate potential for cooperation in biotechnology, since both territories contain megadiverse and unique biomes, and in outer space sciences, due to their location on opposite sides of the southern hemisphere, but there are a number of other areas where opportunities can be found, including renewable energy, nanotechnology, and natural resource management. The success of the student exchanges programs has sparked the interest of Brazilian and Australian universities to exchange researchers. Although incipient, scientific-technological cooperation has the potential to become a bilateral tie as successful as student exchanges are.

2.3. Economic Relations

Like Brazil, Australia is a country whose economic growth has been very dependent on the primary sector of the economy. Among Australia's top ten export items, only the fourth and fifth (education and tourism services respectively) are not derived from its extractive or agricultural industries. The same factors that favor the primary industry in Brazil (low demographic density, vast territories for livestock, favorable climate for agriculture and rich mining provinces) are present in Australia. Unlike Brazil, however, Australia embraced these competitive advantages and didn't try to forcefully change its status of an exporter of mainly primary products through severe protectionist measures and government-led projects to build domestic industrial capacities to substitute imports of foreign goods. With this bet, Australia's case can be taken as a practical refutation of ECLAC's[2] theories on deteriorating terms of trade for exporters of primary goods and the obligation of the State to lead a country's industrialization process to enable its economy to reach an advanced stage, which had a predominant influence over Latin America's economic policies until the end of the 1980s, but even to this day continue to have many followers.

With a population of only 24 million people, Australia has, according to IMF data in April 2016, the 13th largest economy in the world, with a nominal GDP of US$ 1.2 trillion. Brazil appears in the same list in 9th place, but with about 210 million inhabitants,

2 Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean, established in 1948 by the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

almost 9 times the population of Australia, the country has a GDP of 1.7 trillion US dollars, only 1.4 times higher. Despite their different levels of productivity, both countries have large economies and attractive domestic markets, vast in the case of Brazil and rich in the case of Australia. Bilateral trade, however, rarely exceeds the USD$ 2 billion traded each year. Brazil's main export goods to Australia are manufactured and semi-manufactured, while almost 80% of Australia's exports of goods to Brazil are fuels, particularly coal varieties.

Distance does create structural difficulties for the growth of trade in some goods between the two countries, namely high freight costs, lesser frequency of cargo ships and proximity to other competing or consumer markets. But technological progress and the evolving dynamics of international trade are reducing the importance of these obstacles. The set of proposals that Brazil presented in the 1970s, in particular the creation of a Brazilian trading company with its own warehouse in the Port of Sydney and the bilateral company for financing trade, aimed to create a regular and reliable freight route between Brazil and Australia, but the consolidation of the port of Singapore as a hub for global cargo transportation, particularly as an intermediate port for cargo leaving Santos bound for Sydney, nowadays provides such a route. Likewise, freight rates do not have the same prohibitive cost as in previous decades, due to technical progress on containers and port logistics, as well as economies of scale from increased trade. Competition from other markets, however, not only remains, but has become a more intense factor, and most of Brazilian manufactured goods exported to Australia have to contend with it, often in disadvantage due to the several free trade agreements that Australia maintains with third parties. Negotiations regarding trade facilitation between the two countries have timidly advanced through rounds of MERCOSUR-Australia-New

Zealand dialogue, but Australia has shown some skepticism about the effectiveness of a FTA with MERCOSUR, citing that a difficult domestic environment to do business in Brazil and other member countries, rather than other factors that would be addressed by an FTA, would be the main reasons that make those countries less interesting for Australian companies. However, trade in goods can still benefit from bilateral talks to increase market access, such as removals of topical non-tariff barriers to the commercialization of particular products, like cachaça in Australia.

There are better prospects for trade in services. Brazil should continue to be a major consumer of Australian "educational services," and the establishment of direct flights between Sao Paulo and Sydney would be a major incentive to bilateral tourism[3]. The great potential for economic relations seems to lie, however, on investments between the two countries. A considerable part of Australia's investments in Brazil are concentrated in the metallurgy and mining sectors, but from the second half of the 2000s onwards, there has been a diversification of this portfolio, with Australian capital being invested in activities such as IT, biotechnology, transportation, telecommunications, insurance, gas and oil, energy, infrastructure, and civil construction. Around this same period the first investments of Brazilian companies in Australia, on industries of automobiles (buses and trucks), cosmetics, cattle and mining began to be observed. From the Brazilian point of view, there is great potential to invest in Australia in renewable energy and biofuels projects, and, on the Australian side, there is still interest in joining the retail sector in Brazil, which will depend on the pace of growth of the Brazilian economy. The work developed by the chambers of commerce and the Brazil-Australia Business Council is essential to broaden the perception of investment

3 An Air Services agreement between Brazil and Australia entered into force in 2019.

opportunities from both sides. The establishment of a high-level group with representatives of the Ministries of Economy and Foreign Trade of the two countries to discuss matters of trade and investment, a goal established in the action plan adopted in 2010, and the negotiation of agreements that guarantee more favorable conditions for the flow of investments, such as an agreement to avoid double taxation of capital, are governmental initiatives that would support the investment projects of the private sector.

The similarity of the general export patterns of the two countries should not be looked at only as a difficulty to increase trade in goods. Rather, the fact that the two economies are more dynamic in the same activities is an opportunity that favors partnerships between Brazilian and Australians companies to exchange experiences and increase productivity. More than competitors, the economies of Brazil and Australia have high potential to be complementary.

2.4. Brazilians in Australia

The 2016 national census registered 27.631 individuals born in Brazil living in Australia as residents, up from 14.509 registered in the 2011 census. It is the second time that the number of Brazilian-born residents practically doubles in five years; the same level of growth was observed between the censuses of 2011 and of 2006.

The migratory movement of Brazilians to Australia had two distinct moments. The first was instigated by the Australian government between the late 1960s and early 1980s, through programs of assisted migration and granting of humanitarian visas, the latter possibly in light of the military regime in Brazil. The second moment began spontaneously in the 2000s and is ongoing. Unlike immigrants from the first wave, who generally had low incomes in Brazil, Brazilians who seek Australia in the 21st century are highly qualified and come from middle- and high-income families. The preference of Brazilians for Australia relies heavily on the incentives for the permanence and possible naturalization of qualified foreigners. About 25% of Australian residents are born out of the country, the fourth highest proportion among OECD countries (behind Luxembourg, Switzerland, and New Zealand).

Immigration is an increasingly sensitive issue in Australia as the country is "discovered" by foreign communities which traditionally would seek shelter in Western Europe and in the United States. The need to attract skilled immigrants, however, is constant in Australia, given the small size of its population, the extent of its territory, and the dynamism of its economy. But between 2016 and 2018, Australia adopted more restrictive measures to allow the entry of migrants and the granting of citizenship, which may reduce, in the next census, the rate of growth of the Brazilian population, although it is certain that the number will continue to increase.

Brazil offers consular services to its citizens residing in Australia through the Embassy in Canberra and the Consulate-General in Sydney. About 68% of residents are in the states of New South Wales (44.8%) and Queensland (23.9%), under the jurisdiction of the Consulate-General in Sydney (which also covers the Northern Territory of Australia, where there is a small number of Brazilians). The remaining 32% are, in descending order, in the states of Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, and Tasmania, under the jurisdiction of the Embassy in Canberra. In addition to the residents' demands, the Brazilian consular network also copes with the needs of Brazilian tourists (whose main destinations are Sydney, in New South Wales, Brisbane and Gold Coast, in Queensland, and

Melbourne, in Victoria), of the large Brazilian student community, which is mainly distributed between Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne, and of Brazilians on temporary work visas, numerous in Perth, Western Australia. The community in the state of Western Australia, in particular, is very dependent on solutions to remotely provide consular services, as it is located almost 4,000 km and two time zones away from the Embassy in Canberra, which has one of the most geographically wide consular jurisdictions among the Brazilian missions abroad. In 2017, the Embassy in Canberra began, in collaboration with the Honorary Consuls of Brazil, to spread through its jurisdiction, to host rounds of remote consulates via Skype, a pilot project approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brasilia and incredibly well received by the Brazilian communities in Australia, later also employed by the Consulate-General in Sydney to regularly provide consular services in the state of Queensland as well. If the Brazilian population continues to increase at such fast rates shown since 2006, it is likely that, in the medium term, a new Consulate-General should be established in Australia, either in Brisbane, Melbourne, or Perth.

Even with the persistence of the difficulties to travel between Brazil and Australia, the number of Brazilians in the largest country in Oceania will grow in the coming decades. In light of the increasing size of its diaspora in Australia, Brazil has already shown interest in discussing bilateral agreements that would ensure greater security for its citizens in that country, such as an agreement allowing the recognition of working time in one country for retirement purposes in the other, and in adopting arrangements to enhance legal cooperation in civil matters involving both national jurisdictions.

2.5. Cultural Promotion

The Brazilian government has been developing cultural promotion actions in Australia since the 1960s, but there has never been a grand plan for the spread of the image of Brazil and its culture in that country. In the 1970s there was the great plan of economic integration, in the 1980s and 1990s there were major plans for coordination in multilateral forums, and in the late 2000s an ambitious political project of a strategic partnership began to be conceived. None of these great initiatives succeeded in changing the state of mutual ignorance between Brazilians and Australians, the major reason of popular disinterest in the bilateral relations, which ultimately led to the abandonment of those projects by the governments of both countries.

The term "mutual ignorance" was first mentioned in diplomatic correspondence between Brazil and Australia in the 1970s, and since then it has been seldomly employed in telegrams exchanged by the Embassy of Brazil in Canberra and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brasilia. Whereas "tyranny of distance" was a concept adopted and often used to make reference to the geographic isolation of the two countries, the idea of "mutual ignorance" refers to the cognitive isolation of their societies, that is, the fact that, in general, Brazilians and Australians know very little about each other. Both peoples share positive preconceptions about the other, but the stereotypes by which they are known are too generic to inspire their desire for further discovery of the other country, especially in light of the effort required to transpose the physical distance between them. When Brazilians and Australians do get into meaningful contact, they are often amazed that, despite the divergences of their historical formation, they share such similar states of mind and ways of life. There is no cultural barrier that resists the communion of Australian informality with the Brazilian cordiality. Both people stand out for the ability to laugh at themselves and the lightness in dealing with their daily lives and their problems. The greatest tragedy of the continuity of the "mutual ignorance" is the maintenance of this cognitive barrier between peoples who would have no difficulty interacting and cooperating.

The advancement of information technologies is not enough to reverse this situation without active efforts to emphasize the affinities between the cultures of Brazil and Australia and their potential for interaction. The vast majority of the promotion of Brazilian culture in Australia is conducted by Brazilians who reside or are temporarily going to work or study in that country. The business sector also increasingly participates in this effort, recognizing that greater mutual knowledge enhances the potential for economic cooperation. Brazil's diplomatic missions strive to maintain a calendar of cultural activities throughout the year, including, for instance, the "Brazil at the Harbor" event in Sydney, and a Portuguese Reader at the National University of Australia, in Canberra, which aimed to promote Portuguese language and Brazilian literature. The community associations of Brazilians in several states of Australia also independently organize successful editions of carnival parties in February and bushfire festivals in June.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through its Cultural Department, develops grand plans of cultural diffusion at a global level, but the promotion of Brazilian culture in Australia still deserves to be carefully evaluated. If there is indeed interest in the success of bilateral economic and political plans, it is necessary not only to consider the promotion of Brazilian culture in Australia as a priority, but also to encourage the promotion of Australian culture in Brazil.

Cultural promotion cannot be dealt like it is just a routine issue, it is the primary front to reduce the mutual ignorance between Brazilians and Australians, which is the main barrier to the growth of bilateral relations.

3. Perspective

After reaching its apex with the celebration of the Brazil-Australia strategic partnership, relations between these two countries began to face the challenge of surviving the successive changes of government in Australia in the mid-2010s and the effects of the political and economic crisis in Brazil. Pressured by domestic factors, the foreign policies of both countries once again seemed reluctant to adopt initiatives in areas outside their traditional spheres of action, such as Oceania is for Brazil and South America is for Australia. The conjuncture of this period bears some similarities to that of the late 1970s, when the frustration of the bilateral project caused a long and fruitless dark age in Brazil's relations with Australia until a very gradual renaissance started in the early 1990s. The difference between the two moments is that, in the decade of 2010, national governments no longer have an almost exclusive role in the bilateral relations. Companies, universities, tourists, students, and immigrants are now the main drivers of the development of the bonds between Australia and Brazil on multiple fronts, and will continue to be regardless of the volatile will of their governments. The public sector, however, still retains a fundamental role in creating the conditions that will enable the relations between the two countries to reach their full potential.

In the 21st century, Brazil faces the challenge of adapting to the displacement of the political and economic axis of the planet from the Atlantic to the Pacific. At this juncture, Australia is a safe haven for Brazilians, a country with which, despite its peculiarities, it shares many cultural similarities and interests in various subjects. Brazil's foreign policy initiative regarding Australia will determine whether these countries will maintain just a friendly relationship with unfulfilled potential, or whether they will be able to build a true strategic partnership. The focus of these efforts should be the fight against the mutual ignorance that keeps Brazilians and Australians only superficially aware of their opportunities for cooperation. Only the fall of this cognitive barrier will allow Brazil and Australia to elevate their relations beyond the tyranny of distance.

CHAPTER 9

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN BRAZIL AND THE COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL ASIA

Fabiano Joel Wollmann[1]

1. Central Asia

Central Asia, a sub-region of Asia, comprises the territories of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, countries that gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

Central Asia can, however, be understood from a broader definition encompassing the interior of Asia and extending from the Caspian Sea in the west to China in the east, and from Afghanistan in the south to Russia in the North. Allison and Jonson understand that, in addition to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, which constitute its core, Central Asia comprises parts of the Russian and Chinese

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territories and Afghanistan, countries whose borders are shared by ethnic minorities ("wider Central Asia")[2]. Khanna considers that Central Asia includes, in addition to the "Stan Republics", parts of Russia, the Chinese provinces of Xinjiang Uygur and Tibet, Afghanistan, and Pakistan[3]. To UNESCO, Central Asia includes Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the Altai Mountains in Southeast Russia, Mongolia, Western China (Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Province), Northern India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and eastern Iran[4]. Some authors include in Central Asia the countries of the South Caucasus (Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia), the Russian Caucasus region (Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria Republic, Republic of Adygea, and Karachay-Cherkessia), and even Chinese Manchuria.

The expanded definition of Central Asia is confused with the concepts of Middle Asia, Inner Asia, and Central Eurasia, and encompasses the land mass that failed to develop its own sedentary civilization. According to this definition, which emphasizes the role of the region in transcontinental trade[5], the limits of Central Asia would be determined by the conflictual relationship between "civilized" and "barbaric" societies, in which civilization is represented by the sedentary way of life, characterized by the slow conquest, technological supremacy and absorption, and barbarism by the way of life of the nomad of the steppes, characterized by short term armed conquest with no lasting legacy[6].

2 ALLISON, Roy & JONSON, Lena. *Central Asia Security*: the new international context. Washington. Brookings Institution Press, 2001.

3 KHANNA, Parag. *The Second World. Empires and Influence in the New Global Order*. Random House. New York, 2008.

4 UNESCO. *History of Civilizations of Central Asia. Towards the contemporary period*: from the mid-nineteenth to the end of the twentieth century, 2005.

5 SINOR, Denis. *History, Civilization, Languages*: a syllabus, 1997.

6 ALLWORTH, Edwards. *History of Central Asia*. Encyclopaedia Britannica.

1.1. Central Asia in Ancient Times and in the Middle Ages

Central Asia has played a central role in the land trajectories of trade caravans that for centuries linked China and Europe, the so-called Silk Route. The region was initially inhabited by Iranian groups of Indo-European peoples: the Scythians on the steppes, the Bactrians on the southern banks of the river Amy Darya (Oxus), the Sogdians between the rivers Amy Darya and Syr Darya (Transoxiana), and the Corasmians to the south of the Aral Sea. After the end of the Scythian dominance, nomadic tribes of Turkic and Mongolian origin from the Altai and Mongolian Mountains migrated to the region. The Huns made several incursions against the southern tribes before moving to the Carpathian Basin. Turkic tribes established the Turkic Empire in 552, composed of the Oghuz Khanate in the west, the Kipchaks in the north, and the Karluks, in the "land of the seven rivers" (Semyrechie). The Uighurs, converted to Buddhism by the Tibetan Empire, established the Uyghur Empire in 744. The victory of the Arabs at the Battle of Talas (Taraz) in 751 introduced Islam in the region. The Kyrgyz defeated the Uighurs in 840. The Kantians defeated the Kyrgyz in 924 and invaded the Karluk Khanate of Kara-Khan, giving birth to the Kara-Kitai (Balasagun, Lake Issyk-kul).

The invasion of the Mongol Empire, led by Genghis Khan (Chinggis) in 1219-1221, destroyed the Kara-Kitai Khakis and the Kashif Empire (Xiva), incorporating Central Asia into the largest contiguous empire recorded in history. After the death of Genghis Khan, the successor states were the Golden Horde (Astrakhan) in the steppes, and the Chagatai Khanate (Bukhara and Samarkand). Between 1370 and 1405, the legendary Tamerlane (Timur Lenk) united the Uzbek peoples of the western part of the Chagatai Khanate. In the fifteenth century, the Golden Horde gave way to the Kazakh Khanate (Turkestan), composed of the Greater, Middle and Minor Hordes. In the 16th century, the trading centers and oases along the Silk Road declined as a result of the discovery of new oceanic routes. In the seventeenth century, the Amu Darya and Syr Darya river basins passed into control of the Kokand, Khiva, and Bukhara Khanates. To the east of the Pamir mountains, the Uyghurs rivaled the Kyrgyz; in the Semirechye, the Kazakh Khanate fought with the Kalmyks (Oirats and Dzungarians), while the Turkmens, established between the Aral and Caspian Seas, crossed the northern borders of Iran in search of slaves to be sold in Bukhara.

1.2. Central Asia under Russian and Soviet rule

Russian soldiers first appeared in north-western Kazakhstan in the 17th century, with the construction of forts at Uralsk (Oral) and Guryev (Atyrau). The southward expansion towards the Central Asian Muslim Khanates was motivated by the desire to reach the Indian Ocean. The expansion was facilitated by the Chinese threat (Oirats and Dzungarians), which forced the Kazakhs to call for Russian protection. The Russians conquered the Lesser Horde in 1758, the Middle Horde in 1798, and when the Kokand Khanate in the south began to extend their dominions, the Greater Horde in 1820.

The abolition of serfdom in 1861 led hundreds of thousands of Russian and Ukrainian peasants to settle in the steppes, a fact that generated resentment among the Kazakh population. In 1863, the Russian Empire created the Governorate-General of

Turkestan[7] and the Territory of the Steppes (Orenburg). Tashkent was conquered in 1867, the Bukhara and Khiva khanates, including Karakalpakistan (Nukus) became protectorates in 1868 and 1873. The Kokand Khanate was annexed in 1876. The conquest of Ashgabat and Merv at the end of the 19th century defined the southern border of the Russian Empire with Iran and Afghanistan. Turkestan gained economic importance with the cultivation of cotton, the "white gold," whose prices rose as a result of the American Civil War. Trade with the region resulted in the construction of the Trans-Caspian railways, between Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) and Samarkand (1888), Trans-Aral, between Orenburg and Tashkent (1905) and Turkestan-Siberia (1930). The expansion to the south received opposition from England and China. The rivalry between the Russian and British Empires, known as the "Great Game," ended with the agreement that recognized Russian rule over Turkestan and British rule over India and Pakistan, turning Afghanistan into a buffer state between the two colonial powers.

The 1916 rebellion during World War I, as well as a Turkmen attempt to gain independence in 1917 after the Russian Revolution, were severely repressed. In 1918, the Red Army created the Soviet Republics of Turkestan, Corasmania, and Bukhara, and in 1920 the Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan[8] (Verny, later Alma-Ata). In lieu of Turkestan, Corasmania, and Bukhara, the Soviet Union created the Soviet Republics of Uzbekistan (Tashkent) and Turkmenistan

7 The name "Turkestan" or "land of the Turkic peoples", which also gives name to the city of Turkestan in southern Kazakhstan, was imposed during the expansion of the Russian and Chinese empires and resulted in the creation of Western or Russian Turkestan (Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Uzbekistan) and East Turkestan or Chinese (Uighur). Previously, the region was known as "Tartary", which also included other Turkic peoples such as the Tatarstan and Crimean Tatars, the Cazars, who converted to Judaism, Tuvans, Bashkirs, Altai, Khakhas, Yakuts, among others.

8 Soviet Kyrgyzstan between 1920 and 1936.

(Ashgabat) in 1924, the Soviet Republic of Kyrgyzstan[9] (Frunze, then Bishkek) in 1926, and the Soviet Republic of Tadjikistan (Dushanbe) in 1929. In order to combat Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism, the Soviet Union differentiated the region's languages and introduced the use of the Cyrillic alphabet[10]. East Turkestan remained Chinese territory and Mongolia, while maintaining formal independence, became a Soviet satellite state.

One and a half million people are estimated to have died, mainly in the Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan, as a result of the forced collectivization of agriculture and political purges. During World War II, millions of Koreans, Poles, Volga Germans, Chechen, and Crimean Tatars were forcibly deported to Central Asia. Hundreds of factories were relocated beyond the Urals. In the post-war period, military bases were set up in the region, including the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground and the Baikonur Cosmodrome. The "virgin land" campaign resettled thousands of farmers in the Soviet Union, mainly Ukrainians, to northern Kazakhstan and the Altai Mountains. The replacement of traditional agricultural crops with irrigated cotton monoculture has resulted in the near disappearance of the Aral Sea.

Eastern Turkestan, home to about one million ethnic Kazakhs fleeing from the Soviet Union, has undergone a similar development process. The Chinese Communist Party encouraged the commercial cultivation of cotton, resettled Han Chinese, and persecuted Islam, especially in the years of the Cultural Revolution.

1.3. Independent Central Asia

Following the attempted coup attempt against Soviet Union President Mikhail Gorbachev on 19 August 1991, the

9 Soviet Republic of Kara-Kyrgyzstan between 1926 and 1936.

10 Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Kazakh and Turkmen are Turkic languages, while Tajik is Persian.

Supreme Soviets of the Central Asian Soviet Republics declared the independence of the Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan on 31 August, Tajikistan on 8 September, and Turkmenistan on 27 October. Kazakhstan was the last of the Soviet Republics to gain independence, on December 16, after the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

The independence of the five new nations of Central Asia has allowed other countries to gain access to the natural resources previously reserved for the Russians. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, as well as Azerbaijan, attracted massive foreign investment, mainly European and American, and became, in little more than a decade, major international producers and exporters of oil and natural gas. The Caspian Sea basin has assumed a central role in global energy markets and, as an alternative to Middle Eastern oil, now plays a key role in international energy security.

The Tengiz oil field on the banks of the Caspian Sea, with reserves of 9 billion barrels, went into production in 2001. It is operated by the Tengizchevroil consortium, made up of Chevron (50%), Exxon Mobil (25%), KazMunaiGaz (20%), and Lukoil (5%). To export Tengiz oil to Europe, the international consortium has built the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) between Atyrau and the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk. The Karachaganak field near Uralsk in northern Kazakhstan, with 14 billion barrels of reserves, began production in 2005. It is operated by the Karachi-based Petroleum Operating (KPO) consortium, which comprises ENI (29.25%), BG (29.25%), Chevron (18%), and Lukoil (13.5%). As an alternative to the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) pipeline, which crosses Russian territory, a consortium led by British Petroleum (BP) built the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, which since 2006 has been the main route for Azeri oil and gas. The Kashagan field, in Kazakhstan's territorial waters, in the Caspian

Sea, with reserves of 13 billion barrels, began production in 2014, but its operations were interrupted due to technical problems. When it comes into full production, it is estimated to double Kazakh oil exports. It is operated by an exploration consortium which includes ENI (16.8%), Royal Dutch Shell (16.8%), Total (16.8%), Exxonmobil (16.8%), KazMunaiGaz CNPC (8.4%), and Inpex (8.4%).

Russia turned its attention to Central Asia as soon as it was able to recover from the economic crisis that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 2002, Presidents Vladimir Putin and Nursultan Nazarbayev shared the offshore gas fields in the Caspian Sea on equal footing. In 2005, Transneft increased the capacity of the Atyrau pipeline to the Baltic Sea. In 2007, Gazprom built the Blue Stream pipeline between the Caspian and Black Seas and expanded the "Central Asia" gas pipeline linking Russia to Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. Russia opposes the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline project, which aims to cross the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus, to Turkey, thus enabling the export of Turkmen, Kazakh, and Uzbek gas directly to the European Union. With Belarus and Kazakhstan, Russia established the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space in 2009. In 2014, it created, with Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Armenia, the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), a regional integration project that has already received the accession of Kyrgyzstan.

China considers Central Asia an essential source of raw materials to sustain its economic growth. In 2001, the Heads of State and Government of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan established the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (OCX) to promote trade and investment among its members. China's National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) acquired an oil field in Aktobe and built, in partnership with KazMunaiGaz, the Kazakhstan-China pipeline, linking Kazakhstan to the Autonomous Province of Xinjiang Uygur. In 2009, it inaugurated the Turkmenistan-China pipeline between the Caspian Sea and Urumqi, which currently accounts for more than half of China's natural gas imports. Central Asia plays a key role in the creation of the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, announced by President Xi Jinping during his visit to Kazakhstan in 2013, which aims to revive the region's historic role as an export corridor between China and Europe.

In 2014, the Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Iranian stretches of the railway line between Xinjiang Province and the Middle East were inaugurated. Turkmenistan supplies gas to Iran through the Dovlet Abat-Sarakhs-Kahn Giran gas pipeline, and plans to supply the Indian market once construction of the Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India (TAPI) pipeline is completed.

Geopolitical competition for Central Asian natural resources, in particular the control over oil and gas pipelines, coupled with the issue of international security resulting from the terrorist attacks of September 11 and the War on Terror, have given greater political weight and bargaining power to countries of the region. International relations analysts have come to mention a new "Big Game" in Central Asia, this time against the backdrop of a dispute over their energy and mineral resources. Some authors have even relived such theories as Mackinder's Heartland, according to which the power which secures the vast natural resources of Central Asia, the geographic pivot of history, will eventually conquer the world[11].

11 Mackinder, Halford John. The Geographical Pivot of History. *The Geographical Society*, v. 23, n. 4, 1904.

2. Bilateral relations between Brazil and the countries of Central Asia

2.1. Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan, the ninth largest territory in the world, a regional leader because of its economic prosperity and political stability, is the country of Central Asia that has shown the most interest in developing bilateral relations. The dialogue was driven by the creation of the Embassy in Astana in 2006, a political gesture that resulted in President Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit to Brazil in 2007 and the return visit of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in 2009. In 2013, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov paid a visit to Brazil to inaugurate the Kazakh embassy in Brasilia. Kazakhstan, which chaired the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2010, is a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the 2017-2018 mandate and supports the Brazilian aspiration to become a permanent member in a reformed UNSC. Brazil and Kazakhstan held political consultations meetings, the last one in Brasilia in 2012, developed a cooperation project for the training of young soccer players in Brazil, and have a reciprocal short-stay visa-free agreement.

Kazakhstan accounts for most of Brazil's trade with the region, in the order of US$ 400 million per year. Air Astana, the largest airline in Central Asia, has thirteen Embraer aircraft in its fleet of regional aircraft. Brazilian companies export basic products such as sugar, meat, and tobacco to Kazakhstan and import ores such as sulfur, copper, aluminum, and lead. Vale maintains a commercial office in Almaty for the exploitation of copper mines. Magnesite has a representative office in Karaganda, from where it manages the trade of refractory materials with Kazakh metallurgical companies. The mining company Eurasian Natural Resources Corporation (ENRC) has acquired Bahia Mineração (BAMIN), Mineração Minas Bahia (MIBA), and Mineração Peixe Bravo (MPB) between 2008 and 2010, and mines iron ore in southern Bahia. The most promising sectors for Brazilian companies are civil aviation, oil, gas, mining, engineering, construction, medicines, and food. In the agricultural area, Embrapa has identified opportunities in meats, wheat, agricultural crops in semi-arid regions, and the production of biofuels. The Kazakh government has expressed interest in Brazilian investments in high-tech areas such as space research, nuclear energy and agriculture.

2.2. Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan, the most populous country in Central Asia, sought rapprochement with Brazil, which resulted in the visit of President Islam Karimov in 2009. Uzbekistan supports Brazil's claim to become a permanent member in an enlarged UNSC. The two countries held a meeting for bilateral political consultations in 2008. The most promising areas for Brazilian companies are agriculture, gas, mining, electricity, and tourism. Marcopolo was invited to produce bus bodyworks in Uzbekistan. The country has the largest automotive industry in Central Asia, with investments from General Motors and Daewoo, exporting to the Russian market. The Uzbek government has shown interest in Brazilian experience in biofuel technology and reuse of cotton waste, of which it is a major producer.

2.3. Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan, whose foreign policy is governed by the principle of permanent neutrality, has grown by ten percent a year for more than a decade thanks to its gas industry. Ashgabat's cumulativeness with the embassy in Astana have enabled more regular contacts with the Turkmen authorities. President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov attended the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. The most promising areas for Brazilian companies are aviation, gas, oil, civil construction, and food. In the agricultural area, there are opportunities in the production of cotton, silk, textiles, wheat, the food industry, agricultural machinery, livestock, and horse breeding. The Turkmen government has expressed an interest in investments in energy and agriculture.

2.4. Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan was the first Central Asian country to join the WTO. Bishkek's cumulativeness with the Embassy in Astana has allowed for more regular contacts with the Kyrgyz authorities. The most promising areas for Brazilian companies are hydroelectricity, mining, agriculture, and tourism.

The mountainous country has great hydroelectric potential. There is a plan to build six hydroelectric plants on the Naryn River in the central region to make Kyrgyzstan an exporter of electricity, especially to Afghanistan. The Kambarata hydroelectric project, one of the six planned plants, is opposed by Uzbekistan, which claims that the reservoir would reduce the volume of water in the Syr Darya River and affect the irrigation of its cotton plantations.

2.5. Tajikistan

Tajikistan was in a civil war between 1992 and 1997. President Emomali Rahmon participated in the Summit of Rio+20 in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. The most promising areas for Brazilian companies are hydroelectricity, mining, agriculture, and tourism.

Tajikistan has a great hydroelectric potential and is developing a project to build power plants in the Vakhsh river in the south of the country. The Rogun hydroelectric plant was suspended by the World Bank in 2012 as a result of opposition by neighboring Uzbekistan, which claims that the reservoir will have a negative impact on its lucrative cotton crop. In 2013, Luiz Amore, the International Advisor to the National Water Agency (ANA), represented Brazil at the High-Level International Conference on Water Co-operation in Dushanbe, when he presented the joint experience of the exploration of the Plata Basin.

2.6. Diplomatic relations between Brazil and the countries of Central Asia

Brazil was among the first countries to recognize the independence of the countries of Central Asia. In 1993, Brazil established diplomatic relations with Uzbekistan (30 April), Kyrgyzstan (6 August), and Kazakhstan (20 September). In 1996, it established relations with Tajikistan (29 March) and Turkmenistan (3 April).

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Division II (DE-II) was initially responsible for the follow-up of the Central Asian countries. In 2004, the Central Asia Division (DASC)[12] was founded, to focus specifically on the relations with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. In 2010, DASC also came to oversee Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran.

The embassy in Moscow oversees diplomatic representation in the countries of Central Asia. In 2005, the areas of Bishkek and Dushanbe were transferred respectively to the Embassies in Kiev and Islamabad. The creation of the Embassy in Astana[13] in 2006, the first and only permanent Brazilian diplomatic representation in a Central Asian country, was a milestone in the relationship

12 Decree No. 5032, 04/05/2004.

13 Decree No. 5686, 01/31/2006.

with the region. Relations with Ashgabat and Bishkek[14] were transferred to Astana in 2008 and enabled more frequent contacts with the Turkmen and Kyrgyz authorities. Contacts with Tashkent are still managed by the embassy in Moscow, since Uzbekistan does not accept receiving credentials from ambassadors accredited in Astana.

During his visit to Kazakhstan in 2006, the Deputy Secretary-General for Political Affairs (SGAP) stated that the choice for Astana was due to the successful trajectory of Kazakhstan since its independence, to its regional leadership role and to the country's growing insertion into the international economy resulting from its abundant mineral and energy resources. Brazil created honorary consulates in Bishkek in 2011 and Almaty in 2013 to assist Brazilians in consular, cultural and commercial issues.

Kazakhstan opened an embassy in Brazil in 2013, twenty years after the establishment of diplomatic relations. The Embassy in Brasília, the first Kazakh diplomatic representation in Latin America, is also building a relationship with Argentina and Chile. The Kazakh authorities justified the choice for Brasilia because Brazil is the largest country in South America, as well as a member of the BRICS group, which includes Russia and China, important Asian neighbors of Kazakhstan.

2.7. The political and economic relations between Brazil and the countries of Central Asia

Bilateral visits are increasingly frequent and demonstrate the willingness to broaden the political dialogue and economic partnerships between Brazil and the countries of Central Asia. During the visits of the President and Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan in 2007 and 2013 and the President of Uzbekistan

14 Decree No. 6449, 05/07/2008.

in 2009, bilateral acts were signed which constitute the legal framework for relations with the region. With Kazakhstan there are agreements on technical cooperation in agriculture and livestock, economic and trade cooperation, visa exemptions for holders of diplomatic and common passports, training of diplomats, and political, economic, commercial, and bilateral investment dialogue. With Uzbekistan, on technical cooperation, agriculture, tourism, economic and trade cooperation, political consultations, visa exemption for holders of diplomatic passports, promotion of trade and investment, sport, mineral resources, and culture.

Brazil holds political consultations with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, at the level of undersecretary-general, to discuss issues on the bilateral agenda, regional issues, and aspects of multilateral cooperation. The Brazil-Kazakhstan political consultations were held in Astana in 2008 and in Brasília in 2012, while the Brazil-Uzbekistan meeting was held in Tashkent in 2008.

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan support Brazil's aspiration to become a permanent member of an expanded UNSC. Kazakhstan supports Brazil's observer status in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Brazil supported the WTO accession of Kyrgyzstan in 1998, Tajikistan in 2013, and Kazakhstan in 2015, and has endorsed Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan's candidacies. In the case of Kazakhstan, the Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry, Zhanar Aytzhanova, signed the Bilateral Protocol on Goods and Services in Brasília in 2007, when he held meetings with Minister Celso Amorim, the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, the president of Petrobras, and a representative of Vale.

Brazil and the countries of Central Asia have concurrent views on issues on the multilateral agenda such as disarmament, regional security, non-proliferation, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The Central Asian countries signed in 2006 in

Semipalatinsk an agreement on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In 2010, the country supported the Kazakh proposal for a universal declaration in favor of a world free of nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan, which renounced the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the Soviet Union, signed an agreement with the IAEA in 2015 to create an international low-enriched uranium bank.

Brazil provided humanitarian aid to the poorest countries in Central Asia. To Tajikistan, it donated US$ 50,000 in 2009 through the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) for victims of major floods and landslides. To Kyrgyzstan, it donated US$ 300,000 in 2010 in response to the call for assistance after the ethnic conflicts in Osh and Jalalabad in the Fergana Valley; and US$ 50,000 in 2013 through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for activities in favor of refugees, internally displaced persons, and people in vulnerable situations.

2.7.1. Visits of Presidents of the Republic

Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev was the first Central Asian head of state to visit Brazil and Latin America in 2007. After the meeting with President Lula, a Declaration of Principles was signed in which the country supported the Brazilian aspiration to become a permanent member in an enlarged UNSC. Also signed were the Agreement on Economic Cooperation and Trade, the Visa Waiver Agreement for Diplomatic and Official Passports, the Protocol of Intentions on Technical Cooperation in Agriculture and Livestock, and the Protocol on Political Consultations. Nazarbayev met with Senate President Renan Calheiros, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies Arlindo Chinaglia, and Federal Supreme Court Chief Executive Ellen Gracie Northfleet. He also met with representatives of Embraer, Petrobras, Vale, and ABIEC and visited the headquarters of Embrapa.

Uzbekistan's President, Islam Karimov, visited Brazil in 2009 in search of comprehensive cooperation with the country. In the meeting with President Lula, they discussed bilateral relations, the issue of security in Central Asia, the situation in Afghanistan, and the global economic and financial crisis. In the joint declaration, Uzbekistan supported Brazil's aspiration to become a permanent member in an enlarged UNSC. Results from the negotiations included the Agreement on Technical Cooperation, the Agreement on Cooperation in Agriculture, the Agreement on Economic and Trade Cooperation, the Visa Waiver Agreement for Diplomatic Passports, the Cooperation Agreement in the Field of Sport, the Agreement for Cultural Cooperation, the Memorandum of Understanding for Tourism Cooperation, the Memorandum of Understanding for the Promotion of Trade and Investment, the Memorandum of Understanding in the area of Mineral Resources, and the Memorandum of Understanding on Political Consultations.

President Lula was the first Brazilian and Latin American head of state to visit Central Asia in 2009. The trip to Kazakhstan, in return for the visit of President Nazarbayev, took place after President Lula attended the BRIC Summit in Yekaterinburg. He traveled together with Minister Celso Amorim, Minister of Mines and Energy Edison Lobão, and chief minister of the Social Communication Department Franklin Martins. In the meeting with Nazarbayev and Prime Minister Karim Massimov, he announced an Apex business mission.

The President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, and the President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, participated in the High-Level Segment of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. President Berdimuhamedov headed the Turkmen delegation composed of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hamrokhon Zarifi, the Presidential Advisor for Foreign Policy, and the Minister of Agrarian Reform and Water Resources.

Nazarbayev met with President Fernando Henrique Cardoso on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session in New York in 1997 and on the fringes of the World Economic Forum in Davos in 1998; with President Lula, on the sidelines of the G8 Summit in St. Petersburg in 2006; and with President Dilma Rousseff, during the VII BRICS Summit in Ufa in 2015. President Rahmon met with President Lula at the 65th United Nations General Assembly in New York in 2010.

2.7.2. Visits of Foreign Affairs Ministers

Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov paid a visit to Brazil in 2013, twenty years after the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. In the meeting with Minister Luiz Alberto Figueiredo, a joint statement was adopted reflecting the bilateral agenda and common positions on international issues. Signed on the occasion were the Memorandum of Understanding for the Establishment of Political, Economic, Commercial, and Investment Dialogue, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Rio Branco Institute and the Diplomatic Institute of the Kazakh Public Administration Academy, the Memorandum of Co-operation in Sports, and the Short Term Visa Waiver Agreement. After presiding at the inauguration ceremony of the Embassy in Brasilia, he participated, together with a business delegation, at a Business Seminar at FIESP headquarters in São Paulo.

In 2010, Idrissov had already been to Brazil as Kazakhstan's non-resident ambassador to the country, when he presented credentials to President Lula and held meetings with Minister Celso Amorim, the Minister of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade, Miguel Jorge, and the undersecretary-general for political affairs, Ambassador Roberto Jaguaribe. On the occasion, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the BNDES and the Kazakh Investment Bank.

Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Kasyhomart Tokayev attended the inauguration ceremony of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso in 1995. Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister Hamrokhon Zarifi joined the Turkmen delegation that participated in Rio+20 in Rio de Janeiro, 2012. Minister Celso Amorim accompanied President Lula during his visit to Kazakhstan in 2009.

2.7.3. High-Level Visits

The special advisor to Asia, Ambassador João Gualberto Marques Porto, visited the countries of Central Asia in 2007. In Kazakhstan, he met with the deputy prime minister; the chairman of the Senate's Committee on Foreign Relations, Defense and Security; the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs; the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources; and the Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce. In Turkmenistan, he was received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rashid Meredov. In the Kyrgyzstan, he met the Deputy Foreign Minister; the director of the Department of International Organizations and Security; the Minister of Labor and Social Development; and the Deputy Minister of Industry, Energy and Fuels. In Tajikistan, with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and the State advisor to the President of the Republic. In Uzbekistan, he met with the deputy minister when he delivered a letter from President Lula to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Vladimir Norov.

Also in 2007, Uzbekistan sent to Brazil the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ilkhomojon Nematov, who signed the Protocol on Political Consultations with the Secretary General and discussed with Apex cooperation in the area of textiles, construction, and agriculture. Uzbekistan's Foreign Economic Relations Minister Elyor Ganiev visited Brazil accompanied by a delegation composed of the non-resident ambassador of Uzbekistan in Brazil, Abdulaziz Komilov, the president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the vice-president of Uzbekneftegaz and the president of Uzbek Tourism. Ganiev met with Minister Celso Amorim and with representatives of the Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply, the Ministry of Mines and Energy, and the Ministry of Tourism, as he explored opportunities for cooperation in mining, oil, cotton, and tourism. In São Paulo, he had commercial contacts with FIESP, ANFAVEA, ABEF, ABIMAQ, and UNICA. On that occasion, a cooperation agreement was signed between FIESP and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan.

In 2008, the undersecretary-general for political affairs, Ambassador Roberto Jaguaribe, held political consultation meetings with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In Astana, he chaired the meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Kairat Sarebay, in which the prospects for bilateral cooperation and the implementation of the agreements signed during Nazarbayev's visit were discussed. The Brazilian ambassador attended meetings in the Presidency of the Republic, in the Ministry of Transport and Communications, and in the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection. In Tashkent, he chaired the meeting with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ilkhomojon Nematov. He also met with the director of Uzinfoinvest and the president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan.

In 2011, the Deputy Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ambassador Maria Edileuza Reis, participated in the VIII World Economic Forum in Kazakhstan, when she met Foreign Minister Yerzhan Kazykhanov. That same year Kazakhstan's Deputy Foreign

Minister Rapil Zhoshybayev visited Brazil to promote Astana's bid to host the World's Fair in 2017. In 2012 Kazakhstan's Deputy Foreign Minister Kairat Umarov co-presided, with the ambassador Maria Edileuza Reis, the 2nd Brazil-Kazakhstan meeting of Political Consultations, when he held meetings at MDIC and Apex.

Uzbekistan's Minister of Nature Protection, Nariman Umarov, and the Kazakh Minister of Environmental Protection, Nurlan Kapparov, participated in the Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. Deputy Prime Minister Djoomart Otorbaev met with Ambassador Maria Edileuza Reis to discuss cooperation in the areas of tourism, agribusiness and hydroelectricity.

In 2013, Deputy Secretary-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, Ambassador Hadil da Rocha Vianna, participated in the World Anti-Crisis Conference and the 6th Economic Forum of Astana. He was received by Minister Idrissov and held meetings with the Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications, Agriculture Minister, Deputy Minister of Industry and New Technologies, the head of the Air Defense Forces, and a representative of Kaznex-Invest.

In 2015, the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, Defense and Security of the Senate of Kazakhstan, Byrganym Aitimova, a special envoy of President Nazarbayev, asked Vice-President Michel Temer to support Kazakhstan's candidacy as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the 2017-2018 mandate. That same year, Rapil Zhoshybayev, commissioner of the Expo-2017, sought from the MRE, MME, MTur, and Apex the confirmation of the Brazilian participation in the World's Fair in Astana.

2.7.4. Business Missions

On a mission to Kazakhstan in 2005, the Director of the Trade Promotion Department held meetings with Kazakh authorities in Astana and attended a Business Seminar in Almaty accompanied by representatives of ANP, Vale, Odebrecht, ABIEC, FIESC, and Comexport.

FIESC carried out a mission to Kazakhstan in 2009 to explore trade opportunities with companies in Santa Catarina. FIESC representatives visited the Samruk-Kazyna Sovereign Fund, the Tsesna business group and the Atameken Chamber of Commerce. A cooperation agreement was signed between FIESC and the Kazakh Chamber of Commerce.

In compliance with the announcement made by President Lula, the Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade, together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply, Apex, and the Embassies in Moscow and Astana, organized a mission to Turkey, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in 2009. The mission was made up of about 40 Brazilian companies from the food, meat, beverage, chemical, agricultural machinery, leather and footwear, sports, aviation, and mining sectors. In Uzbekistan, MDIC Executive Secretary Ivan Ramalho attended the Brazil-Uzbekistan Business Forum and had meetings with the Deputy Prime Minister, Vice Ministers of Foreign Affairs and External Economic Relations, Investments and Trade, and the director of Uzinfoinvest. In Kazakhstan, in addition to attending the Brazil-Kazakhstan Business Forum, he met with representatives from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Samruk-Kazyna National Fund, and the Kazakhstan Development Bank.

In 2010, the Brazilian Agency for the Promotion of Exports and Investments (Apex-Brasil) opened an office in Moscow with the objective of increasing the exports of Brazilian products and services to the countries of the former USSR, attracting direct foreign investment to Brazil and promoting the internationalization of Brazilian companies. The Apex-Brazil Eurasia Office in Moscow operates in partnership with the Embassies in Moscow and Astana and participates in corporate missions and international fairs in Central Asia.

On a business mission to Uzbekistan in 2010, MDC Foreign Trade Secretary Welber Barral attended the Tashkent International Tourism Fair and had meetings with the Minister of Foreign Economic Relations, Investment and Trade, the Finance Minister, Foreign Minister, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources, the President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the President of Uzbekenergo. As a result of the meetings, export contracts for sugar and soy, and for the import of cotton and fertilizers were negotiated. In 2012, MDC Foreign Trade Secretary Tatiana Prazeres, a representative of the Apex Moscow Office, and Brazilian businessmen participated in a business mission to Istanbul, Turkey, followed by a business roundtable in Kazakhstan.

In 2015, the embassy in Astana carried out a business mission to Turkmenistan. Representatives of Brazilian companies JBS, Minerva, Weg, Randon, Tramontina, and Oderich and the Apex Office in Moscow attended a seminar and a business roundtable in Ashgabat organized jointly with the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan. In 2016, the Embassy in Astana held business missions to southern Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The representatives of the Brazilian companies Marcopolo, WEG, Magnesite, Timbro Trading, JBS, Seara, Novaprom, and the Apex Office in Moscow participated in a seminar with government and business partners and business roundtables with businessmen in Almaty and Bishkek.

2.8. Trade relations and investment between Brazil and the countries of Central Asia

Kazakhstan is the main market for Brazilian products in Central Asia, with a trade volume ten times higher than that registered with Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan together (see tables below).

In 2015, Kazakhstan's foreign trade reached US$ 75.9 billion, with exports of US$ 45.7 billion, imports of US$ 30.1 billion, and a balance of US$ 15.6 billion. The main Kazakh partners were Russia (US$ 14.5 billion), China (US$ 10.5 billion), and Italy (US$ 9.3 billion). Brazil ranked only 34th among the largest partners, with a current trade of US$ 266.7 million, exports of US$ 127.6 million, imports of US$ 139.1 million, and a negative balance of US$ 11.5 million.

Trade between Brazil and Kazakhstan accounted for only 0.35% of Kazakhstan's total foreign trade. Even so, Brazil was Kazakhstan's main partner among the Latin American countries, ahead of Mexico (US$ 71.4 million), Ecuador (US$ 32.9 million), and Argentina (US$ 23.5 million). The main products exported to Kazakhstan were sugar, meats, tobacco, and iron pipes, and the main products imported were sulfur, copper, aluminum, and lead. The largest exporters were Paranapanema (BA), Vale Fertilizantes (MG), and Alcoa Alumínio (PE), the largest exporters were Philip Morris (RS), Cooperativa Aurora (SC), Confab (SP), and JBS.

The trade with Central Asian countries is in fact believed to be considerably higher than that recorded by SECEX and local statistical agencies, possibly because part of the exports to the region are eventually counted as trade with Russia and are subsequently re-exported without the knowledge of the Brazilian companies.

According to the JBS commercial office in Moscow, shipments of Brazilian beef to the Kazakh market through Russia reach $ 200 million annually. According to suppliers based in Shymkent, about half of the sugar consumed in Central Asian countries is of Brazilian origin.

Brazil/Central Asia	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	average
Exchange	250,4	301,0	457,0	413,4	456,0	325,6	287,7	355,7
Exports	236,5	260,4	376,4	331,5	394,4	225,2	145,7	281,2
Imports	14,4	40,6	80,6	81,9	61,6	100,4	142,0	74,4
Balance	222,1	219,8	295,6	249,6	332,8	124,8	3,7	206,8

Source: MDIC ** million US$ ***2015

Brazil/Kazakhstan	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	average
Exchange	213,2	264,5	420,1	379,4	392,7	292,0	266,7	318,3
Exports	201,4	225,4	342,5	299,4	331,4	192,8	127,6	245,7
Imports	11,8	39,1	77,6	80,0	61,3	99,2	139,1	72,5
Balance	189,6	186,3	264,9	219,4	270,1	93,6	-11,5	173,2

Source: MDIC and Kazakhstan Statistical Agency (AEC) for Brazilian exports ** million US$ *** 2015

Brazil/Uzbekistan	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	average
Exchange	13,7	20,6	10,8	22,7	46,9	18,1	12,3	20,7
Exports	11,7	19,6	8,3	20,8	46,6	16,9	9,9	19,1
Imports	2,0	1,0	2,5	1,9	0,3	1,2	2,4	1,6
Balance	9,7	18,6	5,8	18,9	46,3	15,7	7,5	17,5

Source: MDIC ** million US$ ***2015

Brazil/Turkmenistan	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	average
Exchange	5,0	3,9	7,4	3,4	1,7	4,4	2,7	4,0
Exports	5,0	3,6	7,1	3,4	1,7	4,4	2,7	3,9
Imports	0,5	0,3	0,3	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,3
Balance	4,5	3,3	6,8	3,4	1,7	4,4	2,7	3,8

Source: MDIC ** million US$ ***2015

Brazil/Kyrgyzstan	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	average
Exchange	6,3	2,2	7,0	4,7	10,2	7,4	2,8	5,8
Exports	6,3	2,0	6,8	4,7	10,2	7,4	2,8	5,7
Imports	0,0	0,2	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Balance	6,3	1,8	6,4	4,7	10,2	7,4	2,8	5,6

Source: MDIC ** million US$ *** 2015

Brazil/Tajikistan	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	average
Exchange	12,2	9,8	11,7	3,2	4,5	3,7	3,2	6,9
Exports	12,1	9,8	11,7	3,2	4,5	3,7	2,7	6,8
Imports	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,5	0,0
Balance	12,0	9,8	11,7	3,2	4,5	3,7	2,2	6,7

Source: MDIC ** million US$ *** 2015

Embraer delivered six EMB-190 aircraft to Air Astana between 2011 and 2013, when the largest trade volume was registered with Kazakhstan. According to the Kazakh government, Air Astana owns thirteen Embraer aircraft in its fleet of regional aircraft.

Magnesite opened a representative office in Karaganda in 2014, establishing direct contacts with the metallurgical companies of the country. Magnesite and Kaznex-Invest signed a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation with a view to developing projects in the metallurgy industry, including the production of refractory materials for KSPSteelea KazOgneUpor in Rudny, Kostanay region. The Brazilian company studies projects for the production of steel pipes in conjunction with Arcelor Mittal Temirtau, Kazzinc, Kazakhmys, Plantade titanium and magnesium from Ust-Kamenogorsk and Kaz Chrome.

Eurasian Natural Resources Corporation (ENRC), a Kazakh mining company among the world's largest steel and aluminum producers, acquired Bahia Mineração (BAMIN) in 2008, for the amount of US$ 970 million. In 2010, the group also acquired Mineração Minas Bahia (MIBA) and Mineração Peixe Bravo (MPB), both in the north of Minas Gerais, involving an investment of US$ 354 million. BAMIN is developing an iron ore concentrate project in Pedra de Ferro, in the south of Bahia, with a plan to haul the production from the quarry to the terminal in Ilhéus over the East-West Integration Railway.

2.9. Agricultural cooperation between Brazil and the countries of Central Asia

Kazakhstan's Minister of Agriculture, Ahmetjan Esimov, visited Brazil in 2007 to develop bilateral cooperation in agriculture. Esimov met with Agriculture Minister Reinhold Stephanes, Minister of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade Miguel Jorge, ABIEC President Marcus Pratini de Moraes, Embrapa President Silvio Pestana, the Vice-President of Brasil Ecodiesel, Ricardo Vianna, ANP director Roberto Ardenghi, and representatives of Petrobras, UNICA, FIESP and ABIMAQ.

In 2009, the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) and Embrapa went on a joint mission to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to identify possible areas of technical cooperation in agricultural matters. In Kazakhstan, cooperation projects in water management, cotton cultivation, animal breeding, veterinary science, development of temperate fruit trees and viticulture were defined. In Uzbekistan, it was agreed to send Uzbek representatives to Brazil and initiate cooperation in the areas of irrigated agriculture, cotton, livestock development, and viticulture. A Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation was signed between Embrapa and KazAgro Innovation.

Non-resident ambassadors from Uzbekistan in Brazil, Ilhom Nematov and Bakhtiyar Gulyamov, held meetings with the director of ABC in 2012 and 2014, when they discussed the implementation of projects to train farmers in fruit processing and the creation of a cattle breeding facility. Basic technical cooperation agreements focusing on agriculture with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are under negotiation.

2.10. The parliamentary cooperation between Brazil and the countries of Central Asia

The Kazakhstan Lower Parliamentary Chamber (Majilis) established in 2012 the Kazakhstan-Brazil Parliamentary Cooperation Group. In response to the Kazakh initiative, in 2015 the Brazilian National Congress created the Brazil-Kazakhstan Parliamentary Meeting. That same year, MEPs Claudio Cajado (DEM/BA) and Antônio Imbassahy (PSDB/BA) went on a parliamentary mission to Kazakhstan, an international trip that also included Azerbaijan and Georgia. On that occasion, the Brazilian deputies were received by the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, Defense and Security, Deputy Viktor Rogalev.

In a meeting with the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee in 2012, Ilhom Nematov, the non-resident ambassador of Uzbekistan in Brazil, demonstrated his country's interest in developing parliamentary cooperation with Brazil.

2.11. Judicial cooperation between Brazil and the countries of Central Asia

The President of the Union of Judges of Kazakhstan, Serik Baybatyrov, participated in 2014 in the 57th Annual Conference of the International Judges Association, in Foz do Iguaçu. In a meeting with the Secretary General of the International Association of Judges and the Judge of Foz do Iguaçu, he outlined the measures taken by the Kazakh government to improve the judicial system, protect human rights and actively cooperate with foreign partners such as the OSCE and the Commission of Venice of the Council of Europe. Legal cooperation agreements on extradition, transfer of prisoners and legal cooperation in criminal matters with Kazakhstan are currently under negotiation.

2.12. Sports cooperation between Brazil and the countries of Central Asia

Brazilian field and indoor soccer players are active in clubs in Kazakhstan (Kairat, Aktobe, Tobol, Bayterek and Astana), Uzbekistan (Bunyodkor) and Kyrgyzstan (Dordi).

Between 2008 and 2010, Olé Brasil, from Ribeirão Preto, participated in the President's Cup in Almaty. In 2009, the Brazilian club signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the training of two groups of 26 young athletes at the Botafogo Social Institute. In 2014, Cruzeiro Esporte Clube from Belo Horizonte, Brazilian champion in 2013-2014, celebrated with the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Kazakhstan a Memorandum of Understanding for the training of a third and fourth group of athletes.

The Kazakhstan Ministry of Defense team participated in the Military World Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2011. The countries of Central Asia sent delegations to the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan won medals, ranking respectively in the 21st, 22nd and 54th places in the overall medal table. Brazilian athletes participated in the II World Nomad Games, on the shores of Lake Issyk-kul in the Kyrgyzstan in 2016 and in the Winter Universe in Almaty in 2017, and are expected to attend the V Asian Indoor Games and Martial Arts Games in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan in 2017.

2.13. Cultural cooperation between Brazil and the countries of Central Asia

The Embassy in Astana organized Brazilian cinema shows in Astana (2007, 2008, 2009 [twice], 2010, 2011 and 2012) Almaty (2012) and Bishkek (2016). In 2009 and 2010, the actresses Lucélia Santos and Glória Pires participated in the Brazilian cinema show as special guests. In 2009, they organized a concert honoring the 50th anniversary of Villa-Lobos's death and the 20 years after the death of Cláudio Santoro, with pianist Alessandro Santoro and soprano Patrícia Endo; in 2010, the show "Piano e Voz", with singer Fafá de Belém; and in 2012, the "Brazilian Classical Music Week", with a concert by conductor Daniel Bortholossi. Capoeira courses and Brazilian jiu-jitsu seminars were also held. Kazakhstan has a capoeira federation that brings together schools located in Astana, Aktobe, Karaganda and Almaty.

The Embassy of Kazakhstan in Brasília organized concerts by violinist Aiman Musakhodzhayeva in Brasília, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in 2014, and in 2014 a concert by the Academic Symphonic Orchestra of Kazakhstan, in Rio de Janeiro and in Vitória, in addition to a Kazakh Cinema Week in Brasília.

3. Perspectives for the relations between Brazil and the countries of Central Asia

The Caspian Sea region has the second largest oil reserves in the world, after the Middle East, with more than 10% of the global estimated oil and natural gas reserves; located in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Uzbekistan and Iran. The Pre-Caspian Basin in western Kazakhstan and southwestern Russia has some of the largest fields in the world: Astrakhan, Karachaganak, Kashagan and Tengiz. Kazakhstan holds 3% of global oil reserves and Turkmenistan has the fourth largest proven natural gas reserve on the planet, behind only Russia, Iran and Qatar.

In addition to the vast energy resources, Central Asia has huge mineral wealth. The Kazakh subsoil holds the world's largest reserves of uranium, lead and tungsten, the second largest silver and zinc reserves, the third largest reserves of magnesium, and significant deposits of copper, gold and iron ore. Kazakhstan is among the world's largest exporters of uranium and copper. Uzbekistan exports gold (23% of exports) and copper, Kyrgyzstan, gold (40% of exports from the Kumtor mine), uranium, copper and iron, and Tajikistan aluminum, gold, zinc and lead.

Exploitation of energy and mineral resources, in the context of rising prices on the international market, has created the necessary conditions for an economic transformation unprecedented in history, especially in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Kazakhstan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the third largest among the countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, behind only Russia and Poland. The increase in purchasing power of the population generates real business opportunities for Brazilian companies, since Central Asia is a net importer of food and consumer goods.

The Embassy in Astana works to overcome obstacles caused by distance, mutual ignorance and a lack of access to Brazilian products in Central Asian markets. Trade promotion and investment attraction could benefit from initiatives like the ones described below.

3.1. Visit of the President of the Republic to Central Asian countries

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was the first and only Brazilian president to have visited Kazakhstan, in 2009. Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have not yet received a presidential visit. The presidents of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, on official missions, and the presidents of Turkmenistan and Tajikistan in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), have already been to Brazil.

3.2. Visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the countries of Central Asia

There has not yet been an official visit of Brazil's Foreign Minister to the Central Asian countries. Minister Celso Amorim was in Kazakhstan in 2009, but he was accompanying President Lula during his visit to the country. Minister Mauro Vieira planned to visit Kazakhstan and the Caucasus countries in 2016, but the visit was canceled due to the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff.

3.3. Bilateral political consultations

Brazil has political consultation mechanisms with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In addition to the resumption of meetings, it would be advisable to establish political consultations with the other Central Asian countries. Memoranda of Understanding on bilateral political consultations are being negotiated with Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan.

A consultative meeting focusing on economic and trade relations with Kazakhstan, created by the Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of Political, Economic, Commercial and Bilateral Investment Dialogue, has not yet been held. Nor has the Intergovernmental Commission for Cooperation with Uzbekistan, established by the Agreement on Economic and Trade Cooperation, convened yet to discuss objectives in areas such as agricultural cooperation, biofuels and trade facilitation.

3.4. Expo-2017

The 2017 World's Fair was held in Astana, Kazakhstan, and focused on renewable energy. The Brazilian participation, in charge of Itaipu Binacional, necessarily involved Brazilian companies in the sector and showed the competitiveness of national technology in this area, its sustainable model of alternative sources of energy and its energy security programs.

3.5. Secom at the Embassy in Astana

A technical study conducted by the Trade Promotion Department in 2010 pointed to the Embassy in Astana as one of the highest priority locations for the opening of a Commercial Sector (Secom).

3.6. Diplomatic representation in Tashkent

Presidents Lula and Karimov discussed the issue of opening a Brazilian diplomatic representation in Tashkent in 2009. The embassy in Moscow oversees the relationship with Uzbekistan, since the Uzbek government does not accept receiving credentials from ambassadors accredited to Kazakhstan.

Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan and the largest city in Central Asia, is located at the epicenter of the urban cluster that includes Almaty and southern Kazakhstan, Bishkek, Dushanbe, Osh and Jalalabad, the Fergana Valley, the historical cities of Bukhara, Samarkand, Khiva, and the Chinese province of Xinjiang. Uzbekistan, the most populous country in Central Asia, has three free trade zones and could be an alternative route for Brazilian products to access the region through the highways and railroads connecting it to Turkmenistan on the Caspian Sea, and from there to Iran and Azerbaijan.

3.7. Visa Waiver Agreements

Brazil has a visa waiver agreement for common passport holders only with Kazakhstan. The agreement, by exchange of notes, entered into force in September 2016. In addition, there are visa-free agreements for holders of diplomatic and official passports with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. An exemption agreement is being negotiated for PADIP and PASOF with Kyrgyzstan.

3.8. Brazilian companies in Central Asian countries

Magnesite opened a representative office in Karaganda in 2014 and supplies refractory materials and pipes to Kazakh metallurgical companies. Vale, which operates in China and Mongolia, had a representative office in Almaty in 2008, when it developed a copper exploration project in partnership with Tau-Ken Samruk, in the vicinity of Lake Balkash in the central region of Kazakhstan. Vale's return to the region could mean a start to cooperation in the mining area. The possible participation of Petrobras in the international consortia that explore oil and gas in the Caspian Sea could initiate cooperation in the energy area, besides diversifying the investments of the Brazilian company, currently concentrated on the exploration of the Pre-Salt basin, thus reducing its operational risks.

3.9. Association Agreement between MERCOSUR and EEU

The Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) forms an enlarged common market of 200 million inhabitants between Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. The negotiation of an association agreement between MERCOSUR and the EEU would contribute to the rapprochement between the two regions.

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CHAPTER 10

BRICS, IBSA AND THE CONTEXT OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN BRAZIL AND ASIA[1]

José Carlos Silvestre Fernandes[2]

Introduction

Reflections on interregional mechanisms between emerging countries impose special difficulties. The analysis of bilateral relations must follow a more inductive and analytical route – the study of each bilateral agenda item leading to an overview of the relationship between the two countries, which can then be tentatively framed in a narrative about a broader international context. However, reflecting on plurilateral initiatives, such as the IBSA and the BRICS – contrary to what happens in bilateral relations –

1 AUTHOR'S NOTE: The following article was written in the Portuguese language in 2016 and reflects the state of the art at the time. BRICS and IBSA alike have evolved since then and much of what follows below is no longer up to date or in the cutting edge of discussions. The author believes, however, that the fundamental ideas of the text still hold water, and the article is presented in an English translation which was not revised by the author in any manner whatsoever.

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must take the opposite path. Plurilateral mechanisms are, at the same time, agents and patients of fundamental changes in world politics and economy at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Thus, they can only be understood from this general context; and necessarily, consideration about these big trends will always be more speculative and conceptual. It will, of course, be necessary to discuss the specific initiatives and topics of the agendas of the respective mechanisms, and we will proceed further; but the whole here is greater than the sum of the parts.

A fortiori, an analysis of interregional mechanisms such as the IBSA and BRICS, which span countries on three continents and have a global agenda that overcomes predominantly regional concerns, could contribute to the objectives of this to help elucidate the broader context of the relations between Brazil and Asia, to be dealt with more specifically and with greater detail in the other essays in this book. In this essay, therefore, I have sought to present the IBSA and BRICS with this goal of contextualization in mind.

I had the privilege of keeping up with the workings of the two mechanisms on under discussion during a key moment in their respective evolutions, and many of the following reflections were only possible thanks to the learning with more experienced diplomats; I am especially indebted to the lessons learned from working with ambassadors José Alfredo Graça Lima and Flávio Damico, and with Minister Elio Cardoso. I could also resort to a wide bibliography on the subject, only a small part of which is referenced in this text. Leaning on the shoulders of giants, however, does not make me any less of a novice, and the following considerations must be understood as the attempt of an early-career diplomat to find meaning in one of the broader and cross-cutting issues of today's scene.

1. Beneficial multipolarity and its discontents

To contextualize the emergence of mechanisms such as IBSA and BRICS, I will highlight two structural elements of the post-Cold War world. The first of these is a kind of systemic indefiniteness, especially evident in the twenty-first century, which followed the end of the bipolar global order of the Cold War. In the words of Gelson Fonseca Jr. at a seminar on BRICS held in December 2011: "since the end of the Cold War, but especially at the turn of the 21st century, there is a demand for order and it is not clear who will produce the supply" (FONSECA JR., 2013). On the one hand, as the author points out, the expectation that the collapse of the Soviet bloc would lead to the establishment of a unipolar international system (which, according to the author, would be the antithesis of the very idea of an international system), centered in American hegemony, has not materialized. This impossibility became especially evident in the face of the difficulties faced by the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq, which demonstrated the need for the superpower to resort to the multilateral system. On the other hand, the opposite expectation, that is, that overcoming the ideological conflict of the Cold War would eliminate the obstacles to a rapid flowering of a multilateral order, based on the principles of the UN Charter, driven by globalization and based on a "new legitimacy, designed by the global conferences on human rights, sustainable development, women's rights, urban settlements" (*idem*) has not become reality either. Like the one who projected a unipolar order, this expectation of a triumph of multilateralism, which "bordered on utopia" (*ibid*), implicitly reflected the notion that the Western bloc's emergent Cold War worldview would easily spread through the world, in an "end of history" of lasting peace and prosperity. The contrast of this expectation about the events of the immediate post-Cold War, still in the 1990s, is already remarkable: it was a period, after all, of systemic financial crises, which spread from Southeast Asia to South America; and humanitarian tragedies in various parts of the world, including in the European continent itself.

The two main narratives about the future of the international order having been frustrated, the twenty-first century began with a deadlock or conceptual vacuum, the perception of a "drifting world," which, still following the reflections of Gelson Fonseca Junior, corresponded to a demand for paradigms of order corresponding to a new architecture of world power, which the traditional powers did not seem able to provide. This impasse has opened up space for other actors, besides the traditional powers, to participate in the redesign of the world order, providing its conceptual contributions; a space that was not yet wide enough for established institutions of governance to be fundamentally threatened, or that visions of open confrontation could be propagated, since none of the new actors could effectively challenge the traditional powers of the West, nor gain with the fragmentation of the current international order and the resurgence of tensions such as those of the Cold War. Nevertheless, it became evident that a revision of the international order was announced, and that this revision would not be conducted exclusively by the traditional powers.

The same nautical metaphor of a "drifting world" is used later by Mahbubani (2014), when referring to the crisis of 2008:

> *None of us would sail into an ocean of rapidly changing currents and looming storms without a capable captain and crew at the helm of our boat. Yet the global policy community proposes to do exactly that: sail into the uncertain waters of the twenty-first century without a captain.*

Mahbubani then describes the coordination effort at the G20 at its first summit meeting in 2009 as a rare moment when the "boat" of international politics was piloted in order to avoid an economic catastrophe. As we will see later, the crisis that began in 2008 and the coordination efforts that followed, with the rise of the G20 as the main forum for global macroeconomic coordination, are key milestones in the history of the mechanisms that are the object of this article.

The other structural element I would like to point out concerns the emergence of the category of "emerging economies" or "emerging countries" – and, among them, the "great emerging ones" – in the same period. Although it dates back at least to the 1980s, the concept of "emerging countries" has gained momentum in the 21st century, when the rates of economic growth in the developing world have consistently outpaced those of the advanced economies, and which, after a period of instability and structural economic reforms at the end of the 20th century, were now developing with special speed and assuming a new role in the world economy. As early as 1997, Jeffrey Garten posited that emerging economies corresponded to a "new category of countries," which would be "the key swing factor" not only in defining the directions of the world economy, but also in the nuclear non-proliferation, the promotion of human rights and the prevention of security crises in critical regions, among others (GARTEN, 1998). Garten warned of a deep transformation under way, for which the United States, according to him, were ill prepared:

> *We are in the midst of cataclysmic change that will result in a new map of power and influence, a map being redrawn by the big emerging markets. It is a revolution as significant in its implications as the great historical shifts such as the breakdown of feudalism, the two past industrial revolutions, the growth of a global economy in*

> *the nineteenth century, and the collapse of the old order in the 1930s and 1940s (idem).*

In a tone that may sound hyperbolic, Garten anticipated what would be one of the major themes of international relations in the early twenty-first century: what was going on was not just the narrowing gap between advanced economies and developing economies, but a review of the ancient North-South dynamics, and the emergence of a new category of countries. With their economic rise, emerging economies – and among them, as I will argue later, especially those that can be seen as large emerging countries of greater individual weight – have taken a new place in the international system; with greater bargaining power in negotiations, greater influence on regional and global issues, and the ability and willingness to act proactively and purposely where the Global South had earlier been restricted to merely passive or reactive roles. This distinction, as will be noted, is always reinforced in the BRICS Declarations, Communiqués and other documents referring to "emerging economies and developing countries" without ever condensing them into a single category.

The above phenomenon is often referred to as the "great convergence" or "great reconvergence,"[3] in contrast to the famous "great divergence" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the economies of the West emerged in relation to the rest of the world, and in particular of Asia – the continent where, historically, most of humanity's wealth had been generated. As synthesized by Martin Wolf:

> *Convergent incomes and divergent growth – that is the economic story of our times. We are witnessing the reversal of the 19th and early 20th century era of divergent incomes. In that epoch, the peoples of western*

3 See MAHBUBANI, 2014 and FERGUSON, 2012, among others.

> *Europe and their most successful former colonies achieved a huge economic advantage over the rest of humanity. Now it is being reversed more quickly than it emerged. This is inevitable and desirable. But it also creates huge global challenges*[4].

This great convergence deserves a careful economic analysis, which is beyond the scope of this article. On the one hand, it is not surprising that less advanced economies show higher growth rates, once minimum conditions for growth are guaranteed (political and macroeconomic stability, minimum regulatory sanitation and legal certainty, openness to trade with the world and external sources – or sufficient internal savings – to finance investment, etc.). They are picking the "low-hanging fruit" of rapid productivity gains, by covering technological backwardness, and the comparative advantages of cheaper labor and under-exploited natural resources. They are, however, sources of growth that limit themselves (see the concept of the "middle income trap"). On the other hand, there remain at least three crucial issues in this particular scenario that require more careful consideration: the coincidence that the major economies of the Global South have achieved these conditions simultaneously, which must have deep underlying causes; the interrelation of the growth of these economies, especially with the centrality of exchanges with China, which outlines a more complex panorama than simple catch-up growth; and finally the question of the limits of this convergence and the possibility of avoiding the middle-income trap[5].

This second structural element, the great convergence and rise of the emergent and large emergent categories, serves as a kind of

4 WOLF, 2011.

5 "Why should they be unable to reach, say, half of US productivity? That is Portugal's level. Can China match Portugal? Surely" (WOLF, 2011).

partial response to the first structural element, the undefinition of the post-Cold War world. The focus on the conceptual evolution of the international system at the beginning of the 21st century is, therefore, the question of the place to be occupied by the emergent ones, as well as about the transformations – institutional, but also of agenda priorities, visions and conceptual new and traditional themes – that would be needed in the international system to accommodate the rise of these new actors. An issue that, even with the intense developments on several fronts in the first sixteen years of the twenty-first century, remains without a definitive answer.

The attitude adopted at the beginning of the twenty-first century to this question, by emerging countries in general and by the major emerging countries with special emphasis, can be characterized by a spirit of beneficial multipolarity[6]. Even the great emerging nations united under the aegis of the BRICS did not have the surplus of power needed to radically challenge the established international order, nor would they have any reason to do so. These countries, whose priority is to develop their own economies and improve the quality of life of their populations, would be especially hampered by a scenario of systemic tension or fragmentation of the international system: the stability of the international system and the efficiency of its institutions were of particular interest to these countries. They would rather seek to review their place in the international system to play a role that suits their new circumstances; but this goal could only be pursued by promoting reforms that would strengthen existing governance institutions, making them more legitimate and effective by updating them to face this new reality. Similarly, in their rhetoric

6 I borrow here a concept used by ambassador Flávio Damico, then Brazilian sub-sherpa for BRICS and alternate focal point for IBSA. Recognizing the term's special ability to capture the spirit of a period, I cannot, however, assert that my interpretation will follow precisely that originally intended.

and effective action in various international fora, these countries would foster the primacy of dialogue, the search for consensus and the defense of sufficiently inclusive multilateral approaches.

As a consequence, the multilateralist impetus of the 1990s, as described above, extended into the 2000s with a new subtext and new style. Instead of a mere expansion of existing institutions and regimes, under the leadership of the traditional Western powers, the decade of 2000 was the scene of intense discussions on reforms in the United Nations system, particularly the Security Council; as well as key institutions of economic and financial governance, such as the IMF and the World Bank. It was also the decade of the launching of the Doha Round in the World Trade Organization, in which emerging economies and developing countries had an unprecedented voice and weight in the negotiations, previously restricted to advanced economies. Similarly, it was a period of evolution in the discussions about climate change, where a coalition of emerging economies – BASIC, formed by Brazil, South Africa, India and China – emerged as a key interlocutor. Developments on the theme of development in the early 21st century (with the Millennium Development Goals and the rise of the concept of sustainable development, for example) demonstrate both this gradual shift in priorities and approaches, such as the overcoming of the old "north-south" one-way dynamic with which development promotion had been addressed in the twentieth century. The examples are numerous and ultimately cover the full potential of the international agenda: either in the discussion of institutional reforms or in the evolution of the treatment of substantive issues, or in the simple identification of actors and key interlocutors.

Perhaps the clearest manifestation of this spirit of beneficial multi-polarity was the IBSA Forum: a group of three emerging countries that sought to disseminate a transformative vision, based on the centrality of promoting development and, of course, closer ties and mutual knowledge among the three great multiethnic democracies of the South. Although uttered in a more general context, it is common to remember in discussions about the IBSA, the affirmation of chancellor Celso Amorim that "the time has come to begin to reorganize the world in the direction that the overwhelming majority of mankind expects and needs"[7] (AMORIM, 2008). In another context, this statement would sound like a third-world rapture without many practical consequences; the IBSA "agenda of humanity", however, consisted of concrete objectives – such as the reform of the UN Security Council and the successful conclusion of the Doha Round – and concepts that were persuasive in the main multilateral fora, such as inseparability and equal importance of the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental), or raising the fight against misery in the world to the list of major political priorities among nations.

The BRICS, which emerged a few years later, was emblematic of beneficial multipolarity, especially as a recognition of the development of a new multipolar order – at least in the economic and financial arena. Concomitant developments such as raising the G20 to the status of the main forum for concertation on international financial issues, replacing the G8, after the crisis that began in 2008 and an ill-fated Heiligendamm Process, can be recalled here; as well as the signing in 2010 of an IMF quota reform agreement – in both cases, causes embraced by the BRICS and effectively inseparable from the rise of its members as "the great emerging actors" of the world economy. At the end of the 2000s, the emergence of a new multipolar order in the international economic relations, of which BRICS was the supreme expression, seemed an

7 Regarding the Brazilian perspective on IBSA in this period, see MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 2007.

incontrovertible question; and the recognition of this new order, which the above-mentioned developments indicated, could be achieved through the expansion of multilateral concertation and the strengthening of existing institutions. That is: in an eminently peaceful, cooperative and mutually beneficial way.

Like the IBSA, BRICS was instrumental in demonstrating to the world the priorities of the emerging countries – especially their national developments, in a sustainable and inclusive way – and the eminently constructive and supportive way in which they intend to direct their external policies to contribute to this end.

These transformations, of course, would not unfold without encountering resistance and challenges. In more general terms, the spirit of beneficial multipolarity could only be one of consensus: the necessary updating and strengthening of international regimes and institutions is in the interest of the traditional powers, which enjoy a privileged position in these systems, as much as it concerns the emerging economies and developing countries. Faced with more specific questions, however, the reformist agenda associated with beneficial multipolarity would often find resistance from the status-quo powers in its realization. After all, opening the door to new actors implies a relative reduction in the power of those who already have a voice; accommodating new priorities, themes and visions to international discussions implies making concessions that were not previously envisaged. The new actors, in turn, would have to face the difficulty of formulating a common agenda, which requires coordination between countries that, geographically distant and with relatively tenuous economic ties, had not had an in-depth political dialogue or significant bilateral relations. Once this dialogue was initiated, it became clear, of course, that there were also divergences between these countries, different from each other both internally and in their relative positions on the international scene[8].

These challenges have made mechanisms such as the IBSA and BRICS necessary tools to deepen their visions and proposals, to push for reforms and to disseminate the conceptual inputs that are identified. These mechanisms have enabled five key countries among the emerging economies to coordinate to build concrete agendas, with priority lists and specific objectives, and then to propagate them internationally, where their voices resonated with much more force in unison than individually. These mechanisms have served to enable these countries to organize themselves in order to realize their potential as international actors with their own initiatives, which extended from the IBSA Fund for the Relief of Hunger and Poverty to the New Development Bank. Their similarities have finally opened up a horizon for a cooperation agenda among the members of these mechanisms, distinct in their nature and potential for cooperation with developed countries and regional integration efforts.

For little more than a decade at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the strengthening of this beneficial multipolarity agenda was evident, and a posture of great optimism seemed well justified. In retrospect, however, the difficulties of moving forward at the core of this agenda may require that this optimism be recalibrated. To take up the previously mentioned examples: the reform of the Security Council remains an open question, with slow and difficult progress, thirteen years have already passed since the Annan Plan of 2005; and the IMF quota reform agreed in 2010 has not yet been implemented. The Doha Round, for its part, is closed for all practical purposes. On a more general

8 It should also be remembered that the primacy of multilateralism and the emphasis on the common development goal gave voice to the developing world as a whole, not only to the emerging ones, creating an even greater diversity of interests, visions and agendas to be reconciled.

basis, the idea of a new multipolar order being embraced through a strengthening of multilateral dialogue and solutions contrasts today with a perception of stagnation in several of the major international regimes, and with first signs of what can be an intensification of systemic tensions, including episodes involving major emerging countries – such as the conflict in Ukraine and the recent hardening of rhetoric on security issues in the South China Sea, among other possible examples.

The trajectories of the IBSA and BRICS, arguably, must be traced in this larger context: first, of uncertainties and systemic transformations of the post-Cold War period; and then the international insertion of the emerging centers according to an ideology and a set of optimistic expectations of the new multipolar order; finally, a tendency in recent years of relative frustration of this optimism and subsequent questioning of this ideology by different actors.

2. IBSA: origin, identity and evolution

Oliver Stuenkel (2015), in his narrative of the transformations of that period, notes an instigating timeframe at the G8 summit in Evian in 2003. For the G8, an informal group that at the time was the main forum for discussion of international financial issues, the rise of emerging economies was an early and immediate challenge. The major emerging economies were already among the largest economies in the world, and the projections that these countries would soon surpass almost all developed economies were common and well known. Their inclusion in the discussions on the key issues of the world economy was, of course, inevitable; how this inclusion would occur, however, came up against the challenges described in the previous section on how to accommodate new actors and demands. In fact, the history of advances and retreats in the G8 expansion is one of the best examples of the impasses between, on the one hand, the reluctance of traditional powers to cede relative power to the inclusion of new actors in privileged forums and, on the other hand, a zeal for preserving the representativeness and effectiveness that make participation in these forums a form of power[9]. At the Evian summit in 2003, a compromise solution was attempted with an invitation to "partially participate" to 13 other countries, 11 of which emerging economies or developing countries, including Brazil, China, India and South Africa[10]. The meeting was orchestrated in such a way that this partial participation, for practical purposes, was reduced to a merely protocolary role, designed to ratify symbolically the result of the discussions at the heart of the G8.

The discontentment of the emerging countries was notorious, and President Lula's description of the meeting was "an invitation to come and have a coffee". Three days after the meeting in Evian, the chancellors of Brazil, India and South Africa met in Brasilia to launch the IBSA Forum, the pioneering trilateral mechanism that would serve as a model for coordination among emerging powers.

Of course, this coincidence of dates should not be seen as a simple causal link, as if the IBSA were merely a response to the hesitancy in the G8 – not least because the financial issues at the heart of the G8 agenda never had that much weight on the IBSA agenda as they would later have in the BRICS[11]. Instead, there is a clear illustration of the general circumstances and trends that have led to the emergence of mechanisms for concerted action among

9 See PAYNE, 2008 and COOPER *et al*., 2008.

10 Russia, as is well known, was included in the group in 1997, which was renamed from G7 to G8. The context and justification for this inclusion differ from those in the present narrative, and has already been described by more recent commentators as "anomalous" SMITH, 2011.

11 Oliveira highlights the importance of the discussion on pharmaceutical patents and compulsory licensing of drugs, issues that were on the agenda of the G8, the origin of IBSA. Thus, even with this financial context, the themes of the most immediate humanitarian impact, such as the fight against epidemics in developing countries, which inspired the formation of IBSA (OLIVEIRA, 2005).

emerging countries. The IBSA Forum was born with a vast and diverse agenda: the Brasilia Declaration, issued at the time of the founding of the Forum in 2003, covered topics such as the reform of the UN Security Council; combating terrorism and transnational crime; cooperation in combating poverty and guaranteeing world food security; the Doha Round; the promotion of human rights, with specific reference to the fight against racism; among others.

This agenda well illustrates the identity of the IBSA Forum: a pioneer and model for the initiatives that have followed, the IBAS has had the legitimacy to deal in a reformist spirit with a wide range of issues on the international agenda. Bringing together three multi-ethnic democracies from different continents, engaged in social development and improving the well-being of their populations, the IBSA was able to act on issues such as human rights, or the interrelation between economic, social and environmental development, without arousing the suspicions of opportunism that tend to accompany the positions of other groups and countries on such issues. Not being status quo powers, the IBSA countries had the space to call for reforms in both the financial and the international security regimes. The IBSA's identity, in short, was based on shared values and a common project on the future of the international order The Forum relies on the "soft power" of its legitimacy and credibility.

In addition to the international consultation agenda, the IBSA Forum has experimented with various aspects of cooperation among its members. In all, there were sixteen of its working groups, covering topics related to trade and investment – accompanying the negotiations and implementation of bilateral agreements connecting the markets of MERCOSUR, SACU and India – cooperation in defense matters – which resulted in the regular conduction of IBSAMAR joint naval exercises, which have already had four editions. IBSA also has five civil society forums, such as the forum of editors and the women's forum. As with all pioneering initiatives, it is natural to expect that not all experiments will be equally successful, and the cooperation initiatives attempted in the IBSA have achieved differentiated results among themselves.

The most well-known initiative of the Forum is certainly the IBSA Fund for Hunger and Poverty Relief created in 2004. The IBSA Fund finances low-cost projects, strategically chosen because of their high potential for reverberation of positive effects, to be implemented in countries of lesser relative development and/or conflict zones. At the end of 2015, the IBSA Fund had a portfolio of 24 projects, 10 of which were completed, nine in progress and five new initiatives approved. In addition to the results of these projects, the IBSA Fund has left its mark as proof of the concept, by illustrating how countries in the global South can contribute to global development, with initiatives tailored to their own particularities, using their national experiences to address poverty and promote development. The IBSA Fund is therefore considered by the United Nations Office of South-South Cooperation as the most successful example of South-South cooperation initiatives.

2.1. Perspectives for IBSA

Five Summits of Heads of State and Government of the IBSA, from the First Summit of Brasilia, in 2006, were held until the fifth Summit in Pretoria in 2011. Since then, there has been a reduction in the dynamism of the Forum, linked to the difficulty in holding high-level meetings, which already inspires doubts with some commentators about their prospects for continuity.

This relative retraction of IBSA can be explained in more than one way: first, it can be pointed out to a reduction in the international activism of its members, as a consequence of changes in priorities and, especially, in reaction to transformations in the internal scenario, a conditioning of the international action. As an informal mechanism, opposed to the economic model of the BRICS, the IBSA depends on the constant political impetus of the governments of its three countries to remain active. These circumstantial retractions by themselves can eventually be overcome, though, as they do not undermine the fundamentals of the forum's relevance for its three members.

Another explanation, more widespread, concerns the shadow that BRICS has projected over the IBSA, especially after the entry of South Africa in 2011. BRICS projects a shadow over the IBSA in three ways. First, by simply juxtaposing agendas, where topics traditionally dealt with in the IBSA are incorporated into the BRICS agenda. When positions are coincident, or the same cooperation agenda is possible in both mechanisms, there is a perception of duplication of the effort, usually resolved to the detriment of the smaller of the two mechanisms. Second, because of the visibility and political weight of the BRICS, which ends up overshadowing IBSA initiatives, or putting them in an inevitable perspective of contrast, if not opposition, to the BRICS agenda. Third, account should be taken of the influence of the bilateral relations of the IBSA countries with Russia and China, as will be discussed below. Adopting a line of action together with IBSA partners is a choice as to which partners will be present or absent, and the IBSA sometimes runs the risk of setting up (or at least being perceived) a sort of "BRICS minus two" rather than a mechanism with its own identity.

Despite these difficulties, there is a fundamental difference in identity between the two mechanisms, with different objectives and principles and, by extension, also offering different opportunities and comparative advantages. The unique identity of the IBSA makes it possible to move forward in areas that are more difficult to articulate in the BRICS, such as the UN Security Council reform, the non-proliferation regime and the human rights regime. Another example is the topic of trade and investment, whose treatment within the IBSA introduces notably different opportunities from those in BRICS, where China's weight is felt as the largest or second largest trading partner of the three trilateral forum members. Trade among IBSA members, by contrast, is still relatively small and full of potential yet to be exploited.

Finally, the IBSA has great potential to serve as a platform for dialogue with third countries, given its unique international credibility as a group of multiethnic democracies in the global South, which is present both in dialogue with developing countries and with the status-quo powers. The BRICS shadow will not necessarily obfuscate IBAS, provided its unique identity and comparative advantages are exploited[12].

It is possible, at last, to propose a pessimistic reading, which sees IBSA as a sign of the wear and tear of its ideals. Many of IBSA's goals seem as distant today as they were thirteen years ago when the forum was founded, and the optimism with which it was received may seem less justified in retrospect. This reading makes the resumption of dynamism in the IBSA something more desirable, because of the strategic function that its soft power can play in preventing a potential emergence or increase of systemic tensions, with a consequent introduction of instability and retraction of the multilateral system and the positive agenda that the forum has been attributed since its foundation.

12 See, on some of the potential of IBSA, SOULE-KOHNDOU, 2013.

3. BRICS

The IBSA was born with a formed identity, manifested in its first joint statement, and its future depends on the preservation and relevance of that identity. The genesis of the BRICS is more complex: as it is well known, the acronym precedes the group agreement between the countries it appoints, and the two meanings of the term – as singularization of the great emerging economies, the BRICS, by financial market analysts; and as a mechanism with a broad agenda and singular weight in international relations, "the BRICS" – coexist until today.

Nor would it have been possible to foresee, at the first meeting at the Minister level in 2006, or at the first summit of Heads of State and Government in 2009, which direction the BRICS would take. At the end of the 2000s, it would scarcely be possible to foresee that such informal meetings between chancellors or Heads of State and Government of the major emerging economies would result in initiatives such as the New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangements. Its evolution has been gradual, although intense, and it has not yet reached its conclusion: the BRICS still inspires perplexity.

At the same time, the approximation between these countries, at least as a conceptual category, is immediately understood. They are countries of continental proportions, with great ethnic and cultural diversity and are holders of strategic reserves of natural resources and a great natural diversity. The five BRICS countries account for 26 percent of the territory and 42 percent of the world's population and were responsible for 23.1 percent of world GDP in 2015. In this sense, George Kennan (1994) already distinguished Brazil, Russia, India and China in 1994 with the concept of "monster countries," a category of countries of great territory and population and that, for that reason, had special conditions both in their internal political organization and in the conduct of international relations. In addition to the four BRICs of the original formulation, the only other "monster country" in Kennan's sense is the United States.

This categorization coined by Kennan came forward again at the beginning of the twenty-first century, with the accelerated growth of the great emerging powers. By introducing the BRIC acronym in 2001, analysts at investment bank Goldman Sachs projected that these four countries would rank among the six largest economies, along with the United States and Japan by 2050. These forecasts were soon revised as emerging markets surpassed the short- and medium-term projections, to a world economy headed by the four BRICs and the United States as early as 2030. It is interesting to note that Jim O'Neill, an analyst at investment bank Goldman Sachs and the first to use the acronym BRIC, included in his brief 2003 article a special section analyzing South Africa's case and its potential to be the fifth member of the proposed analytical grouping – an association that O'Neill would later deny, just when it became a reality.

The first "BRIC" meetings began at the chancellor level, beginning in 2006, on the sidelines of the opening sessions of the United Nations General Assembly. Coordination among the major emerging economies had a high profile in the face of the global economic crisis that had begun in 2008 with the bankruptcy of the Lehman Brothers bank, which hit the advanced economies hardest. The First Summit of Heads of State and Government of the BRIC (at that time, still without South Africa)[13] took place in 2009 in Yekaterinburg, in a context where the need for greater

13 With the entry of South Africa, BRICS achieved its mature formation by incorporating a traditional partner of concertation exercises among emerging countries, combining geographical representativeness and the ability to define and defend detailed and strong positions on the main agenda items.

coordination between the major emerging economies, which would be the main driving forces behind the recovery of the world economy in the years that followed.

The themes of the economic-financial agenda, thus, have always stood out in the BRICS agenda. Among the main points of convergence are the defense of the G20 as the main forum for coordination on global macroeconomic issues (the G20, it should be noted, had its first meeting at the level of heads of state and government in 2009, in the same period of the BRICS dialogue); the promotion of reforms of the Bretton Woods institutions, in order to make them more transparent, legitimate and effective; and the need for greater international concertation to ensure the relative stability of the major reserve currencies and the sustainability of fiscal policies – two priorities in the face of emergency policies adopted by national economies to deal with the international crisis, but which had potentially negative international reverberations. A quick inspection of the Goa Summit Declaration shows the narrowing of the consultations between the BRICS and the agenda under discussion in the G20, with firm positions on very specific topics such as erosion and profit shifting base and discussions on antimicrobial resistance; it is enough compare the Declarations of BRICS and the G20 to see the closeness of their concerns.

The maturation of this constant exchange on economic issues has allowed BRICS to launch its own large initiatives, reaching beyond multilateral negotiations. The launch of these initiatives coincided, not by chance, with the beginning of the second Summit cycle in Fortaleza in 2014, when the treaties constituting the New Development Bank and the Reserve Contingent Arrangement were signed.

The New Development Bank aims to finance infrastructure and sustainable development projects in the BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries. It is an open initiative for the accession of new members, both from countries with a borrower profile and from developed economies; the leadership of the five founding members, in every way, is protected in its constitutive treatise[14]. The institution's initial subscribed capital is US$ 50 billion, divided into equal shares among the five founding members, and its initial authorized capital is US$ 100 billion, with openings for future enlargements[15]. NBD recently announced the approval of its first projects in the area of renewable energy sources and the issuance of its first green bonds, denominated in renminbi. The Contingent Reserves Arrangement, with commitments totaling US$ 100 billion, constitutes a safety net among the five BRICS members in cases of liquidity crises in the external sector, facing a growing volatility in money markets since the outbreak of the 2008 crisis.

These two initiatives, it is important to emphasize, are not intended to replace or rival the established institutions of international financial governance; to the contrary, their role is reportedly complementary. In the case of the NBD, it is worth recalling the World Bank's estimate that additional contributions of US$ 1 trillion per year would be required to account for the demand for financing infrastructure projects in emerging and developing economies, a figure that increases by US$ 200-300 billion to ensure that these investments are sustainable, low carbon and climate change resistant. The NBD joins a number of other regional or multilateral initiatives that seek to address this demand, such as the African Development Bank, the Asian

14 The five founding members will retain most of the quotas and, by extension, the voting power, even with future capital increases. In addition, decisions classified as especially important, such as the entry of new members, will require the affirmative vote of at least four of the five founding members.

15 The subscribed capital is not confused with the borrowing capacity that the NBD can effectively offer, considerably greater, when capitalizing on the financial market. Projections can be found in a report by the French investment bank Natixis (NATIXIS, 2014).

Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, the Asian Bank for Investment in Infrastructure (AIIB) and CAF (Latin American Development Bank, the former Corporación Andina de Fomento), among other examples. In the words of Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank, on the occasion of the founding of NBD:

> *We are committed to working closely with the New Development Bank and other multilateral institutions, offering to share our knowledge and to co-finance infrastructure projects. These types of partnerships will be essential to reach our common goals to end extreme poverty by 2030, boost shared prosperity, and to reduce inequalities (THE WORLD BANK GROUP, 2015).*

Nor must the Contingent Reserve Arrangement be construed as a challenge to previous institutions, also because expanded access to its resources under the constitutional treaty is conditional upon the negotiation of an agreement within the framework of the IMF. By creating a mutually supportive mechanism among the major emerging economies, the RTA allows the IMF to direct more of its resources to the aid of weaker economies in a possible scenario of instability in international money markets. The launch by BRICS of its own major initiatives does not, therefore, constitute a change of course in relation to its beneficial multipolarity agenda, *i.e.* strengthening multilateral consultation on economic and financial issues and major multilateral governance institutions; rather, it represents a deepening and a natural evolution of this agenda.

In addition to these two major financial initiatives, intra-BRICS economic cooperation takes place on several fronts, such as the interlocution between national development banks, through the so-called "BRICS Interbank Cooperation Mechanism"; the exchange between entrepreneurs of the five countries, through the BRICS Forum and Business Council; the traditional meetings between the ministers responsible for trade in the margins of the summit meetings, assisted by a contact group of experts (the CGETI); among many others. Following the launch of these two major initiatives at the Fortaleza Summit, a document entitled "Strategy for a BRICS Economic Partnership" was adopted at the Ufa Summit. It is a map of the broad path, aiming to provide structure for the multifaceted intra-BRICS cooperation on economic themes and their interrelationship with the treatment of associated themes like education and infrastructure.

Despite the primacy of economic issues on the BRICS agenda, the mechanism has had a broader dialogue and a strong sectoral cooperation agenda since its inception. I refer here to the survey presented by Renato Baumann on the evolution, Summit to Summit, of these two agendas (BAUMANN, 2013), to which should be added the extensive Plan of Action adopted at the Ufa Summit in 2015. As the breadth and vitality of its current agenda proves, the BRICS is not a mere institutionalization of a financial market concept – its potential for concerted action and joint action was not even foreseen by the analysts who introduced the acronym – but its re-appropriation[16] by the countries the acronym designates, and which quickly gained a life and identity of its own.

The BRICS concertation agenda was never limited to economic and financial issues. The Declaration of the First BRIC Summit in Yekaterinburg in 2009 already addressed issues such as combating terrorism, sustainable development and food security, among others. The BRICS concertation agenda today covers a variety of issues in the area of security (from common positions on crises and regional conflicts to topics like cyber security the

16 See GRAÇA LIMA, 2015, DAMICO, 2015 and REIS, 2013 for a more in-depth discussion of the topic.

fight against piracy, organized crime and drug trafficking, etc.)[17], in social areas like cooperation in health and education, dealing with climate change, and many others. Not always, however, the five BRICS countries find these issues as precise as they are on their economic agenda, which sometimes limits their treatment under the BRICS. For example, identifying common positions on regional crises and conflicts and on cross-cutting issues such as the fight against terrorism cannot go further into a broad doctrine without an understanding in the BRICS on some central issues of the security regime; in particular, without explicit support from Russia and China on the UNSC reform agenda promulgated by other members, a subject which has only been progressed very gradually in the BRICS.

The intra-BRICS cooperation agenda is equally broad and expanded rapidly between the 1st Ekaterinburg Summit and the 8th Summit in Goa. The Plan of Action adopted in Goa lists 112 events of the Indian BRICS presidency, of which 87 had already been held prior to the Summit of Heads of State and Government; 24 "key initiatives" of the Indian PPT were also singled out, ranging from a railway research network to a potential credit rating agency. The Plan adopted in Goa demonstrates the extent to which the BRICS cooperation agenda could reach, as well as its tendency to expand over time.

As in the experience of the IBSA, the BRICS countries find in intra-BRICS cooperation a set of potentialities different from those offered by the traditional forms of north-south cooperation, or those attainable within a strictly regional scope. To take a single example, among several possible, I choose the health area. Conducted by ministerial and expert meetings and advised by

17 Mention should be made here of the extensive treatment of terrorism in the Declaration issued at the Goa Summit in the context of intensifying tensions between India and Pakistan involving terrorist activities in the border region of Kashmir.

working groups for each priority sub-theme, the joint work of the BRICS in the area of health includes coordination at WHO and other relevant fora (e.g. on access to medicines in the face of restrictions that surpass those stipulated in the WTO TRIPS Agreement, and financing mechanisms for health research, the WHO and other fora); cooperative activities in areas like traditional medicine, well-being and combating noncommunicable diseases; exchanges between specialists on health surveillance and universal health coverage; joint efforts to combat tuberculosis, with the adoption of the ambitious "BRICS TB Cooperation Plan" as well as HIV, malaria and other neglected tropical diseases, including the promotion of medical research for treatment development; the use of information technologies and the strengthening of regulatory frameworks (which has a specific working group), among other initiatives.

Similar comprehensive multi-pronged agendas and perspectives such as priorities and interests characteristic of BRICS members can be found in other areas of cooperation like agriculture, education, science, technology, and innovation. In general, an outsourced BRICS sector is conducted through accurate meetings at the ministerial level, prepared by work meetings and contacts between senior officials. These meetings are held to identify priority areas, so that in a framework of action or action plan with coordination of activities in each priority area is given to one of the member countries. This arrangement, in turn, results in meetings between specialists, workshops and seminars, and finally, concrete actions and binding arrangements, always backed up at a high level. This gradual approach allows for cooperation in BRICS to flourish naturally, accompanying exploration for common potentialities and interests, and avoids the risk of paralysis or lack of follow-up that faster, top-down approaches may imply. There is, of course, no obstacle to ad hoc sectoral activities beyond the cooperation frameworks and in response to initiatives at a high level, which take advantage of the density of dialogue guided by milestones and cooperation plans.

4. The place of IBSA and BRICS in the international relations of its members

In a collection of essays on Brazil's relations with Asia, it should be clarified that BRICS does not provide a platform for the discussion of topics specifically related to the Asian continent, although it includes three main players in regional policy. To that end, the three Asian members of the mechanism have a trilateral forum of their own, in close approximation to the experiences of IBSA and BRICS, as well as initiatives like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Not even in the financial sphere, the BRICS's broad international agenda is confused with mainly Asian issues: note the launch of the Asian Bank for Infrastructure Investment (AIIB) a few months after the signing of the NDB constitutive agreement. Even with all BRICS members among its founders, the AIIB was never conceived as a "BRICS" initiative, nor as an initiative that could disrupt or clash[18]..

The strength and legitimacy of the BRICS derives, in the latter instance, from this reducibility to regional agendas and, not in the least, to agendas that could be characterized as ideological in the sense of a mere contestation of the status quo. More precisely, positions advocated by the BRICS cannot be understood as "anti-Western", or framed, for example, in a logic of reigniting Cold War tensions, with the formation of a Sino-Soviet bloc aligned fundamentally different than the West, or as the resumption of an equally outdated "third-world" concept. When the BRICS find

18 The issue of role-playing between the two regional investment banks for Asia – AIIB and ADB, Asian Development Bank – is beyond the scope of this essay.

consensus among themselves on a common position, this position can only be seen as a structuring fact on the international scene, common to key players in emerging economies and the developing world, and reflecting the pragmatism and emphasis on promoting development that guide the mechanism. It is, so to speak, the autonomy of its members and the differences between them that imprint on the positions advocated by the BRICS their weight and relevance, rather than being, as some commentators feared in the beginning, an insurmountable obstacle to a substantive understanding among the five countries.

For Brazil, this is a key part of BRICS's approach to positions of national interest – by demonstrating that many of the points defended by Brazil internationally are in fact shared by the emerging powers – is the main acquis of its participation in BRICS, together with the opportunity to work together on initiatives the size of the NBD and ACR, and gain from intra-BRICS cooperation activities. In a broader sense, participation in the BRICS is part of a strategy of autonomy through diversification[19] by which Brazil builds its place in the world as a major emerging country operating in the main international regimes through the establishment of new partnerships with other key agents, without thereby hampering its traditional partnerships or its regional action.

The internal dynamic of the BRICS has been conserved, even in the face of the singular Chinese weight, primus inter pares among the great emerging economies. It is noteworthy that this Chinese participation is atypical of its foreign policy, which tends to favor bilateral arrangements or to safeguard its unique position, as in the case of the G77+China. China's growing weight is felt through its GDP, which in 2015 corresponded to 67% of the combined BRICS GDP (against 45% in 2005) and its international

19 On the concept of autonomy for diversification, see VIGEVANI et al., 2007.

reserves, which totaled US$ 3.3 trillion in March 2016, about nine times higher than the reserves of Brazil, Russia and India, taken individually, and 75 times greater than the international reserves of South Africa. The same Chinese preponderance is observed in trade: China is the largest or the second largest[20] trading partner of all other BRICS countries in both import and export flows. On the other hand, none of the other BRICS countries are listed in the top five markets for imports or exports of Chinese products. As trade between the BRICS members is still much less expressive, BRICS countries have a hub-and-spokes structure, with China at the center. This centrality of trade with China could be mitigated through initiatives under the IBSA, exploiting the great potential for trade and investment flows between the three member countries, as well as, bilaterally, with Russia.

For China, the partnership with the BRICS is of special value in allowing to avoid the impression that its demands are interpreted as coming from the one great ascending power, and therefore, in inevitable counterpoint to the western powers, evidencing that many of these demands are shared by the great emerging countries, many of whom enjoy particularly fruitful relations with the West. It is in the interest of China, as in the case of the other BRICS, to prevent its national development from being compromised by the restrictions that would result from the triumph of a Chinese competition narrative with the Western block, to the detriment of a narrative of establishment of an effectively multipolar world order. In addition, diversifying and deepening their relations is imperative for China in order to ensure that its development trajectory in the medium and long term is not affected by restrictions in the external sector of its economy or by the limitations of its international insertion.

20 When second largest, after the European Union taken as a block.

For the other BRICS, it is necessary to ensure that the mechanism remains egalitarian and based on effective consensus, avoiding that the unique Chinese weight decharacterizes the nature of the mechanism, causing it to lose its effectiveness and legitimacy as a meeting point of the great emerging powers.

For Russia, whose relations with the Western powers are currently in a strategically difficult time, with the recent conflicts in the Crimea and the ensuing economic embargo, the BRICS gains special prominence as one of the ways to avoid relative international political isolation. The firm rejection of the BRICS of the Australian proposal to suspend Russia in the G20, in the wake of the conflict in the Crimea region, well illustrates this role[21]. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that BRICS does not serve as a support platform for the most controversial issues in Russian foreign policy: again, the mechanism plays a key role in avoiding structural faults in international politics, but its diversity of political views and wide autonomy of its members prevent automatic alignments or the configuration of a block that could or would systematically counter the traditional powers. The BRICS also has a special place in Russia's economic insertion, which transcends the aggravating circumstances of the recent economic embargo; it should be noted in this regard that one of the main outcomes of the Ufa Summit was the adoption of the document "Strategy for a BRICS Economic Partnership": a map of the vast and multifaceted road to the consolidation and diversification of economic relations between the BRICS countries. Lastly, Russia seeks to strengthen in BRICS the dialogue on issues of special

21 On Russia's suspension in the G8, one can interpret the resurgence of the G7 as the setting up of a forum for coordination between large advanced economies, mirroring the place of BRICS among the major emerging economies, against the background of the G20 as a privileged forum for discussions on global economic issues.

interest to its national agenda in areas such as energy and energy efficiency.

While Russia and China have been protagonists in the international scene throughout the Cold War and now need to redefine their insertion as major emerging countries, the role as "global players" of the three other BRICS members is a novelty, at least on the scale they are entering the 21st century. The participation of India and South Africa in BRICS follows the Brazilian logic of seeking the diversification of partnerships and the construction of channels to conduct a more comprehensive international action, besides taking advantage of the possibility of launching, jointly with the other members, large initiatives such as NBD and ACR.

In the Indian case, the goal of managing diverse partnerships to ensure their autonomy and build the external support necessary for their development requires a particularly precise strategic calculation, given their place in the Asian context. Despite the prolific collaboration through the BRICS and the intense bilateral economic relations, India and China still have outstanding territorial issues, and it is necessary to weigh in the Indian perspective on the growing influence of China in their regional environment, with initiatives like One Belt, One Road, as well as its bilateral relations with countries like Pakistan. (In this context, the regional influence of Russia, through OCX and investments in Central Asia, should also be noted). The Indian insertion in the BRICS, which implies a constant coordination with China and Russia about key issues on the international agenda, is necessarily complex, but has been directed mainly pragmatically, and the convergence and cooperation achieved through the BRICS has had a positive effect on India's bilateral relations with its Asian partners: in a naturally complex scenario, BRICS provides a way for dialogue and rapprochement between Asian states that have many reasons to cooperate, but which also have points of divergence and conflict potential. IBSA, it should be noted, played a similar role in overcoming some damage to India's relations with Brazil and South Africa caused by the 1998 nuclear tests.

India has repeatedly shown engagement with BRICS, both in its traditional economic-financial agenda and in the growing diversification of its work fronts. Its strategy in the context of Sino-Russian initiatives for Asia, in turn, has been one of participation and rapprochement, as demonstrated by the recent bid to join the OCX and involvement as a founding member of AIIB. This stance, however, is balanced by the country's fruitful relationship with Western countries, its closer ties with the Indian Ocean coastal countries and, of course, its involvement in the IBSA.

A revitalization of the IBSA would have strategic significance not only for India's regional and global insertion, but also for bilateral relations with Brazil by strengthening the two countries' actions on issues such as Security Council reform, coordination on human rights and social issues, opportunities to increase trade and investment flows between the three IBSA countries, and the promotion of South-South cooperation. A weakened IBSA, in turn, would lead to the need to build alternative channels of dialogue, to prevent the handling of such issues being harmed – a goal that could be pursued even by deepening the bilateral dialogue.

The centrality of BRICS to South Africa's international insertion in recent years is apparent, as can be seen in presidential statements. In the case of South Africa, account should be taken of the growing weight of its economic relations with China and the historical political relations with Russia, as well as the value to South Africa of the prestige gained from its participation in the BRICS. As in the case of India, a definition on the future of IBSA is a structuring issue for bilateral relations with Brazil. Notwithstanding the priority given to the BRICS, it is not expected that the specific agenda of the IBSA will be neglected by South Africa, although the challenge of managing its simultaneous participation in IBSA and BRICS will be pressing for the smallest individual member among the giants gathered in the two mechanisms.

Conclusions

Regarding its relevance to Asia and to Brazil's relations with Asian countries, it is important to emphasize, first of all, that the BRICS and the IBSA have been essential for the definition of the place in the world of three key powers of the Asian continent, facing the uncertainties of the post-Cold War world. IBSA has shown that emerging economies from different continents can effectively join forces to promote development, introduce innovative concepts and proposals, and find a common voice in multilateral forums. The BRICS gave its name and face to the unprecedented reality of the post-Cold War world: the emergence of emerging great powers as key actors in international politics, acting in an autonomous but coordinated, open and supportive way, and reinforcing the promotion of development as its highest priority. These mechanisms are inseparable from today's concept of emerging economies – what they are, how they act, and what their objectives are – and have been essential elements in their evolution. For each of the five countries, a comparison of their international role in the 1990s and their role today reflects a conceptual evolution that is coextensive with the two mechanisms and can only be understood once these been understood.

As part of this structuring function of international relations, BRICS and IBSA have served as a platform for interaction between the three major emerging countries of the Asian continent and their counterparts in other continents, especially the non-

Asian members Brazil and South Africa. As other essays in this collection will deal with in more detail, Brazil's bilateral relations with Asian countries have taken advantage of much of the bridges created through these mechanisms. This statement is true even for countries that are not members of BRICS and IBSA: in the case of BRICS, external outreach exercises should be noted; in the case of the IBSA, the implementation of IBSA Fund projects in Asian countries that sometimes have a limited history of relations with Brazil, such as Laos; and, both in the case of the IBSA and BRICS, the links created through coordination with other emerging economies and developing countries in multilateral fora, based on common initiatives and positions in these two mechanisms, as well as the implications of addressing, the IBSA and the BRICS, regional issues with a global scope like the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian issue and the situation in Afghanistan. Of course, the deepening of relations between leaders of different regions leads, by various routes, to a broader relationship with other countries in these regions. Initiatives open to third countries, such as the NBD, and the growth of the economic ties between BRICS members – as we have seen, pursued on several fronts – should further naturally strengthen Brazil's relations with other Asian countries.

Finally, BRICS provides a unique space for dialogue among the three major emerging Asian countries[22], with the singularities of being a mechanism based on a global vision, not confined to Asia. The BRICS serves as an instrument, for example, for greater dialogue between India and China, which often find points of dissonance on regional issues, by highlighting their common interests as major emerging countries with the common ultimate goal of shaping the conditions necessary for their continued development. Similarly,

22 The recognition of Russia as a projection power in Asia has a heuristic purpose, given the objectives of this article, and does not contradict its identification also as a European country; it is well known that Russia emphasizes both its European and Asian dimension.

BRICS has been instrumental in the growing convergence between Russia and China, and in the diversification of ties between Russia and India, traditionally focused on security and defense issues.

As emphasized throughout this essay, BRICS and IBSA incorporate, in different ways an optimistic, multi-polar worldview that is based on the promotion of multilateral dialogue. This view is a possible answer to the uncertainties of the world order at the beginning of the 21st century and results from the economic rise of its members, as well as from other emerging countries, with consequences that far exceed the mere reconfiguration of international economic and financial relations.

In recent years, this view has come up against new challenges: first, some point to a slowing of the BRICS growth rate, suggesting that enthusiasm over the rise of the big emerging countries may have been exaggerated. In addition, the difficulties in moving forward with key items on the IBSA and BRICS reform agenda, as well as in major multilateral initiatives such as the Doha Round, point to a collapse of the idea of a beneficial multipolarity as the new international order. This objection is more immediate in the discussions about the IBSA, but a change in the global context also affects BRICS, as there is a certain skepticism about the promises of shaping a beneficial multi-polar world order.

On the first objection, we must first of all respond that the rise of the BRICS is already a reality: the place of its members as indispensable interlocutors in the main international issues has been consolidated. It should also be remembered that the long-term outlook for emerging markets remains unchanged, and that atypically high growth rates at the beginning of the century are indicators of what is clearly a more general trend, which must be confirmed despite short-term variations and transient oscillations. On the second point, the challenges in establishing a stable and beneficial multipolar order for all, and the shortcomings in multilateral approaches only emphasize that the possible contributions of the two mechanisms are increasingly necessary and urgent.

We will see, in the short term, the directions that the three countries of IBSA and the five countries of the BRICS will adopt to further promote the agendas of the respective mechanisms and the broader vision they represent. In both cases, it is a time for definitions, and it would be fruitless to speculate on decisions that will emanate, after all, from the will of the leaders, who drive and animate both mechanisms. I hope that these brief considerations have served, in any way, to illustrate the systemic meaning with which these movements take place, helping to compose the context for the reflections on Brazil's bilateral relations with the countries of the Asian continent that can be found in the other articles of this book.

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CHAPTER 11

THE PATHWAY TO BRAZILIAN DIPLOMACY IN PAKISTAN

Pedro Henrique Chagas Cabral[1]

Introduction

When we think about Pakistan, the first things that we normally associate with the country are those that appear often in the international press, such as terrorism and the extremist ideology of groups like the Taliban. Pakistan has also been in the limelight in recent times because of events such as Osama bin Laden's execution by US forces on its territory and the attack against the young Malala Yousafzai, who became known worldwide and received the Nobel Prize for her activism in favor of the education for women. Other news that received ample coverage were the huge floods that devastated large areas of Pakistani territory in 2010, affecting almost 20 million people and causing 2,000 deaths,

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to the point of being described by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as the biggest natural disaster he had ever seen.

Thus, to foreign eyes, the image of Pakistan is usually pretty negative. Other factors such as the poverty of the majority of its population and corruption at different levels of the public administration also contribute to negatively impact the general impression of the country. Due to these issues, it may be tempting to classify Pakistan as a "failed state," or to say that the country is moving towards that status, as many political analysts have done in recent years. This is not, however, a recent trend. In 1983, a book written by the political activist Tariq Ali was published with the title "Can Pakistan survive? The Death of a State" (ALI, TARIQ, 1983). However, the Pakistani state continues to resist to this day, in spite of having faced numerous crises that threatened its existence, and Pakistani society still remains cohesive in several aspects, even though there are people of different ethnic groups who speak different languages living in the country. Such factors are indicative that a more accurate analysis of Pakistan's internal situation can help refute certain labels often repeated. And, as this chapter tries to demonstrate, that the importance of the country in its region, in the world and for Brazil is greater than what is often perceived.

Regarding the term "failed state", used to refer to countries facing serious conflicts and internal instability, it is worth comparing the situation of Pakistan with that of other Asian nations that have or have had similar problems, but have not always been labeled as such. The governments of Sri Lanka and Myanmar, for example, faced insurgencies that lasted longer, affected a larger part of their territory and claimed more victims than the Taliban in Pakistan. The civil war in Nepal between 1996 and 2006 effectively resulted in the overthrow of the country's government, putting an end to the monarchist regime. Even in India, which has the most stable political regime in South Asia, the Naxalite insurgency operates in rural areas proportionally larger than the Taliban-dominated territory in Pakistan, which prompted former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to declare, in 2009, that this Maoist group represents the greatest threat to the country's security.

These comparisons are not intended to minimize the ability of the Taliban and other terrorist groups to challenge the integrity of the Pakistani state. However, it should be considered that Pakistan is not the only Asian country unable to control its entire territory, and that this does not necessarily imply an imminent risk of collapse of its governmental structure and institutions. There are specific factors, from a historical and social point of view, that explain the country's resilience to such adversities. And there are others, from an economic point of view, that may boost its potential for development, which makes it attractive to other countries and to Brazil.

Pakistan is the sixth most populous country in the world, with almost 200 million people, which is equivalent to more than twice the population of Iran and almost two thirds of the population of the Arab world. The country is located in a strategic region between Central Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and China. In the midst of undeveloped semi-industrialized areas, there are islands of modernity in the form of several modern industries, good roads and universities that are well known in the region. The country also has one of the most powerful armies in the Asian continent in terms of armament, operational capacity and manpower.

Pakistan is also the only Muslim country that possesses nuclear weapons, which is a clear sign of its geopolitical power, as well as its capacity for technological development. Its economy, in terms of purchasing power parity, is the twenty-third in the world[2]. Investment bank Goldman Sachs has included Pakistan in the "Upcoming 11" list, which identifies eleven countries with the potential, together with the BRICS, to rank among the world's largest economies in the coming decades[3]. Therefore, in addition to being of great strategic importance with regard to international security issues, Pakistan also has the potential to occupy a prominent position in the world economy.

1. The Foreign Policy of Pakistan

Pakistan's foreign policy rests on two main axes: the troubled relations with India and the alliance with the United States, which in recent years has gone through advances and setbacks. The relationship with China, which is one of its largest trading partners and investors in its economy, and with Afghanistan, the main focus of instability in its region, are also crucial for the country. The Pakistani government also attaches great importance to relations with other Muslim nations, but the approach to each country varies according to religious and ideological affinities, which makes it closer to countries whose population is mostly Sunni. In this context, Islamabad's largest Islamic ally is Saudi Arabia, whose economic aid to Pakistan is substantial. Furthermore, the relations with the United Arab Emirates, the country's largest trading partner in the Middle East, are noteworthy.

The relations with India are the cornerstone of Pakistani foreign policy. After all, Pakistan's origins date back to the political-ideological and religious disintegration of British India in

2 THE WORLD BANK. GDP, PPP (current international $). Available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.PP.CD?order=wbapi_data_value_2014+wbapi_data_value+wbapi_data_value-last&sort=desc>. Last access on: 5 May 2016.

3 Beyond BRICs: A look at the 'Next 11', 2007. Available at: <https://www.goldmansachs.com/insights/archive/archive-pdfs/brics-book/brics-chap-13.pdf>. Last access on: 5 May 2016.

1947, which resulted in the creation of an Islamic republic with a predominantly Muslim population and in a secular state with a mostly Hindu population. The partition occurred in a violent and disorganized manner, resulting in territorial disputes that have caused, throughout history, three open wars, an undeclared war and several localized conflicts. Mutual mistrust prevails to this day, but there have also been several attempts to normalize bilateral relations, especially in recent years. In 2014, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif attended the inauguration of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, an unprecedented act in the history of both countries. In 2015, both heads of government agreed to resume the bilateral dialogue, and Modi was the first Indian prime minister to visit Pakistan since 2004. However, following an attack on an Indian military base in September 2016, which killed 19 soldiers and was allegedly perpetrated by Pakistani jihadists, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called Pakistan a "mothership of terrorism" and persuaded the governments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Bhutan to boycott a summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which was held in Islamabad in November that year.

Pakistan relies heavily on US aid, and the Americans, in turn, depend on Pakistani intelligence to act against terrorist groups that might carry out attacks on their territory and in other Western countries. Relations with the United States, however, have eroded due to several events, such as the death of 26 Pakistani soldiers in an attack carried out by an UAV in November 2011, which caused the temporary closure, by the Pakistani government, of roads that carry NATO supplies to Afghanistan. In 2013, the same route was blocked by the government of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, as a protest against repeated attacks made by UAVs in Pakistani tribal areas, which often cause civilian deaths.

However, despite such quarrels, Pakistan is a key player in America's global counter-terrorism strategy. The United States has long understood that the option of attacking Pakistan to put pressure on the Afghan Taliban[4] is not a feasible alternative. Nor would the imposition of sanctions be effective, as the substantive worsening of the Pakistani economy would directly benefit the terrorist groups that intend to overthrow the government. Thus, the only effective way the United States have found to influence Pakistan in the context of the war on terror has been to give incentives and economic aid, as well as threatening to cut these benefits.

On the Pakistani side, collaboration with the United States and the West in the fight against insurgent groups in Afghanistan is usually calculated as a balance between geopolitical strategy and population sentiment. Most Pakistanis, including members of the armed forces, believe that the Afghan Taliban's struggle against foreign occupation is a legitimate form of resistance, analogous to the Mujahideen conflict against the Soviet occupation in the 1980s. As for strategy, the Pakistani government takes into account the possibility of Afghanistan aligning itself with India and acting against Pakistan. This concern partly stems from the country's widely held belief that India supports separatist rebels in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan, using the territory of Afghanistan, as well as from the dubious idea that India helps the Pakistani Taliban.

The fear of India both boosts and limits Pakistani collaboration with the United States. Fear of an alliance between the Indians and the Americans to destabilize Pakistan was one of the arguments used by former President Pervez Musharraf to

4 The Afghan Taliban, which ruled Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001 and is seeking to retake control of the country today, is a different group from the Pakistani Taliban, also known as Tehrik-i-Taliban, which controls areas in north-western Pakistan and aims to overthrow the Pakistani government.

convince the Pakistani people of the need to cooperate with the United States after 9/11. On the other hand, fear of India also prompted the Pakistani government to focus its attention on the eastern part of the country and to stop sending troops to fight the Afghan Taliban in the west. Some of the Pakistani leaders also tried to use assistance to the United States as a bargaining chip to make Washington pressure New Delhi to reach an agreement with Pakistan over the region of Kashmir, which has, for decades, been the target of territorial disputes between the two countries. This strategy, however, was not successful neither in the presidency of George W. Bush nor in that of Barack Obama. This refusal on the part of the American government has contributed to exacerbate the distrust of the Pakistanis towards the United States.

Some of the Pakistani authorities and the country's elite also believe that close ties with the Afghan Taliban should be maintained, because the group is viewed as Pakistan's closest ally in Afghanistan. From a moral point of view, many Pakistanis do not consider the Afghan Taliban to be any worse than the political groups that are heirs to the Northern Alliance, which was formed in 1996 to combat the fundamentalist government of the Taliban. It is known, for example, that these groups of non-Pashtun ethnicities, such as Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras, committed atrocities against Taliban prisoners and are involved in the traffic of heroin in the region. In addition, many Pakistani soldiers fought alongside the Taliban's Afghan government during the war that resulted in its downfall in 2001. The escalation of violence in the country after the partial withdrawal of US troops starting in December 2014 has also helped reinforce the belief in Pakistan that Afghanistan could be taken over by a chaotic civil war and that the Afghan Taliban could be an important ally in the conflict.

Notwithstanding such perception, it is important to note that this sympathy for the Afghan Taliban does not necessarily translate into approval of its ideology and methods, either by the country's elite or by the population at large. Hence the difference in attitude towards the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban. The Pakistani army has never acted, or failed to act, to facilitate the seizure of power in the country by the Pakistani Taliban. The Pakistani armed forces, it should be said, took a while to fight against the group more forcefully. But that delay stemmed from the perception that the Pakistani Taliban could be restrained by a combination of moderate use of force and negotiations. Many also believed that the group should not be fought because of its alliance with the Afghan Taliban. There was also a perception, mainly by the Pashtun segment of the population of Pakistan, that fighting the Pakistani Taliban would only serve US interests. We should not ignore the fact that part of the Pakistani army and intelligence service have close contact with jihadist groups, especially some in Kashmir who oppose India, which in turn have ties to the Pakistani Taliban.

However, at a time when the Pakistani Taliban has proven to be a serious threat to the country by engaging in a series of attacks against the military and the civilian population in recent years, the armed forces have begun an offensive aimed at isolating the group and some of its strongholds, such as the southern and northern regions of Waziristan and the Swat Valley. These actions are a strong indication of the Pakistani government's military capacity to prevent the seizure of power in the country by jihadist groups. The same cannot be said of its stance vis-à-vis the Afghan Taliban, which has always been hesitant. Ultimately, there is no denying that the attitude of Pakistan's government, military and population towards the main countries that make up the spectrum of their external relationship and the different jihadist groups is complex and needs to be analyzed on a case-by-case basis. Thus, the simplistic conclusion that the country is an unrestricted sponsor of international terrorism should be avoided.

Brazil's place within the complex web of Pakistani external relations encounters some obstacles, but there is an undeniable advantage in the fact that our country is not an actor that directly influences the security of Pakistan. The main obstacle to Brazil's diplomacy is our strategic relationship with India, a member of the IBSA and BRICS mechanisms, which are of great importance to our foreign relations. Thus, further cooperation between Brazil and the Pakistani government in some strategic areas, especially defense, may not be well regarded by the Indians. Therefore, the Brazilian relationship with Pakistan is based on the construction of a positive agenda, in order to keep the bigger interest of Brazil in South Asia unharmed. To this purpose, Brazil has directed its relationship with Pakistan to areas such as trade, which has increased significantly in recent years (from 2000 to 2010, the year in which bilateral trade reached its peak, the total growth was of 86%), and technical cooperation in areas such as agriculture, health, fight against hunger and poverty, humanitarian aid, education, renewable energy, among others. As regards political dialogue, high-level meetings have been less frequent in recent years, as the last Pakistani presidential visit to Brazil occurred in 2004, when former president Pervez Musharraf went to the country, and the last visit by a foreign minister took place in 2005, when former Brazilian minister Celso Amorim went to Pakistan. Political consultations at the level of under-secretaries of foreign affairs, on the other hand, have been more frequent. More details on the culture, society and economy in Pakistan will be discussed below, as well as the initiatives in the bilateral relationship with Brazil.

2. Culture and society

Compared with developed and some developing countries, Pakistani society and its government can be considered unfair, violent, and often oppressive towards women and the poor. But, at the same time, it can be argued that its structure has remained relatively stable throughout history. According to political analyst Anatol Lieven, specialist in global strategies against terrorism and member of the New America think tank:

> *Trying to understand Pakistan's internal structures and dynamics is complicated; for if there is one phrase which defines many aspects of Pakistan, [...] it is 'Janus-faced': in other words, many of the same features of Pakistan's state and government which are responsible for holding Islamist extremism in check are at one and the same time responsible for holding back Pakistan's social, economic and political development.* (LIEVEN, 2012)

It is therefore necessary to understand this apparent paradox. On the one hand, Pakistan resists attempts by extremists to subvert the established political order, but on the other, it fails to take important steps towards a more advanced level of development.

2.1. Families and the state

The name "Pakistan" was proposed by the Indian student Rehmat Ali in 1933 to describe a future Muslim state that would encompass the northwestern region of then British India and would bring together populations of the Punjabi, Pashtun, Kashmiri and Sindhi ethnicities, as well as ethnic groups of today's Baluchistan province. The name of the country is a combination of letters and syllables taken from the names of these ethnic groups in English. The word "pak" also means "pure" in Urdu, the official language of the country together with English, so "Pakistan" also refers to the “land of the pure.” The initial concept of the new state did not contemplate the idea of incorporating Muslims living in the East Bengal region, which would eventually become part of the country and be named East Pakistan, until a conflict in 1971 between the western and eastern parts led to the establishment of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh. Most of the Punjabis and Pashtuns of West Pakistan did not identify themselves with the Bengalese, nor did they even consider them to be true Muslims. They had inherited the British contempt for these individuals, who, in their view, “behaved passively”, in contrast to the “virility” of the inhabitants of West Pakistan. Such facts, combined with the difficulties to administer two territories separated by India by a distance of 1,600 kilometers, were already indicative of the impracticability of keeping the two parts of the country together.

The Urdu language did not arise in any of the original two parts of the country. Its origin dates back to the military dialect of the Islamic armies inhabiting the Indian subcontinent in the Middle Ages, which was a mixture of Hindustani with Persian and Turkic languages. Urdu was spoken by the Muslims who inhabited the heart of the ancient Mugal Empire around the cities of Delhi, Agra, Lucknow, Bhopal and Hydebarad, located in present-day India. The language was never spoken by Muslims in the Bengal region and is not even spoken by the majority of the population of present-day Pakistan. Urdu is used in schools, newspapers and Pakistani films, but the only individuals who speak the language in their homes are the descendants of the Mohajirs, who left India after the partition in 1947 and now make up about 8% of the total population.

Such historical and cultural traits show the artificiality in the construction of the Pakistani state, just as it happened with several postcolonial countries that were formed in the

20th century. However, in the period between 1947 and 1971, Pakistan distinguished itself from most of these states by having a geographical unity that dates back to centuries ago. The country is made up of ethnicities that, although different from each other, lived together along the valley of the Indus River and surrounding areas for many generations, and were all guided by the Muslim faith and ruled in several periods by the same dynasties. This characteristic makes Pakistani society much more cohesive than it is commonly imagined. The government, on the other hand, has had, in the last decades, great difficulty to implement positive changes in the daily life of the population. As stated by Professor Mohammad Qadeer,

> *Pakistan has had a strong state and a weak society for almost four decades. Since the 1990s, the pendulum has begun to swing the other way, particularly with the rise of Islamic groups of considerable "street power." These shifts in state-society relations have a direct bearing on the development of society and culture* (QADEER, 2006).

Thus, groups with social power use this advantage to obtain favors from the state, often subverting the law and using the governmental bureaucracy for their own benefit. Hence the striking statistic that only about 1% of the Pakistani population pay income tax, and many wealthy landowners do not pay any type of tax at all. The existence of police officers and judges in the cities can convey the appearance that the state is present and fully functional, but often these agents work either on their own or for the ones who exert influence and hold power locally. This hierarchical structure is related to the centrality of kinship and paternalism in Pakistani society, which comes from a collective solidarity for the defense of personal interests.

These interests involve not only concrete advantages, but are also deeply tied to feelings of collective honor and prestige, as well as shame. The collective honor of a family group is, in practice, instrumental in obtaining status and increasing its economic power. In the same way, a family group that happens to be seen as "disgraced" ends up having great difficulties to defend their interests and to achieve their goals. The maintenance of honor is reflected, more dramatically, in the prevention and punishment of "illicit" sexual behavior on the part of women. This is a tradition so deeply rooted in the country that it is not uncommon for individuals to take extreme measures, including murder, against women who "dishonor" their family by committing acts like adultery or simply by relating to men from other family groups without permission.

Defending the honor and interests of family groups is, in general, far more important than loyalty to political parties, the state and professional codes of ethics. This logic applies not only to most ordinary citizens, but also to politicians and other authorities. As a consequence, corruption is often related not to violation or lack of laws, as in the case of Western countries, but to the ancestral value of loyalty to families and clans. Another major reflection of family strength in Pakistan's politics is the fact that the parties are mostly dynastic. The Muslim League of Pakistan (PML-N), of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, is dominated by the Sharif clan; the Pakistani People's Party (PPP), by the Bhutto family; and the Awami National Party (ANP), by the Wali Khan family. The main leaders of these parties have, in turn, a support base in local dynasties. This explains, in part, the fact that Benazir Bhutto became prime minister in an extremely conservative and male-dominated society, as her power came from her lineage.

However, whereas family ties are a decisive factor in the weakness of the Pakistani state, they also contribute, paradoxically, to its stability. The main reason is their relation to the structure of social classes. The fact that political elites exercise their power through relationships with clans and families, especially in rural areas, amounts to a certain responsibility over their followers that results in the distribution of benefits, which softens, to some extent, the division of classes based on wealth. This may explain, in part, the low level of inequality in the distribution of income in the country, according to the Gini coefficient[5], despite the low level of human development. Combined with income growth in recent decades, this has contributed to 50 million less people living in poverty in 2011 than in 1991, so that the percentage of people living on less than $ 1.25 a day fell from 66.5% in 1987 to 12.7% in 2011[6].

The Pakistani government has also advanced in this area in recent years, mainly with the Benazir Income Support Program, launched in 2008, which operates within the family structure by transferring income only to female heads of households. Brazil also contributed to public policies to combat poverty in Pakistan, inspiring, in 2012, the launch of the "zero hunger" program, analogous to the Brazilian version launched in 2003. The objective of the program is to combat hunger with different actions, such as the distribution of money and food to households and schools in greater need, expanding food production, as well as improving supply to markets in poorer areas. Also in 2012, the Brazilian embassy in Islamabad organized the "Seminar on the Eradication of Hunger and Poverty," which was attended by Brazilian experts from different government agencies and representatives of the

5 UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME. Human Development Reports: Income Gini coefficient Available at: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/income-gini-coefficient>. Last access on 15 May 2016.

6 PATEL, Dilan. Poverty in Pakistan: Numerous efforts, many numbers, not enough results. *The First Trinch*. AidData, 10 March 2015. Available at: <https://www.aiddata.org/blog/poverty-in-pakistan-numerous-efforts-many-numbers-not-enough-results>. Last access on 15 May 2016.

government of Pakistan. The event had great repercussion in the Pakistani press and drew attention to the recognized Brazilian experience in the area of fighting hunger and poverty. It should also be noted that, in 2011, the Brazilian government allocated resources of around US$ 350,000 to carry out projects to provide food to students in the most deprived areas of Pakistan.

2.2. Tradition and modernization

Throughout Pakistan's history, there have been different attempts by governments to radically change the country. Some examples are the reforms of the governments of generals Ayub Khan (1958-1969) and Pervez Musharraf (1999-2008), who attempted to establish a secular, nationalist and modernizing model inspired by Turkey. On the other hand, the government of General Zia ul-Haq (1977-1988) implemented laws in conformity with the more puritanical and radical understandings of Islam. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the founder of the PPP, tried, in the 1970s, to establish a populist and anti-elitist political-economic model. None of these attempts, however, were completely successful. The main reason was the inability of these rulers to obtain support from professional politicians and activists who were truly committed to change. Instead, they could only rely on the old "feudal elites" in the countryside and urban leaders who, in practice, did not act very differently from their counterparts in the countryside.

Even though the military is the most organized and modern entity in Pakistani society, military governments, which have held power throughout much of Pakistan's history and have often pledged to "sweep the corruption of the old elites," were not strong enough to rule without the help of the ancient clans. Nor could they do so, for extended periods of time, without the Parliament, which, by the way, is made up of members of the same elites that the military would like to change. Such facts explain why Pakistan has never adopted a democratic regime in accordance with the established standards in the West. Moreover, it is necessary to rectify the notion that there is, in the country, only an internal conflict between modernity according to Western standards, which include democracy and the rule of law, and Islamic conservatism.

A more accurate way of looking at this question would be to consider that there are two basic and antagonistic modernizing driving forces in Pakistan. The first is a model inspired by Western standards and the British legacy in the country, which includes a vague belief in democracy that contrasts with the conservative mentality of the Pakistani population and its contempt for the United States and some of its allied countries. The second is based on the Islamic tradition, but with modernizing traits, which is also hampered by conservative forces on the one hand, and by part of the country's elite, on the other. Furthermore, there is a lack of successful examples of this model in other Muslim countries. Both Western and Islamic modernizers see their battle against the country's backwardness as urgent, but many Pakistanis reject both proposals, which prevent changes from happening.

Brazilian diplomacy has sought to help the country modernize itself in different ways. In the area of education, for example, Pakistan was included in the Scholarships for Foreign Students programs (PEC-G and PEC-PG)[7], which made possible the candidacy of Pakistani students for undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships in the most prestigious Brazilian universities. Portuguese classes are also taught to Pakistanis at the Brazilian embassy in Islamabad. In the area of health, the Butantan Institute in São Paulo initiated a dialogue with the Dow University

7 Brazilian federal research funding agencies, Brazilian Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), provide scholarships for foreign undergraduate (PEC-G) and Master and Doctoral students (PEC-PG), from several countries.

of Health Sciences, a public institution in Lahore, to establish cooperation projects in research and clinical trials to analyze the possibility of exporting Brazilian vaccines against Hepatitis B, Rabies and Influenza. Pakistan is facing major problems in the area of public health. One notable example is the fact that poliomyelitis, which has already been eradicated almost everywhere in the world, is still endemic in the country because of the rejection by part of the population to the vaccination campaigns, which are considered by these segments as anti-Islamic.

This illustrates how archaic some sectors of Pakistani society are, and how damaging such a situation is to the well-being of the people in the country. And it is inevitable that there will be serious long-term consequences if some of these challenges are not addressed. One is the fact that its population, which is already very large, continues to grow rapidly, and that there is a scarcity of natural resources in its territory, especially water. With an average rainfall of 240mm per year, Pakistan is one of the most arid densely populated countries in the world. Most of its territory is formed by deserts, semi-desert areas and mountains. Only 24% of the total area is arable, with water supply provided mostly by artificial irrigation systems. Many natural water sources have dried up because of unsustainable use, and many others are at risk. Thus, the country must urgently improve the management of water resources and develop new techniques to expand its agriculture.

Brazil has contributed with technical cooperation initiatives in agriculture, one of the most promising areas of bilateral relations. In response to a Pakistani request, the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) sent a prospecting mission to Islamabad in 2011, and as a result, two activities were carried out, consisting of technical visits by representatives of the Pakistani government to the Brazilian states of Pernambuco and Paraíba in 2012. A memorandum of understanding was signed between the governments of Pakistan and Pernambuco, respectively represented by the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and by the Agronomic Institute of Pernambuco (IPA). The areas which the visit encompassed were the cultivation of sugarcane, including the ethanol production chain; the planting of cotton; the exchange of germplasm; technical assistance and rural extension, including public technology transfer policies to small farmers. In 2014, the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa) invited agriculture specialists from the Pakistani government to visit Brazil, with the purpose of learning the structure of the company and identifying possibilities for cooperation with Brazil in this area.

In addition to the natural resource scarcity, Pakistan has also been suffering the effects of global warming, mainly due to floods caused by monsoons. The floods in 2010 were catastrophic and showed the country's fragility when it comes to natural disasters. In the wake of the event, the Brazilian government provided US$ 500,000 in humanitarian aid with the help of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The contribution was aimed at the acquisition of priority items for the affected population, reconstruction of schools and providing food for vulnerable groups, such as internally displaced persons, refugees, women and children. A total of 32,940 children from 78 schools located in 48 communities, and 70,889 refugees benefited from the Brazilian aid. Later that year, Brazil donated another US$ 500,000, with the help of the World Food Program (WFP), for the purchase of goods such as drinking water, food and medicines. An amount of US$ 200,000 was donated in response to the UN appeal to aid vulnerable populations in the Sindh province.

Thus, the combination of the damaging effects of climate change, water scarcity, poor irrigation infrastructure and high population growth rates is one of the greatest threats to the well-being of the population and to the Pakistani state itself. The country's government needs to make efforts and rely on international aid to reforest degraded areas, contain erosion, restore and expand irrigation systems and promote a more sustainable use of available water. There are already ongoing projects sponsored by the World Bank to promote sustainable water management, but it is necessary for the Pakistani government to mobilize more resources in order to solve the problems in these crucial areas for the country's future.

2.3. Terrorism

Pakistani terrorist groups have been successfully attacking civilian, governmental and military targets, displaying great audacity and considerable tactical skill. Most of these groups are part of the Pakistani Taliban, but there are also dissident and independent groups. Only in the 2000s, more than 60,000 civilians died as a result of the attacks, and in the six years prior to the time of writing this chapter, more than 10,000 attacks occurred throughout the country. There are also separatist insurgencies in the province of Baluchistan, sectarian political groups in the Sindh province and violence against Shiite, Hazara and Ahmadi religious minorities.

Many analysts say that the main roots of religious hatred in the country date back to the 1980s, when General Zia-ul-Haq implemented a process of Islamization of the country by adopting measures based on the Sharia. With the financial support of Saudi Arabia, several madrassas where religious teaching was based on extremist doctrines were built. Currently there are about 24,000 madrassas in the country, attended by at least two million students, most of whom follow the Deobandi school, whose beliefs are similar to Saudi Wahhabism. In addition to using radical rhetoric, some of these schools are also involved in the training of terrorists.

Many criticize the fact that a number of Pakistani politicians, military and ordinary citizens support terrorist attacks in India and attacks against Western forces in Afghanistan. Some analysts argue that the Pakistani government, by distinguishing the Afghan Taliban's actions as positive for the country, as opposed to the "atrocious and immoral attacks" of the Pakistani Taliban, ends up compromising its credibility in the fight against terrorism. Many also condemn the fact that the government provides assistance, using the country's intelligence service, to groups such as the Haqqani Network, which has bases in both Afghanistan and northern Waziristan. This is one of the major points of contention with the Afghan government and the United States. Governmental support for the Lashkar-e-Taiba group, based in Kashmir, is also a source of permanent conflict with India. However, the population's support for acts committed outside the country does not necessarily represent an approval of extremism, as already mentioned. This support is more related to anti-Indian nationalism and hostility against what is perceived as an intrusive role of the United States and Western countries in Pakistan and in the Muslim world in general. Therefore, it does not equal to supporting insurgencies aimed at overthrowing the Pakistani government in order to establish a fundamentalist state, given that their methods involve mass killings of innocents, which are naturally rejected by the bulk of the population. Massive support for extremist and terrorist groups only occurs in the country's tribal areas, where only 5% of the total population resides.

It is also important to consider that the wave of attacks in recent years does not necessarily show that the groups involved are overly strong. In order to overthrow a government and seize power, it is usually necessary the existence of mass urban movements that take over government institutions, or a guerrilla force in the countryside that controls part of the territory, or a revolt in the armed forces against the main command, or a combination of these three elements. There is no record in history of a movement that has overthrown a national government with the use of terrorism alone. The Pakistani Taliban appeared to be extremely powerful and menacing when it assumed control of the tribal areas and the districts of Swat and Buner in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. However, when they kill innocents with suicide bombers, they only seem desperate in the eyes of the general public[8].

In order for an extremist revolution to take hold of Pakistan, the rebel movement would need the support of most of the population in the cities of Karachi and Lahore, the country's two main urban centers. Such a scenario is, however, unlikely now and in the near future. A more remote possibility for such a situation to materialize would be if floods destroyed part of the large cities and, consequently, left many people homeless and starving, and they could be co-opted by extremist groups interested in taking power. But even in this hypothesis, the fall of the main state institutions would occur more because of natural disasters than due to the population's sudden realization that repressive fundamentalism is the best thing for the country.

Therefore, one must be careful not to associate terrorism in Pakistan with a possible risk of the downfall of the government or the collapse of the state. As stated by Anatol Lieven:

8 It should be noted that, following the Pakistani army's 2009 offensive against the Taliban in the Swat district, which left more than 1.2 million internally displaced people, the Brazilian government donated $50,000 to the government of Pakistan for the purchase of 155 tons of wheat flour. In total, 3,900 families of internally displaced persons (IDPs) were benefited during one month, totaling approximately 23,400 persons.

> *Pakistan is probably thus far from the situation in Iran in the late 1970s or Russia in 1917. Apart from anything else, the army is a united and disciplined institution, and as long as that remains the case, it will be strong enough to defeat open revolt – as it proved by defeating the Taleban in Swat and south Waziristan in 2009. Unlike in Africa and elsewhere, military coups in Pakistan have always been carried out by the army as a whole, on the orders of its chief of staff and commanding generals – never by junior officers. [...] The only thing that can destroy this discipline and unity is if enough Pakistani soldiers are faced with moral and emotional pressures powerful enough to crack their discipline, and that would mean very powerful pressures indeed. In fact, they would have to be put in a position where their duty to defend Pakistan and their conscience and honor as Muslims clashed directly with their obedience to their commanders. As far as I can see, the only thing that could bring that about as far as the army as a whole is concerned (rather than just some of its Pathan elements) is if the US were to invade part of Pakistan, and the army command failed to give orders to resist this.* (LIEVEN, 2012)

This analysis seeks to rectify the notion that the high occurrence of terrorist activities within Pakistani territory or the connivance (and sometimes acquiescence) of the government with the use of militant groups as proxies in Afghanistan and India represents a lack of state control over terrorism. However, it cannot be denied that terrorist attacks constitute a major burden on the security and development of the country, nor that it is a complex problem and difficult to solve in the short term. The large scale that terrorism has acquired in recent years and the heinous atrocity of the acts have increasingly prompted the Pakistani authorities to take stronger action. In the current administration of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, a crucial event was the massacre, in December 2014, at a school in the city of Peshawar, capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which killed 141 people, including 132 children. In response to what was considered the most lethal terrorist attack in the country's history, Prime Minister Sharif and the head of the Armed Forces, General Raheel Sharif, drew up a national plan to combat domestic terrorism that has resulted, at the time of writing this article, in the death of 3,400 members of terrorist groups and the destruction of 837 operational bases, including much of their infrastructure[9].

While such statistics show an undeniable progress, there is still a long way to go in order for the Pakistani government to defeat, or significantly weaken, extremism in the country. Another recent attack that had great repercussion domestically and abroad was the one that occurred on March 27, 2016, an Easter Sunday, in which 74 people, mostly women and children, died after the explosion of a suicide bomber in a park in the city of Lahore, and over 300 were injured. The attack was claimed by Jamaat-ul-Ahar, a Pakistani Taliban dissident group, which said it intended to target Christians. Most of the victims, however, were Muslims. The terrorist group also announced to Prime Minister Sharif that it had arrived in Lahore, capital of the country's most populous, most developed and safer province, Punjab, which is also the stronghold of the Nawaz faction of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), the party to which the Pakistani head of government belongs. Although there is an intense movement of terrorist groups in southern Punjab, most of the violence occurs elsewhere,

9 THE ECONOMIST, 2016.

notably in the Pashtun majority region of northwestern Pakistan, which the Punjabi elite considers as if it were another nation.

The PML-N had been accused for years of facilitating the activities of terrorist groups in the Punjab and of having deals with such movements. In early 2014, the Pakistani government started to openly negotiate a ceasefire with some of these groups. However, the terrorist attack at Karachi International Airport in June of that year, which resulted in the death of 11 security guards, 9 military personnel and 10 terrorist fighters, interrupted the dialogue. In response, Pakistan's armed forces launched a major military offensive in northern Waziristan, one of the main strongholds of the Pakistani Taliban, and Punjab governor Shahbaz Sharif, the prime minister's brother, began to confront the militias in the province. Public support for anti-terror activities has grown and skyrocketed in the wake of the Peshawar school massacre.

However, the strength of the military can also be, paradoxically, an obstacle to the obtainment of more governmental powers for the fight against terrorist groups. An example is the case of the Rangers paramilitary group, which obtained permission from the Sindhi provincial government to deal with criminal gangs and terrorists in the city of Karachi. The group was able to reduce crime in the city, but also turned against corruption schemes in which the Pakistani People's Party (PPP), which rules the province, was allegedly involved. Thus, the governor of Punjab and the prime minister, who, by the way, suffered a *coup d'état* when he was in power in 1999, are hesitant to grant a legal mandate for the army to operate freely in Punjab, even though, in practice, extrajudicial operations are being carried out.

Another more obvious difficulty in combating terrorism is that it is not enough to fight groups already constituted, but it is also necessary to prevent the intolerance and hatred that are born, as indicated previously, within society and in educational institutions such as madrassas. In February 2016, the death sentence of Mumtaz Qadri, who worked as a bodyguard for ex-Punjab governor Salmaan Taseer and murdered him in 2011 on because of his criticism of the country's blasphemy law, was carried out. Taseer had said that the blasphemy law, which determines punishments ranging from imprisonment to death penalty for those who insult the precepts of Islam, has no clear definitions and is enforced arbitrarily, as in the case of the Christian citizen Asia Bibi, who was sentenced to death for having allegedly insulted the prophet Muhammad during an argument with Muslim women who were annoyed by the fact that she had drunk water from an utensil that belonged to them. More than 100,000 people attended the funeral of Qadri in the city of Rawalpindi and 10,000 protested against the government in the capital Islamabad. Some authorities threatened to use force against 2,000 of the protesters who camped outside Parliament, but eventually they went away after hearing from MPs that there would be no change in the blasphemy law.

The fight against terrorism in Pakistan, therefore, is a complex subject and calls for incisive action not only in the military field, but also in changing thoughts and habits deeply rooted in the Pakistani society. If, on the one hand, the notion that the fall of the Pakistani state is imminent or inevitable because of the threat of terrorist groups can be challenged, on the other hand, the widespread violence disturbs investors and foreign companies in the country and damages its image in the world. Therefore, it would be also of direct interest to Brazil the improvement of the security situation in Pakistan. It should also be mentioned that heroin produced in Afghanistan is entering Pakistani territory, especially in Baluchistan, to be exported from Pakistani ports such as Karachi and Gwadar.

Greater control over extremist violence could also help promote tourism, which has great potential, as there are ruins of ancient civilizations in the country and natural attractions such as the Karakoram mountain range, home to some of the highest peaks in the world. The problem of terrorism is, therefore, an urgent matter to be resolved.

3. Pakistan's Economy

More than a quarter of Pakistan's GDP and two-fifths of its labor force are concentrated in the agricultural sector, reflecting the fact that the majority of the population still live in the countryside, despite the rapid urbanization in recent years. Most of the industry is focused on food processing and the production of textiles, which are the main export items of the country. The service sector, although mostly informal and composed of small-scale businesses, represents about half of the GDP. Remittances of Pakistani workers residing abroad, which currently correspond to more than $ 1 billion per month, are an additional pillar of the Pakistani economy.

As a result of the political and macroeconomic instability in recent years, in addition to the effects of the global economic crisis of 2008-2009, the Pakistani rupee has depreciated by more than 70% since 2007. Economic growth, however, is currently recovering, despite the fact that foreign investments have not yet reached the pre-crisis level and that the country's economy is very vulnerable to the fluctuation of world demand due to the low diversification of its exports. Regarding public finances, after a small fiscal surplus between 2010 and 2011, there were persistent deficits due to the high import price of oil and the decrease in the price of cotton, an important export product. However, the decline in the oil barrel price contributed to the reduction of this fiscal deficit in 2015. The growth of the country's international reserves has also provided more stability to the economy as a whole.

In 2013, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) lent $ 6.7 billion to Pakistan, conditioning it on the reduction of the fiscal deficit (to 5.8 percent of the GDP); a 30% increase in the electricity tariff; creation of a new tax on gas; and the privatization of 65 state-owned enterprises. In December 2015, the IMF released a $ 502 billion loan installment, despite the government's failure to meet three of the agreed targets. Risk agency Moody's recently awarded grade B3, which reflects a moderate economy, to Pakistani governmental bonds, and outlined a stable outlook for the future. Much of the expectations of foreign direct investment in Pakistan, and also of economic progress for the country as a whole, are associated with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project. The project encompasses the Chinese strategy to develop the western region of the country and may reduce the risks of instability in the Xinjiang province. The corridor is part of the Chinese initiative of the One Belt One Road. At an initial cost of $ 20 billion, the project will establish a 2,000 km land connection between Kashgar in Xinjiang and the Gwadar Port in Pakistan, which is currently controlled by China's Overseas Ports Holding Company.

The Pakistani energy matrix is mainly made up of hydrocarbons (gas accounts for 31.9% and oil for 24.7% of the total). Renewable energy sources have a considerable participation (34.5% of the total), especially the use of traditional biomass, mainly for cooking and heating processes. In order to reduce reliance on foreign supplies of fossil fuels and to promote broader access to energy for the local population, the Pakistani government has sought to increase investments in the hydroelectricity sector, in addition to developing initiatives for the generation of energy from other renewable sources, under the guidance of the Pakistan Renewable

Energy Technologies Council (PCRET). In 2003, the "Alternative Energy Development Board" (AEDB) was created, with the aim to expand renewable sources in the country's energy matrix, especially with incentives for private investment.

There are also projects to build the Diamer Basha and Bunji hydroelectric plants, both in the north of the country, as well as plans to build medium and small power plants. Such ambitious prospects demand a large contribution from external investments, which has motivated the search for international partners. According to a report by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the country aims to have, by 2020, the capacity to generate 1,000 MW. Also according to the report, Pakistan has high potential for the generation of wind energy, solar energy, hydropower and geothermal energy. The Pakistani government also places great hope on regional projects such as the Central Asia-South Asia Power Project (CASA 1,000) and the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline (TAPI), both in early stages of implementation. Iran is also seen as a key player in the country's energy supply.

However, despite the progress and great potential for improvement with ongoing projects, much remains to be done in order to improve the Pakistani economy. The low tax collection capacity, legal insecurity, management problems and power cuts that often plague the productive sector, are factors that significantly damage the country's economy, in particular the textile sector, one of its flagships. Another major challenge is the improvement of the health and education systems, which do not adequately serve a growing and increasingly urban population.

Brazil is Pakistan's main trading partner in Latin America and there is significant potential for increasing bilateral trade flows. The main products exported by Brazil to Pakistan are, in general, commodities like soy, cotton, iron and steel scrap, as well as plastics, wood and paper. Imported goods from Pakistan include textiles, medical and surgical instruments, soccer balls – the official 2014 World Cup balls were manufactured by a Pakistani company – and leather goods.

Conclusion

Despite the many challenges that it faces, Pakistan is also strong and resilient. Terrorism and natural disasters, especially floods, are serious threats to the population, but it is possible to prevent and minimize the damage caused by these two problems. In the case of terrorism, there have already been advances, which can be measured by the decrease in violence and the advance of government control over areas formerly dominated by the Pakistani Taliban. Damage from floods can also be prevented with the improvement of infrastructure and the help of foreign institutions and companies. And we must always take into account the great economic potential of Pakistan, which can be fully achieved after the correction of structural failures in its economy, the medium-term advantages of the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor, ambitious energy projects and an improved connectivity with Central Asia.

Due to its internal problems, Pakistan's international position and ability to influence the course of the region are often underestimated by political analysts, but the country's course of action is key to determining the outcomes of the war in Afghanistan, which is the main focus of the geopolitical tensions in Central and Southern Asia. It is important, therefore, that Brazil, an emerging power interested in world security issues, watches the developments in Pakistan's regional environment and the fight against terrorism, always taking into account the complexities of this issue.

In this chapter, I have tried to demonstrate that, despite the negative associations inherent to Pakistan, it is important that Brazilian diplomacy does not lose sight of the potential that exists in bilateral relations, from the point of view of economic relations and bilateral cooperation. During the period in which I worked in the Central Asia Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is responsible for the political relationship with Pakistan, I had contact with several diplomats and other Pakistani authorities who have shown, on several occasions, how positive Brazil's image is in Pakistan and the growing interest that Pakistani citizens have for our culture. We must, therefore, seize this precious diplomatic capital in order to boost the relationship with this important Asian nation.

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CHAPTER 12

BRAZIL-AFGHANISTAN RELATIONS: ANATOMY, DIAGNOSIS AND PROGNOSIS

Thomaz Alexandre Mayer Napoleão[1]

The purpose of this chapter is to present a comprehensive survey of the political, economic, social, and intellectual ties between Brazil and Afghanistan, based on the author's direct experience with the subject and research on primary and secondary sources.

The exercise has three complementary dimensions. Firstly, we will study the anatomy of relations, that is, the trajectory of the Brazilian-Afghan dialogue from its genesis to the present (2017), as well as the different aspects of Brazil's engagement with international debates on the successive conflicts afflicting Afghanistan since 1979. We will then examine the state of the art of the partnership between Brazil and Afghanistan, whether on a bilateral basis, in interregional mechanisms – such as the BRICS –

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or in multilateral organizations, especially the UN and its Security Council. Lastly, we will present a prognosis for the future evolution of the relations, including feasible proposals.

The present text also seeks to help fill an evident gap in the bibliography of international relations in general and the history of Brazilian foreign policy in particular. Although there is an abundance of literature on crises in contemporary Afghanistan, as well as numerous works that study Brazilian involvement with other crises in the Muslim world, there are virtually no publications of any kind specifically dedicated to the Brazilian-Afghan relationship. It is hoped that the work will be useful to diplomats, academics and journalists interested in the subject.

1. Bilateral convergences and divergences in the 20th century

In the first half of the 20th century, geographic distance and the precariousness of the media and transportation, coupled with sporadic domestic turbulence in Afghanistan, limited the effectiveness of bilateral relations.

Brazil did not immediately react to the independence of Afghanistan, enshrined in 1919, following the third Anglo-Afghan war. Although both countries participated in the multilateral system of collective security established by the League of Nations, there was no coincidence between the Brazilian (1920-1926) and Afghan (1934-1946) presence in the organism. With the exception of Persia of the Qajar dynasty, which had maintained diplomatic relations with the Brazilian government since 1903, the other neighbors of Afghanistan – the Soviet Union and the Indo-British Raj – had no formal ties with Brazil before World War II, which made the dialogue between Kabul and Rio de Janeiro even more difficult.

It was only in 1933 that the contacts between the governments of Brazil and Afghanistan were formalized through a Treaty of Friendship signed in Ankara by the respective plenipotentiaries with Turkey, the ambassador – and future chancellor – Mário de Pimentel Brandão and his Afghan counterpart Sultan Ahmed Khan[2].

Diplomatic relations would be confirmed in 1952, which allowed Brazil to establish a non-resident legation with Afghanistan in February 1953, initially cumulatively with the Brazilian embassy in Karachi, then the Pakistani capital[3]. Only nine months later – and perhaps at the request of the Afghan government, whose relationship with Pakistan is historically tumultuous – cumulativity was transferred to the Brazilian embassy in New Delhi[4]. The seat of cumulative relations would again be changed to Islamabad in 1966[5]; and, finally, to Tehran in 1968[6]. The legation of Brazil with Afghanistan, resident in Iran, was raised to embassy in 1969[7].

During the long and stable reign of Zahir Shah (1933-1973), Afghanistan's foreign strategy consisted in the search for neutrality

2 There is a certain opacity about the date of launch of bilateral relations. The Treaty of Friendship of 1933, besides forming per se mutual recognition between sovereign states, states that "the High Contracting Parties shall have the right to establish between themselves diplomatic and consular relations, in accordance with the Law of the Nations." The 1952 MRE yearbook reports that Brazil decided to establish diplomatic relations with Afghanistan that year, when it agreed to create a legation in Kabul (Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1952, p.35). It is interesting to note that there is no mention of the 1933 Treaty in the Itamaraty packages prior to 2009 – the year in which the Afghan embassy in Washington, cumulative with Brazil, compiled a historical account of the bilateral ties and confirmed the existence of the Treaty of 1933, which had been forgotten. The author suggests the interpretation that diplomatic relations began in 1933 and were confirmed in 1952.

3 Decree No. 32343, of February 28, 1953.

4 Decree No. 34635, of November 17, 1953.

5 Decree No. 58648, of June 16, 1966.

6 Decree No. 63229, of September 10, 1968.

7 Decree No. 64648, of June 4, 1969.

and equidistance in the context of American-Soviet bipolarity[8]. There were few contacts between Brazilian and Afghan authorities during this period, although both governments converged in the genesis of multilateral initiatives of interest to developing countries, such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and its the Group of 77 (G77), both launched in 1964. Even after the conception of the Independent Foreign Policy, which underpinned the diversification of Brazilian partnerships since 1961, political and economic relations with Kabul remained incipient, although cordial.

The violent change of regime in Kabul with the so-called Marxist-Leninist "Saur Revolution" in 1978 and the subsequent military intervention of the USSR in the following year negatively impacted the bilateral relationship. Brazil did not recognize the legitimacy of the new Afghan authorities and supported successive United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions that repudiated the Soviet incursion[9]. The theme was raised in all Brazilian speeches at the opening of the UNGA General Debate between 1981 and 1989, when Brazil described the USSR's campaign in Afghanistan as "a violation of the principles of non-intervention and self-determination of peoples" (Chancellor Saraiva Guerrero, 1981), "occupation of a sovereign country" (President Figueiredo, 1982) and "attempt to interfere in internal political processes by technical force or infiltration" (Chancellor Saraiva Guerreiro, 1984)[10].

8 Afghanistan was one of the only non-European countries to adopt neutrality during World War II. For the same reason, it was not among the founders of the UN, although it was one of the first to join the organization in 1946. Later Afghanistan was among the 29 participants in the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung in 1955 and among the 25 founders of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961. It remained officially unaligned throughout the Cold War, including during the Soviet military intervention of 1979-1989.

9 AG/RES. A/ES-6/2 of January 14, 1980, and subsequent.

10 SEIXAS CORREA, Luiz Felipe (org.) *Brazil and the United Nations*, 1946-2011, p. 496, 505 and 535.

In 1984, Brazil would also endorse a resolution by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) creating a special report, linked to the UN Commission on Human Rights, to investigate human rights violations in Afghanistan occupied by the USSR[11].

In the late 1980s, and in the more cooperative international context of *perestroika*, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, negotiated under the Geneva Accords, was positively welcomed by Brazil and allowed a gradual resumption of bilateral relations. Overcoming a long period without high-level official contacts, the two countries held meetings between ministers (Abreu Sodré and Abdul Wakil in 1987) and presidents (José Sarney and Mohammad Najibullah in 1988) in New York.

When the Soviet venture in Afghanistan came to an end, in 1988-89, Brazil was an elected member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) after a twenty-year hiatus outside the organ. In that capacity, the country voted in favor of sending the United Nations Good Offices Mission to Afghanistan and Pakistan (UNGOMAP), which between 1988 and 1990 would oversee the observance of the Geneva Accords and the organized withdrawal of the Red Army[12]. The then permanent representative of Brazil, Ambassador Paulo Nogueira Batista, insisted on the need to endorse Ungomap by a resolution, rather than by a simple exchange of notes between the Secretary-General and the Security Council, as the superpowers preferred – if adopted, that procedure would have minimized the possibility of accountability of the Mission[13].

11 Resolution E/1984/37 of the ECOSOC, dated May 24, 1984. The special rapporteur existed until 2005.

12 UNSCR 622 (1988) of October 31, 1988. In fact, Ungomap had been in operation since May 15 of that year; the Council only corroborated it with five months' delay.

13 BATISTA, Paulo Nogueira. Presidindo o Conselho da Segurança da ONU. *Política Externa*, v. 1, n. 3, 1992.

After the collapse of the communist regime in Kabul in 1992, the new Afghan government, which was the result of a fragile alliance of mujahedin factions, considered opening an embassy in Brasilia. This intention was presented to Brazil during a conference for the signing of the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, in Paris in January 1993. The initiative was abandoned, however, as a result of the subsequent fragmentation of political authority in Afghanistan, which would face a new stage of civil war.

As a member of the UNSC in the 1993-1994 biennium, Brazil endorsed presidential statements by the Council expressing concern about the suffering of civilians in Afghanistan, urging the parties to the dispute to cease hostilities and reiterating the need for a peaceful and democratic transition of government in the Asian country. It also endorsed the activities of the United Nations Special Mission for Afghanistan (UNSMA), established by the UNGA[14]. From 1993 to 2001, Unsma coordinated international humanitarian assistance to the Afghan population and sought to reconcile belligerent factions. These efforts, unfortunately, were not successful. Once the Cold War ended, Afghanistan was largely neglected by the majority of the international community. Simultaneous conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Somalia were of greater political, diplomatic and journalistic interest than the collapse of the Afghan political order – culminating in the occupation of most of the country from 1996 to 2001 by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, better known as the Taliban.

Brazil never acknowledged the legitimacy of the *de facto* government of the Taliban, which quickly gained international outrage over its grave violations of human rights and its explicit

14 UNGA Resolution A/48/208 of December 21, 1993.

support for the Al Qaeda terrorist network[15]. In the words of the then permanent representative of Brazil to the UN, Ambassador Celso Amorim, "no political movement, regardless of the territory it controls, will gain international respectability as long as it is perceived as a bastion of terrorist activities"[16]. Although the Taliban exercised effective control over Kabul for more than five years, Brazilian diplomacy preserved formal ties with the deposed government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani, who continued to represent Afghanistan at the UN and other multilateral agencies.

Back to the Security Council in 1998-1999, Brazil voted in favor of stringent economic, flight and arms sanctions against the Taliban and its ally Osama bin Laden, both formally considered terrorists by the UN since then[17]; supported UNSMA efforts to facilitate peace negotiations, including through the so-called 6+2 Format (China, USA, India, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Iran and Uzbekistan); has called for an end to foreign interference in Afghanistan; and condemned ethnic-sectarian persecution, abuses against women and girls and attacks on diplomats, journalists and aid workers by the Taliban[18].

2. Brazil and Afghanistan after September 11

The United States military campaign in Afghanistan[19], launched in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, was not challenged by Brazil, on the understanding that

15 Only three countries – Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan – recognized the Taliban as the legitimate representative of the Afghan people in the 1990s.

16 Statement by Ambassador Celso Amorim at the 3921st UNSC meeting, August 28, 1998.

17 UNSC Resolution 1267 (1999) of October 15, 1999.

18 FONSECA Jr, Gelson (org). *Brazil in the UN Security Council* 1998-1999, p. 141-149.

19 The then Brazilian ambassador to Islamabad examined the context and consequences of the US intervention in ARANTES JR, Abelardo. O conflito de 2001 no Afeganistão e suas implicações para a ordem internacional. *Política Externa*, v. 11, n. 1, p. 41-65, 2002.

such actions were backed by the right to individual or collective self-defense, as provided for in Article 51 of the UN Charter and recognized by Security Council[20]. In estimating that the global fight against terrorism would not entail "hesitations, nor compromise," then-President Fernando Henrique Cardoso stressed that such a fight should not be triggered "against a people, a state or a religion," and said he hoped that operations would prevent the loss of innocent lives[21].

At the Organization of American States, then-Foreign Minister Celso Lafer proposed the application of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (TIAR), in a gesture of solidarity with the United States and as a legal framework for hemispheric cooperation in the face of the threat posed by terrorism[22]. Following this, the UNSC authorized – and Brazil accepted – the formation of interim government structures in Kabul through the Bonn Accords and the creation of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF, of which NATO would later assume command) to stabilize Afghanistan.

In that context, while diplomatic relations with Afghanistan remained suspended, Brazil began to provide humanitarian assistance to the Asian country. The first gesture was the reception of 23 Afghan refugees who were protected by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and were resettled in Rio Grande do Sul in April 2002.

Brazil was again called upon to occupy a rotating seat at the UNSC at a decisive juncture in Afghan history between 2004 and

20 UNSCR 1368 (2001) of September 12, 2001.

21 Note from President Fernando Henrique Cardoso on the start of military operations against targets in Afghanistan, October 7, 2001.

22 Statement by Foreign Minister Celso Lafer at the XXIV Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization of American States, September 21, 2001.

2005. The biennium corresponded to the end of the post-Taliban institutional transition phase, the so-called Bonn Process, with the entry into force of a new constitution and the first democratic elections in Afghan history – the 2004 presidential elections and the 2005 parliamentary elections. It was, however, a time of gradual deterioration in the domestic security situation, with the strengthening of the Taliban insurgency and the gradual expansion of ISAF/NATO for the Afghan interior. Absorbed by the concomitant confrontation in Iraq, the US devoted insufficient resources to the cause of Afghan stabilization, whose diplomatic visibility was limited[23].

In October 2003, the Brazilian Mission to the UN formulated 23 parameters to mark the country's position in the Security Council discussions on Afghanistan in 2004 and 2005. The document identified, in a premonitory way, challenges that would later be exacerbated, including the urgency of consolidating the authority of the Afghan state through judicial reforms and the restructuring of the security apparatus; the importance of international investment to restore the Afghan road network, assist internally displaced persons and support the voluntary repatriation of refugees; and the need to discern the reconstruction projects conducted by rom the activities of civilian humanitarian organizations to avoid duplication of efforts and the "mistaken association between the Counter-Terrorism Coalition forces and the UN and NGO staff"[24].

In a time of optimism that may have been exaggerated over the performance of the international project in Afghanistan, Brazil was already alert to the risks posed by deteriorating security, lack of progress in human rights, delayed disarmament, demobilization

23 TOMSEN, Peter. *The Wars of Afghanistan*. New York: Public Affairs, 2011.

24 Delbrasonu ostensible telegram 2166, October 16, 2003.

and reintegration of former combatants and by the failure of attempts to eradicate the poppy[25].

Despite these difficulties, the end of the post-Taliban transition and the assumption of Afghanistan's first democratic government created the ideal conditions to formalize the resumption of diplomatic ties between Brasilia and Kabul in 2004. It was decided that Brazil's cumulative relations with the Afghanistan would be accompanied by the embassy in Islamabad – and no longer by the Brazilian representation in Tehran, as it had been since 1968[26]. Normalization of relations allowed the Afghan ambassador in Washington to present credentials in Brasília as his country's cumulative representative in September 2004 and for the Brazilian ambassador to Islamabad to make the same gesture in Kabul in March 2006.

3. Bilateral partnership reaches peak

Once resumed bilateral relations, Brazil intensified its political involvement with the international campaign to stabilize and develop Afghanistan. This movement occurred, explicitly or implicitly, from the confluence of several factors, such as the strategic decision to expand the Brazilian presence in Asia, understood as the most dynamic pole of the world economy[27]; the emphasis on diplomatic universalism and South-South relations during President Lula's term; and the awareness that Afghanistan, whose peculiar geography places it among the regional security complexes[28] in South Asia, the Middle East and Central Asia, plays

25 Statement by Ambassador Ronaldo Sardenberg at the 5025th meeting of the UNSC, August 25, 2004.

26 Decree No. 5073, of May 10, 2004.

27 In the same tone, and also in Asia, Brazil opened or reopened embassies in Colombo (2005), Astana (2006), Pyongyang (2008), Daca (2009), Yangon (2010) and Kathmandu (2010), among others.

28 BUZAN, Barry & WAEVER, Ole. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security.*

and will continue to play a decisive geopolitical role on the Asian continent.

On the other hand, the Brazilian mood may have been partially curbed by the continued presence of NATO, whose military activities, although authorized by the UNSC, did not necessarily represent a sustainable contribution to regional stability and national reconciliation in Afghanistan. Brazil is traditionally skeptical of Atlantic Alliance tendencies to handle "concepts and strategies that raise problematic and sensitive issues", as well as its practice of "unilaterally defining its sphere of action beyond the territories of its members", in the words of the then chancellor Antonio de Aguiar Patriota[29]. NATO's military role in Afghanistan tends in practice to eclipse the UN's civilian presence in the country, coordinated since 2002 by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which carries out political, humanitarian and state support tasks, domestic reconciliation and regional cooperation.

As of 2006, Brazil has been present in most of the high-level multilateral events dedicated specifically to the Afghan issue, such as political conferences, donor conferences and regional economic cooperation.

In the first Brazilian participation in such meetings, in London[30], the then Minister Celso Amorim reflected on the principles that should guide the international engagement in favor of Afghanistan:

> *What happens in Afghanistan matters to its neighbors in Central Asia; for the United States and for Europe.*

29 Statement by Minister Antonio de Aguiar Patriota at the 7015th UNSC meeting, August 6, 2013.

30 The 2006 London Conference launched the "Afghanistan Compact", which identified goals and priorities for the Asian country over the next five years, organized in three areas: security; governance, rule of law and human rights; and social and economic development.

> *But it also matters for Latin America and, of course, for Brazil. The road to peace and reconstruction, designed in Bonn, provided the necessary guidelines to overcome an inheritance of social and economic stagnation, political violence and external interference. [...] The construction of peace is not exclusively a security task. Institutional reconstruction must go hand in hand with economic and social development. [...] Afghan political experience challenges the false paradigm of the "clash of civilizations." People from diverse backgrounds are looking to work together for a better and safer future. Neglecting Afghanistan had a high price. We need to prevent this from happening again by promoting enhanced international cooperation and comprehensive political dialogue*[31].

In all, Brazil participated in eleven conferences alluding to the subject in the last decade, always defending the guidelines of the political solution to the conflict, through a process of peace and reconciliation under Afghan leadership; continued international cooperation to foster the economic and institutional development of the Asian country; and the centrality of the United Nations to the future of Afghanistan[32].

In the opposite direction, Kabul sent delegations to the most significant international meetings organized by Brazil in recent

31 *Review of Brazilian Foreign Policy*, n. 98, 1st half 2006, p. 49.

32 Brazil participated in the donor conferences of London in 2006 (delegation led by Foreign Minister Celso Amorim), Paris in 2008 (Ambassador Ruy Nogueira), Tokyo in 2012 (Ambassador Alfredo Leoni) and Brussels in 2016 (Ambassador Everton Vieira Vargas); the political conferences of the Hague in 2009 (Ambassador Roberto Jaguaribe), Kabul in 2010 (Ambassador Alfredo Leoni), Bonn in 2011 (Ambassador Everton Vieira Vargas) and Tashkent in 2018 (Ambassador Antônio Salgado); and the regional economic cooperation conferences (RECCA) of Dushanbe in 2012 (Ambassador Alfredo Leoni), Kabul in 2015 and Ashgabat in 2017 (Ambassador Claudio Lins). In most cases, Brazil was the only Latin American country present.

years, namely the III Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations in Rio de Janeiro in 2010; the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, or Rio+20, also in Rio de Janeiro in 2012; the III Global Conference on Child Labor, in Brasilia, in 2013; and the X Internet Governance Forum in Joao Pessoa in 2015. This activism is remarkable in light of the challenging political and budgetary circumstances of Afghanistan.

At the same time, visits by senior Afghan officials became more frequent to Brazil, which received – for bilateral visits or multilateral events – the then ministers Zalmai Rassoul (Foreign Affairs) and Mohammad Asif Rahimi (Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation); Vice-Chancellor Atiqullah Atifmal; and the then ambassador in Washington, Said Tayeb Jawad. There has not yet been a presidential visit between Brazil and Afghanistan, but the then presidents Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Hamid Karzai held two bilateral meetings in New York on the sidelines of the UNGA in 2006 and 2008[33].

Since 2007, Brazil has also publicly and systematically monitored and repudiated the most serious incidents of violence in Afghanistan. The Foreign Ministry (also known as MRE or Itamaraty) issued at least 27 press releases condemning terrorist attacks, civilian kidnappings and assassinations in the country.

33 Interviewed by veteran journalist Clóvis Rossi at the 2008 World Economic Forum in Davos, Karzai compared Lula to Indian leader Jawaharlal Nehru for having "a vision, not just for Brazil, but for the world." The Afghan president said he was informed that Brazil was manufacturing "very good airplanes," but regretted that it did not have the resources to buy them; the reporter suggested, humorously, that Lula "donated a plane to Afghanistan." Curiously, something very similar would happen years later, when 20 Embraer Super Tucano aircraft, acquired by the US Air Force, were ceded to Afghanistan. *Folha de S. Paulo*, January 25, 2008.

Apparently discontinued between 2012 and 2014, the Brazilian practice of officially executing such crimes was resumed in 2015[34].

As NATO members prepared to exponentially reinforce the Western military presence in Afghanistan in order to confront the Taliban insurgency between 2008 and 2009, Brazil was even invited by the United States to provide security assistance, possibly contributing financially to the cost of the Afghan army. The proposal was declined for political, budgetary and principled reasons – Brazil has traditionally not been involved in security initiatives in which design it did not participate[35].

For the fifth time since the beginning of the Afghan wars, Brazil held an elective term in the Security Council for the 2010-2011 biennium. The era was neuralgic for monitoring and surveillance of Western military campaign in the Asian country, then at the APEX[36]. It was the context of the execution of Osama bin Laden in northern Pakistan, in 2011 – an episode that symbolically signaled the decline of the "war on terror" proclaimed a decade earlier; the beginning of the gradual military, political and security transition

34 Press Releases from the MRE condemned the kidnapping of South Koreans in Afghanistan on August 10, 2007; attacks on a hotel in Kabul on January 13, 2008; against the Indian embassy in Kabul on July 7, 2008; against UN officials in Kabul on September 28, 2009; again against the Indian embassy in Kabul on October 9, 2009; attack on UNAMA headquarters in Mazar-e-Sharif on April 1, 2011; against strategic buildings in central Kabul on September 14, 2011; the assassination of former President Burhanuddin Rabbani on September 20, 2011; attacks on the Ashura holiday on December 8, 2011; in Jalalabad on April 15, 2015; against the Spanish embassy in Kabul on February 13, 2015; against Tolo TV's team in Kabul on January 21, 2016; new attacks in Kabul, on April 19, 2016; against army cadets, on June 30, 2016; against peaceful demonstration in the capital on July 23, 2016; against a mosque in Kabul on October 12, 2016; on Emirati and Afghan diplomats on January 12, 2017; near the Supreme Court of Afghanistan on February 8, 2017; on a hospital in Kabul on March 8, 2017; near Mazar-e Sharif, on April 21, 2017; in Kabul, on May 31, 2017; in Herat, on August 3, 2017; an explosion in Lashkar Gah on August 24, 2017; attacks in Kabul on December 28, 2017; on voters in Kabul on April 23, 2018; on journalists and students in Kabul, Khost and Kandahar on April 30, 2018; and explosions in Nangarhar on June 19, 2018. The list is not exhaustive.

35 State Department Circular of April 1, 2009 and telegrams from the US Embassy in Brasilia on October 3, 2008, April 14, 2009 and December 3, 2009, all published by the Wikileaks website.

36 At its peak in mid-2011, ISAF/NATO had about 132,000 combat troops from more than 50 countries, including 90,000 US troops.

that would culminate in 2014 when ISAF/NATO was closed and the Afghan government became fully responsible for its self-defense[37]; and the moment when the reconciliation process between Kabul and the Taliban was endorsed at both the internal and external levels[38], with three parameters – insurgents should lay down their arms, break ties with terrorist groups and commit to respecting the Afghan Constitution, with its guarantees of human rights.

Always acting independently in the UNSC, Brazil was concerned about civilian casualties caused by the conflict; argued for the value of UNAMA and UN humanitarian agencies in Afghanistan; underlined the impossibility of a military solution to the Afghan question; and advocated the need for a political process and peace negotiations[39]. At the time, the hypothesis of dealing with the Taliban was still denounced, as a synonym for surrender, by influential Western, Russian, and Indian analysts[40].

Consistently with such an understanding of the nature of the Afghan situation, Brazil endorsed the “bifurcation” of the sanctions regime applicable to the Taliban and al-Qaeda in 2011, when separate embargo mechanisms were created against the two entities[41]. The purpose of this move was to encourage the peace process, with objective rewards – the promise of no further sanctions – for Taliban fighters to reconcile with the Afghan

37 Known as *inteqal* in Afghan Dari, the security transition corresponded to the “Afghanization” of the conflict – and not, of course, to the end of the war, which goes on. Once *inteqal* was accomplished, Afghanistan theoretically entered the so-called Decade of Transformation (2015-2024), the peace-building phase foreshadowed at the 2011 Bonn Conference, in which Brazil was present.

38 Between 2010 and 2011, the launch of the reconciliation process was approved by the Afghans in two *jirgas* (traditional assemblies) and endorsed by the international community at the London and Bonn conferences.

39 Remarks by Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti at the 6255th meeting of the UNSC on 6 January 2010.

40 For example, TELLIS, Ashley. *Reconciling with the Taliban?*

41 UNSC Resolutions 1988 (2011) and 1989 (2011), both dated June 17, 2011.

government. Members of the terrorist organization Al-Qaeda, by contrast, were considered irreconcilable. Also in 2011, Brazil was vice chair of the Taliban-specific sanctions committee (1988 Committee), a subsidiary body of the UNSC.

Complementing its political-diplomatic engagement with the Afghan issue, in the last decade Brazil has made timely contributions to humanitarian assistance and support for the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan, always through international institutions.

In 2008, during the International Conference in Support of Afghanistan in Paris, Brazil announced a US$ 100,000 contribution to the World Bank-administered Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF). The funds would be spent on financing school feeding and family farming projects. A new Brazilian donation of US$ 100,000 to ARTF was made in the following year.

In 2012, Brazil was the first country to collaborate – in the amount of US$ 250,000 – for the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), an initiative launched by UNHCR and the governments of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan to facilitate the voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration of Afghan refugees, as well as to support host communities.

4. Multilateral convergences

In addition to the international discussions on the Afghan conflict, since the resumption of bilateral relations, there has been a considerable identity of interests and positions between Brasilia and Kabul in multilateral forums.

A priority issue for both governments has been the reform of the UNSC. In 2005, Afghanistan supported and co-sponsored the draft resolution submitted to the UNGA by the G4 countries (Brazil, Germany, India and Japan), which would create ten additional seats in the Council – six permanent and four elective[42]. Ambassador Zahir Tanin, then Afghan permanent representative to the UN, facilitated intergovernmental negotiations on the reform of the UNSC for a long period (2008 to 2014) and was always open for dialogue with Brazil and the other G4 members.

Afghanistan has favored Brazilian candidates to the leadership of multilateral organizations, such as José Graziano da Silva's successful nomination to lead the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 2011. Brazil, in turn, supported Afghan membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), approved at the WTO Ministerial Meeting of Nairobi in 2015.

Brazil historically supports the comprehensive annual UN General Assembly resolutions on the political, security and human rights situation in Afghanistan, including through active and constructive participation in the corresponding negotiations, always facilitated by Germany, and had been co-sponsoring such texts since the fall of the Taliban. It ceased to do so in 2014, however, noting that the resolution adopted by the UNGA in that year[43] did not adequately address the need for a solid legal basis for NATO's new military mission in Afghanistan[44].

Other important UN documents on Afghanistan were co-sponsored by Brazil. This was the case, for example, of the UNGA

42 Draft resolution A/59/L.64 of the UNGA, of July 6, 2005; the text was not voted on.

43 UNGA Resolution A/69/18 of November 20, 2014.

44 The presence of ISAF/NATO in Afghanistan was legally grounded by the UNSC, which authorized such a multinational force in 2001 and periodically renewed its mandate until 2014. In contrast, the current Resolute Support Mission (RSM/NATO) has its legality based only on bilateral agreements and on an invitation by the Afghan government for NATO to keep troops in the country. UNSCR 2189 (2014) only "welcomes" the RSM/NATO, without authorizing it, and does not limit its mandate in temporal or material terms. In practice, since 2014 the Council has waived the prerogative to monitor and control the Western military presence in Afghanistan. Not having been created by the UNSC, RSM/NATO in theory cannot be discontinued by the Council.

resolution urging the Taliban not to destroy Afghan historical and religious heritage, such as the giant Buddhas of Bamiyan, in March 2001[45]; and the special resolution of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March of the following year on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan after the end of the fundamentalist regime[46].

During the re-examination of the human rights situation in Afghanistan by the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism of the Human Rights Council (UPR/HRC) in April 2014, Brazil praised the progress in the Afghan educational sector and made two concrete recommendations to the Asian country: to redouble efforts to curb violence against women, through the creation of reporting mechanisms, investigation and dissemination of laws in force; and to seek international cooperation to improve the electoral system. Both suggestions were accepted by the Afghan authorities[47].

5. Afghanistan in the perspective of the BRICS

Among the interregional diplomatic mechanisms with Brazilian participation, the one with the most systematic approach to the Afghan question is the grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS)[48]. Although there was no reference to Afghanistan in the final documents of the first three BRICS Summits (2009 to 2011), in the following years the group of

45 AGNU Resolution A/55/243 of March 9, 2001.

46 ECOSOC Resolution E/2002/27 of March 25, 2002.

47 Report of the HRC, A/HRC/26/4, April 4, 2014.

48 The India, Brazil and South Africa Forum (IBSA) also defines joint positions on Afghanistan, but such a mechanism does not promote presidential meetings since 2011.

emerging countries began to present, with increasing complexity, a joint position on the subject[49].

It was not by chance that Afghanistan was first discussed by the BRICS during the rotating presidency of the group member with the greatest interest in the subject – India. The New Delhi Declaration of 2012 prioritized a dual approach to the subject, balancing economic and security concerns. The document noted that Afghanistan "needs time, development assistance and cooperation, preferential access to world markets, foreign investment and a clear end-state strategy to attain lasting peace and stability." It affirmed its commitment to the emergence of a "peaceful, stable and democratic state, free of terrorism and extremism" in Afghanistan, and mentioned the importance of regional cooperation and combating illicit opium trafficking[50].

Significantly, the BRICS New Delhi Declaration did not spell out terms such as "peace", "reconciliation" or "dialogue" in the Afghan context. This bias reflected, most probably, the traditional Indian skepticism about whether to start political talks with the Taliban insurgency. The following year, under the South African presidency of the grouping, the eThekwini Declaration essentially repeated the same formula[51].

In 2014, when Brazil presided over the group for the second time, the common position of the BRICS *vis-à-vis* Afghanistan evolved visibly.

Besides reaffirming previous statements, the BRICS Declaration of Fortaleza brought three significant innovations:

49 It is curious that intra-BRICS coordination on Afghanistan only started after the year 2011 in which all five countries were members of the UNSC. OLIVEIRA, Ana Paula, UZIEL, Eduardo & ROCHA, Rafael. "The performance of the BRICS at the United Nations Security Council in 2011".

50 IV BRICS Summit: Declaration and Plan of Action of New Delhi, March 29, 2012.

51 V BRICS Summit: eThekwini Declaration and Plan of Action, March 27, 2013.

the recognition that "peace, security and development are closely interlinked" in the Afghan context; a call on the UN to play "an increasingly important role in assisting Afghanistan's national reconciliation, recovery and economic reconstruction"; and the advocacy of "a broad-based and inclusive peace process in Afghanistan which is Afghan-led and Afghan-owned"[52].

In the Ufa Declaration of 2015, the BRICS recapitulated the positions agreed in Fortaleza and also emphasized security issues dear to Russia, such as the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking. The document recalled the basic parameters of the Afghan peace process and warned of the "emergence and rapid growth of influence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" in Afghanistan. Referring to the country's "unprecedented growth in production of narcotic drugs," the document called for "more active measures to address the drug problem and to discuss it in all relevant international fora," including strengthening the Paris Pact on combating narcotics of Afghan origin[53].

Finally, the Goa Declaration of 2016[54] and the Xiamen Declaration of 2017[55] essentially reiterated the key positions of the BRICS concerning the political, security and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. The most notable addition was a stronger focus on the positive role played by regional organizations and processes, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the Heart of Asia Conference (Istanbul Process) and the Moscow Format of Consultations.

52 VI BRICS Summit: Declaration and Plan of Action of Fortaleza, July 15, 2014.

53 VII BRICS Summit: Declaration of Ufa, July 9, 2015.

54 VIII BRICS Summit: Declaration of Goa, October 16, 2016.

55 IX BRICS Summit: Declaration of Xiamen, September 4, 2017.

The comparison of references to Afghanistan in the last six declarations suggests that Brazil distinguishes itself from the other BRICS by its emphasis on the peaceful settlement of disputes, the promotion of development and the defense of multilateralism embodied by the United Nations – not by coincidence, three basic elements of Brazilian foreign policy. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that the geographical distance from the conflict allows Brazil to adopt principled positions that might not be feasible for the three BRICS members who are directly affected by the consequences of the Afghan instability.

6. Reality and prospects of economic relations

In light of well-known geographical, logistical and security barriers, Brazilian-Afghan trade has always been small. Bilateral commerce has grown significantly since the end of the Taliban regime but has remained at modest levels – evolving from US$ 1.5 million in 2001 to US$ 9.5 million in 2017, having culminated in US$ 12.7 million in 2013 and 2014, according to the Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services[56]. Brazil has a large surplus; its exports, concentrated in the sale of chicken meat, exceed 95% of the bilateral flow. Afghanistan exports small quantities of dried fruits and precious or semiprecious stones to Brazil, such as lapis lazuli.

The limited dimensions of the Afghan economy naturally limit the potential of trade with Brazil. According to the World Bank, in 2016 Afghanistan recorded a GDP of US$ 20 billion, with a per capita income of US$ 580 and 36% of the population below the poverty line[57].

56 Actual figures are likely to be larger, since much of Afghan imports are triangulated via the United Arab Emirates, Iran or Pakistan, and thus do not appear in bilateral trade statistics.

57 WORLD BANK, World Development Indicators, accessed on July 9, 2018.

Afghanistan is at the same time a least developed country, as recognized by the UNGA since 1971[58]; a country without access to the sea; and one of the self-proclaimed “fragile states” that make up the G7+ group. In addition to the uncertainty of the security situation and its precarious infrastructure, it faces structural economic vulnerabilities such as reliance on foreign assistance, the government’s low tax base, and the susceptibility to occasional droughts and food price shocks[59].

It is possible, however, to foresee a commercial expansion in specific sectors. Brazil is the second largest supplier of chicken meat to Afghanistan after the US, accounting for 27% of such sales[60]. If Brazilian business had greater direct access to the Afghan market, which could be facilitated by trade missions organized by APEX and ideally by the creation of a Brazil-Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce, it would be relatively simple to double the value of poultry meat exports for the Asian country.

In the long run, and considering that the Afghan government is heading for an internal conflict of low intensity and indefinite duration, Brazil could expand its presence as a supplier of weapons to Kabul. Especially promising will be sales of parts for the maintenance of A-29 Super Tucano aircraft, delivered by the US Department of Defense to the Afghan Air Force. Such patrolling, tactical support and light attack airplanes, ideal for Afghan geographical conditions, are finalized at the Embraer-Sierra Nevada consortium in Jacksonville, Fla., but their components are produced at the Embraer units in Botucatu and Gavião Peixoto, in the interior of São Paulo, and in several other Brazilian security

58 UNGA Resolution 2768 (XXVI) of November 18, 1971.

59 GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN. *Realizing Self-Reliance: Commitment to Reforms and Renewed Partnership.*

60 MIT, Observatory of Economic Complexity, accessed on: May 16, 2016.

and defense firms. In addition to the initial batch of 20 units, four of which came into operational use in 2016, it is possible that 20 to 35 additional aircraft will be commissioned by the Pentagon for assignment to Kabul.

Embraer's presence in Afghanistan, thanks to the A-29s, can be expected to contribute to the company's entry into the Afghan civil aviation market, which has grown rapidly in the last decade[61].

The expectation of a rapid resumption of trade between Brazil and Iran, as a result of the suspension of the multilateral sanctions that until recently weighed against the Persian country for its nuclear activities, could indirectly favor the enlargement of the exports to the Afghanistan. The Iranian deep-water port of Chabahar, now under construction in partnership with India, is expected to improve the connectivity and outflow capacity of Afghanistan and the rest of Central Asia, which will reduce the costs of trade between those countries and Brazil[62].

Investments in mining, however, promise the greatest potential for deepening bilateral economic relations. The Afghan subsoil comprises unexplored deposits of gold, copper, iron, lithium, niobium, molybdenum and cobalt, the total value of which is estimated by the US Geological Survey at about US$ 1 trillion[63]. For the time being, only two large-scale contracts were signed in the industry: in 2008, the Chinese consortium MCC, consisting of the China Metallurgical Group Corporation and the Jiangxi Copper Company, announced a US$ 3.5 billion investment in the Mes Aynak copper deposits; and in 2011, Indian and Canadian

61 The aircraft of the three major Afghan airlines – Ariana Airlines, Safi Airways and Kam Air – have, on average, more than 20 years of use, which indicates the need for fleet renewal in the near future.

62 India and Iran signed an agreement for the development of the port of Chabahar on May 23, 2016, with a forecast of $ 500 million of Indian investments.

63 PETERS, S.G., *Preliminary assessment of non-fuel mineral resources of Afghanistan*. USGS, 2007.

firms, led by the Steel Authority of India and Kilo Goldmines, won an auction to develop the Hajigak iron ore mine, a project which could reach US$ 11 billion. It may be expected that Brazilian firms with mining experience in unstable areas, such as Vale, might be interested in operating in Afghanistan in the future, even if only as part of larger multinational consortia.

Caution and patience are advised in addressing the issue, since the Aynak and Hajigak Mes projects have yet to yield tangible results. For the time being, investments in Afghan mining are hampered by the lack of energy and transport infrastructure; legal insecurity and the perception of corruption in certain areas; the risks arising from the presence of the Taliban in places with rich deposits, such as the province of Logar; and, in the case of Mes Aynak, for the need to preserve Buddhist relics excavated in the region.

Despite these obstacles, the extraordinary potential of Afghan mining should not be neglected by the Brazilian business community, particularly in light of the proximity between Afghanistan and the more dynamic economies of Asia, especially China and India, both significant importers of minerals and metals. From the Afghan perspective, such deposits could represent a decisive contribution to stability, development and poverty reduction, if they are to be exploited in a transparent, environmentally sustainable and socially responsible manner.

Economic ties between Brazil and Afghanistan could also be boosted by the Silk Road Economic Belt, a land pillar of the Belt, and Road (BRI) initiative, the most ambitious geo-economic enterprise launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping[64]. The project is expected to include some US$ 900 billion in infrastructure works in Eurasia, including railroads, highways, waterways, oil and

64 STOKES, Jacob. *China's Road Rules*: Beijing Looks West Toward Eurasian Integration.

gas pipelines, irrigation networks and fiber-optic cabling, which should improve regional connectivity and reduce transaction costs between the landlocked countries of Central Asia and the rest of the world. Endemic Afghan instability is the main negative externality affecting the Silk Road Economic Belt – which raises the expectation that Afghanistan will be explicitly included in the Chinese project soon[65]. BRI can also create opportunities for Brazilian contractors in Asia, at least in partnership with Chinese and local firms.

Likewise, one cannot rule out the possibility that Brazil participates, or indirectly benefits, from other interconnectivity projects that aim to integrate the physical environment of Afghanistan and to overcome the current regional shortage of logistics corridors. Because of its geographic specificities, Afghanistan is the natural bridge between Central Asian energy exporters and the densely populated societies of South Asia that are large importers of energy resources. This is the premise that motivates two initiatives already under way: the CASA-1000 (project of electric transmission lines between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan[66]) and the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline (TAPI)[67] – both financed by international financial institutions – and one in the planning phase, the Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TUTAP) power transmission line[68].

Finally, the newly launched financial institutions run by developing countries will be able to create spaces for the Brazilian

65 ZHOU, Andi. *Can China's 'One Belt, One Road' Save the US in Afghanistan?*

66 The CASA-1000 project, whose works were launched in 2015 and are expected to be completed in 2018, will allow the supply of 1000 MW to Pakistan and 300 MW to Afghanistan.

67 Designed in the 1990s, the TAPI pipeline is under construction since 2015 and is expected to allow the flow of 33 billion cubic meters of natural gas between Turkmenistan and South Asia.

68 MUDABBER, Zabihullah. *Afghanistan's Role in the Central Asia-South Asia Energy Projects.*

economic presence in and around Afghanistan. This is the case of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), led by Beijing, with Brazil among its founders, launched in 2015 and expected to play a key role in financing OBOR projects[69]. Also, the New Development Bank (NBD), linked to the BRICS and formalized in 2014, may subsequently make loans for public or private development projects in Afghanistan[70].

7. Rise and potential of technical cooperation

In 2006, Brazil and Afghanistan signed a Basic Agreement on Technical Cooperation, the first legal instrument to unite the two countries since the Treaty of Friendship of 1933. Promulgated in Brazil in 2010, the document was designed as a starting point for a diversified partnership program of bilateral agreements within the priority given by Brazilian foreign policy to South-South cooperation.

Following the Basic Agreement, in 2009, Brazil received a delegation of Afghan officials who visited the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa), the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), among other entities, to identify possibilities for cooperation in sectors such as soil recovery, irrigation techniques, agricultural crop improvement, biometric electoral registration and demographic census. In 2010, a new Afghan delegation

69 Brazil was the only country in the Americas to co-found AIIB, although its shares were drastically reduced in 2017 for budgetary reasons. China is the main shareholder with 31% of the subscriptions. Afghanistan joined the bank in 2017. The AIIB differs from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), which has Japan and the US as its main shareholders and has benefited Afghanistan since 1966 – but does not include Brazil.

70 Under the Agreement Establishing the NBD, the Board of Governors of the Bank may, by special majority, authorize support for public or private projects in a non-member developing country, "subject to the condition that it involves a material interest of a member" which certainly applies in the case of the direct interests of India, China and Russia in Afghanistan.

came to Brazil and participated in a course on Brazilian mineral legislation, offered by the Brazilian Association of Small and Medium Producers of Gems, Jewelry and Similars (Abragem) and the National Department of Mineral Production (DNPM) to visit gold mines and emeralds in Minas Gerais.

In the other direction, in September 2010, the then director of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), Marco Farani, coordinated the first Brazilian technical mission to Afghanistan, along with Embrapa, Abragem, DNPM and the Agricultural Research and Extension Company of Santa Catarina (Epagri). Two Complementary Adjustments on Agriculture were then proposed to the 2006 Basic Agreement, dealing with the rural extension and the agroecological zoning of Afghanistan. The documents would be signed during the Rio+20 Conference in 2012. In the same year, Afghanistan participated in an ABC course on public policies for gender equality and food security.

However, the fiscal shortage faced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the following years has reduced Brazil's ability to offer technical cooperation to developing countries, including Afghanistan. ABC did not have the material conditions to implement the two Complementary Adjustments for Cooperation in Agriculture signed in 2012; while the agroecological zoning initiative was discontinued, the rural extension project was reformulated on a more modest scale, becoming a short course to be offered by the University of Lavras to Afghan technicians. No original bilateral technical cooperation program has been launched since 2012, although the possibility of initiating a project of the IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) Fund in Afghanistan was envisaged. The low level of administrative capacity of the Afghan State represented an additional obstacle to the implementation of technical cooperation actions.

Should the Brazilian government overcome the current scenario of fiscal restrictions and re-engage in technical cooperation for the benefit of Kabul, it could be advantageous to establish triangular partnerships with countries or international organizations with previous experience in Afghanistan and a physical presence in that country. India, which has the largest portfolio of cooperation actions with Kabul among developing countries, could be invited to join Brazil in future works[71].

Agriculture, an economic sector that employs 40% of the Afghan workforce, tends to continue to play a predominant role in the technical cooperation agenda. In view of the geological and hydrological configuration of Afghanistan, whose territory is partly composed of steppes and deserts, Brazil could suggest cooperation projects for the sustainable management of water resources in semi-arid regions. A low-cost possibility would be to invite Afghanistan to initiatives that Brazil already has with the Arab world in this field, within the framework of the South American-Arab (ASPA) Summit, following the example of a workshop organized in 2011 by the National Institute of the Semi-Arid (Insa), in Campina Grande, for technicians from 33 Arab and South American countries.

The sharing of techniques and technologies to increase the productivity of Afghan crops would also make the Asian country more stable and secure. One of the main sources of financing for the Taliban and Afghan organized crime is the trafficking of narcotics derived from the poppy – a widely disseminated and

71 New Delhi has offered more than US$ 2 billion of cooperation to Kabul since 2001, including institutional capacity building, rural development, hydroelectric plant construction and higher education projects. The most visible example is the new seat of the National Assembly of Afghanistan, built by India and inaugurated in 2015.

profitable crop in Afghanistan[72], a country that represents the vast majority of global markets of opium (85%) and heroin (77%), according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)[73]. The Afghan government expressed its admiration for the Brazilian model of agribusiness and could receive assistance for the promotion of economically viable alternative crops and for the elaboration of policies of access to credit and market for Afghan agricultural production[74].

Finally, the energy sector is still not used in the bilateral cooperation agenda. Energy shortages are a structural obstacle to Afghanistan's economic development, which imports from its neighbors 78% of the electricity it consumes[75]. Only a third of the Afghan population has regular access to electric power[76]. Small hydroelectric plants represent a large part of Afghanistan's electricity production, which could benefit from Brazil's technical expertise to raise the productivity of its turbines and plan the expansion of its network. There is also considerable potential for the use of biofuels in Afghanistan, whose soil is suitable for seeds with a high proportion of vegetable oils, such as *Jatropha curcas*. Brazilian institutions, such as the Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV), could carry out feasibility studies in the area, as occurred

72 The only Afghan crop that is systematically more profitable than poppy is saffron, a seasoned crop produced in small quantities in that country, as it demands labor-intensive and rare geographical conditions, common only in Herat province. However, there is research suggesting that more common Afghan crops, such as grapes and pomegranates, could be more profitable than poppy if ideal conditions of irrigation and market access are created. Apud MANSFIELD, David. *State Built on Sand: How Opium Undermined Afghanistan.*

73 UNODC World Drug Report 2015, p. 42.

74 RAHIMI, Mohammad Asif. Afghanistan: Does Brazil Hold the Key to Afghan Stabilization? and CARRANCA, Adriana, Ashraf Haidari: Brazil Has the Key to Stabilizing Afghanistan.

75 Presentation by Deputy Minister for Mining and Oil of Afghanistan, Ahmad Javid Sadat. VI Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation for Afghanistan, September 3, 2015.

76 WORLD BANK. Afghanistan Country Update, April 2016.

in several Central American and Caribbean countries within the framework of trilateral cooperation involving Brazil and the USA.

8. Crossed views between Brazilians and Afghans

Human and social ties between Brazilians and Afghans are historically limited. In addition to not having a significant Afghan diaspora, Brazil was little affected by the successive flows of migration and refuge from Afghanistan since the 1980s[77].

The main Brazilian initiative to host Afghans occurred in 2002, shortly after the Taliban collapsed. At that time, Rio Grande do Sul received 23 resettled Afghans, previously refugees in India and Iran, as the first experience of the Brazilian Solidarity Resettlement Program, a partnership between the federal government and UNHCR[78]. Other Afghans would apply for asylum in the following years, but in isolation. According to data from June 2016 of the National Council of Refugees (CONARE), there are 62 Afghans recognized as refugees in Brazil.

The Brazilian community in Afghanistan is even smaller, now estimated at about ten people, although the absence of a resident embassy in Kabul makes it difficult to verify such statistics. Whether they are reporters[79], diplomats, academics or officials

77 In comparison, communities of Afghan origin in North America are estimated at 100,000 in the United States, primarily in the San Francisco metropolitan area; and 80,000 in Canada, especially in Toronto.

78 More than half of the 23 Afghans resettled in Brazil in 2002 would return to Afghanistan the following year, faced with the difficulty of learning Portuguese and getting suitable jobs.

79 Among the exceptions are Adriana Carranca, Igor Gielow and Lourival Sant'Anna, authors of the works *Afghanistan after the Taliban*, *Ariana* and *Journey to the world of the Taliban*, respectively. Other Brazilian journalists, such as Ana Paula Padrão, Cristiana Mesquita, Mauricio Horta, Patrícia Campos Mello, Roberto Cabrini and Samy Adghirni, produced reports in the Asian country, but for short periods.

of international agencies or humanitarian organizations[80], Brazilian citizens with significant direct professional experience in Afghanistan are rare.

The flow of Brazilian tourists to the Asian country is paltry, although for justified security reasons[81]. Nor are there any significant numbers of Brazilians fluent in Afghan languages, such as Dari (Afghan Persian) and Pashto, both of whom are almost unknown in Brazilian academia, although they are heirs to long literary traditions[82]. No less important, few Brazilian visual artists have depicted Afghanistan in their works[83].

One of the consequences of this lack of human ties is the absence of critical mass in Brazilian society to support and sustain the rapprochement between the respective governments. Unlike what occurs with Muslim-majority nations with a significant community in Brazil, such as Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians, there are no political leaders, business associations or class entities specifically dedicated to advocating for the strengthening of political and economic relations with Afghanistan.

Also as a result of the lack of direct and unmediated intercourse between the two societies, the Brazilian imaginary of the Asian

80 Brazilian humanitarian workers have already worked in Afghanistan for organizations such as Doctors Without Borders and the Red Cross. Unama had a Brazilian spokesperson, Manoel de Almeida e Silva, from 2002 to 2005. Some Brazilian citizens, usually US residents, have enlisted to fight in ISAF/NATO; the total contingent is unknown.

81 Afghanistan became a reasonably popular destination for alternative tourists – including Brazilians – in the 1960s and 1970s, as part of the hippie terrestrial trail between Europe and India. The situation changed abruptly in 1979, with the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and a theocratic revolution in Iran. Currently, the Brazilian embassy in Islamabad does not recommend non-essential travel to Afghanistan.

82 Unlike Arabic, Persian is rarely studied in Brazilian universities with a tradition in the teaching of Eastern letters, such as those of São Paulo (USP) and Brasília (UnB).

83 There are a few cases worth noting: Afghanistan was portrayed by the great Sebastião Salgado, in *Exodus*, 1996; by visual artist Arthur Omar in Travel to *Afghanistan*, 2002; and by the author, in photographic exhibitions in São Paulo, Brasília and New York between 2013 and 2014. Switzerland-based Brazilian Wolgrand Ribeiro co-directed the documentary *Kaboul Song*, released in 2014.

country is generally reduced to caricatures and orientalisms, in the sense of Edward Said. It is no exaggeration to say that most Brazilians see Afghanistan as an inherently arid, hostile and exotic land populated by oppressed women and violent men – as if the Taliban were in power until today[84]. Conversely, the Afghan perception of Brazil is still dominated by stereotypes, particularly related to soccer, the most popular sport in both countries. Overcoming such preconceived images will require a patient effort of mutual learning.

9. Brazil's place in Afghan foreign policy

Contemporary Afghan democracy is fluid and does not obey clear ideological standards, but it is possible to discern, in schematic form, two opposing trends in foreign policy priorities in Kabul.

On the one hand, a tendency favors the relationship with China, seen as a greater hope of attracting investments to the Afghan economy; as the inevitable center of gravity of regional geopolitics; and as the most effective external mediator of the peace process with the Taliban insurgency. This group defends a conciliatory attitude with the Pakistani authorities and adopts the utilitarian assumption that only Beijing would be able to put pressure on Islamabad – traditional protector of the Taliban – to collaborate for the success of the negotiations on the Afghan national reconciliation.

In contrast, a rival faction of the Kabul elites advocates the guidelines that guided Afghanistan's regional policy for most

84 Several literary or journalistic works on Afghanistan were translated into Portuguese and became best-sellers in Brazil, such as T*he Bookseller of Kabul* (Åsne Seierstad), *The Sewing Circles of Herat* (Christina Lamb), *The Underground Girls of Kabul* (Jenny Nordberg) and the literature of Khaled Hosseini, especially *The Kite Runner*, but it is possible to argue that some of these books contributed to romanticize the image of the Asian country.

of its recent history, namely tacit alliances with India and, to a lesser extent, with Iran and Russia. This school of thought is more hostile to Pakistan and shows great skepticism about the chances of success of the talks with the Taliban, to the point of seeking to intensify the armed struggle against the guerrillas.

Within the national unity government that has run Afghanistan since 2014, President Ashraf Ghani is the top exponent of the first line, which tends to prevail among members of the Pashtun ethnic group[85]; on the other hand the second one is led by the CEO[86] Abdullah Abdullah, alongside veteran commanders of the former Northern Alliance and a large part of ethnic minorities.

There are, however, many points of convergence between the opposing poles of Afghan foreign policy. Both recognize the need for lasting relations with NATO members and other industrialized governments whose military and economic assistance is still essential to ensure the physical survival and budgetary feasibility of the Afghan state. Both seek to maintain strong ties with the most influential Muslim majority countries, particularly Turkey and Saudi Arabia – two traditional sponsors of development projects in Afghanistan. More relevant to Brazil, both would like to diversify Kabul's international partnerships to include non-traditional partners, such as the emerging economies of the global South.

Years before assuming the helm of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani expressed admiration for the recent Brazilian trajectory. In his book *Fixing Failed States*, he cited the Real Plan as an example of a measure capable of restoring confidence in the state's capacity to establish and implement rules – clear monetary policy parameters,

85 Meanwhile, President Ghani's conciliatory stance at the beginning of his term of office weakened in 2016 as the peace process with the Taliban stagnated and new crises between Kabul and Islamabad.

86 Position equivalent to prime minister and created ad hoc after the 2014 presidential elections to accommodate Abdullah Abdullah, the candidate defeated in the second round.

anti-corruption and inflation control[87]. As the Afghan leader, he publicly requested Brazil and the other BRICS to strive to redefine the rules of the inter-state system; to define comprehensive counterterrorism strategies; and to unleash the potential for regional and global cooperation for development and poverty eradication[88].

His predecessor Hamid Karzai referred to Brazil on several occasions as "an example to be followed by all countries seeking development"[89]. In contacts with Brazilian interlocutors over the last decade, several Afghan authorities have recognized the positive role played by Brazil as an emerging power in the international political scene[90], and expressed their intention to make Brasilia the third great partner of Kabul in the Americas, alongside Washington and Ottawa.

It is symptomatic that the Afghan embassy in Brasilia was inaugurated in 2012, just as Afghanistan prepared for the negative effects of diminishing military, technical and economic assistance offered by NATO members. In the eyes of Kabul, Brazil is one of the only countries that represents a convincing alternative to reduce the current dependence on Western powers. The Brazilian position with regard to Central Asia is seen by Afghanistan as balanced and impartial, as it does not incorporate interventionist whims or direct geopolitical interests.

10. The unfinished project of resident embassies

On the strictly political level of the bilateral relationship, the most ambitious measure taken by Brazil and Afghanistan

87 GHANI, Ashraf. *Fixing Failed States*: *A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World*, p. 138.

88 Statement by President Ashraf Ghani during the BRICS Summit in Ufa, Russia, July 12, 2015.

89 Ostensible telegram 820 from the Embassy in Islamabad, October 31, 2011.

90 Ostensible telegram 1841 of the Embassy in Washington, July 16, 2008.

was the strategic decision, announced in 2010, to establish resident embassies in the respective capitals. Such a gesture can be interpreted as an inseparable part of the growing – and constructive – Brazilian engagement with the geopolitical disputes of the Muslim world, which culminated precisely in that year[91].

The Brazilian embassy in Kabul was legally created in September 2010, through a presidential decree[92]. Three months later, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a precursory administrative mission to the Afghan capital to study the conditions of installation, personnel and security of the diplomatic missions residing on the site.

However, the process was not followed up and the post was never actually installed. The successive restrictions on the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2011, coupled with uncertainties about security conditions in Afghanistan, led to the indefinite postponement of the process. The mishaps faced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the long and costly process of reopening the Brazilian representation in Baghdad after the 2003 Western military intervention may have served as a counterexample and reduced Brazil's willingness to establish a physical presence in the Afghan capital.

The Afghan government, meanwhile, inaugurated an embassy in Brasília – its first in South America[93] – in December 2012. Over the next three years, Afghanistan was among the only countries with a seat in the Brazilian capital without reciprocity[94],

91 Also in 2010, Brazil mediated, alongside Turkey, the Tehran Declaration on Iran's nuclear program; promoted his first presidential-level visit to Israel and Palestine; diplomatically recognized the State of Palestine; and decided to participate in the UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon (UNIFIL) as the leader of its maritime task force – the Brazilian contingent would arrive the following year.

92 Decree 7288, dated September 1, 2010.

93 Communist Afghanistan maintained an embassy in Cuba in the 1980s, but closed it in the following decade.

94 The other countries in this situation were Burundi, Fiji, Macedonia and Mongolia.

though only at the level of *chargé d'affaires*. Finally, noting that Brazil's presence in Kabul would not take effect in the short term, the Afghan Chancellery temporarily closed its representation in Brasilia in December 2015, when the Afghan embassy in Washington returned to being a non-resident mission to Brazil.

The return to the *status quo ante*, pre-2010, was confirmed in January 2016, when a new presidential decree determined that the Brazilian embassy in Kabul will be, until its actual installation, cumulative with the Brazilian representation in Islamabad[95].

This solution is understandable in light of the current Brazilian economic situation, but it is not ideal. There are numerous reasons to believe that the reciprocal establishment of resident embassies would be highly beneficial to Brazil's interests and priorities in the world.

At the strategic level, lack of presence in Kabul makes it difficult to monitor the global problems that affect – or may affect in the future – the security of Brazil, such as drug trafficking and terrorism; forces the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to depend on secondary sources, such as the UN, the press and the academic community, to obtain information about Afghanistan; and keeps Brazil as a minor player in multilateral debates on the subject[96], which "undermines the legitimacy of the Brazilian campaign for reform of international institutions such as the Security Council," according to analysts such as Oliver Stuenkel[97].

95 Decree 8646, of January 28, 2016.

96 One concrete example: ambassadors from some 50 countries comprise the International Contact Group for Afghanistan, which since 2009 has been the main platform for political and diplomatic coordination on the Afghan issue. Because it has no resident presence in Kabul, Brazil is not part of the mechanism.

97 STUENKEL, Oliver. "Retreat or normalization in Brazilian foreign policy?" *Folha de S. Paulo* and "Brazil is abandoning its global ambitions?" *Post Western World*. Brazil is the only G4 member without an embassy in Kabul.

Establishing an embassy in the Afghan capital would allow for the provision of consular assistance more effectively to the Brazilian community in the Asian country. It would facilitate the monitoring of one of the poles of the current global crisis of migration and refuge. It would also promote bilateral initiatives for technical cooperation, humanitarian assistance and the promotion of human rights.

As for the economic potential, the installation of a post in Kabul would allow a local network of contacts that would contribute to the Brazilian entrepreneurship having access to the ambitious infrastructure projects that are unfolding in Central Asia, particularly within the framework of the Chinese enterprise of the Silk Road Economic Belt, as well as providing access to the vast untapped mineral resources of Afghanistan.

In light of the security conditions in the Asian country, it is undeniable that the embassy installation would have significant budgetary implications for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but there are at least three alternatives to establish a physical presence in the Afghan capital at relatively modest costs i) to host the representation, at least temporarily, in a safe hotel[98]; ii) consider the physical sharing of the embassy with another country[99]; and iii) take advantage of the recent closure of small embassies of governments that have withdrawn their troops from Afghanistan to rent or purchase property in Kabul that already has adequate security and communications infrastructure without the need for

98 It was the solution adopted by countries like Australia, Canada and Estonia when installing their presence in Kabul.

99 Although this practice is not usual for Brazil, something similar has already been done: Brazil and Argentina have an agreement on reciprocal consular assistance (2001) and have studied the possibility of establishing consulates at the same physical location – an experiment was the 2018 World Cup in Russia, when Brazil and Argentina kept a joint consular office in Saint Petersburg. In Kabul, there were cases of physical space sharing between embassies, such as Germany and Hungary; and the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

expensive and time-consuming reforms[100]. There are concrete and feasible precedents for all these administrative solutions.

In the short term, a viable option to mitigate Brazil's absence in Afghanistan, at no cost, would be the creation of an honorary consulate in Kabul, subordinate to the embassy in Islamabad[101]. This was the formula found by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to establish a Brazilian indirect presence in remote Central Asian countries, such as Kyrgyzstan[102].

11. Conclusion: prognostics and proposals

The current Brazilian political and diplomatic circumstance is conducive to reflect on the need for an *aggiornamento* of the guidelines that guide our relationship, as a state and society, with Afghanistan. Three recommendations are applicable.

The first step would be to avoid the impulse to understand Afghanistan from a negative perspective *a priori*, as if such a country represented only a perennial source of risks and threats.

It is not a question of neglecting the security dynamics still linked to Afghan instability, such as the phenomena of terrorism, trafficking in opiates, the illicit circulation of small arms and the mass influx of refugees and migrants. It would be foolish to do so. Rather, it is to recognize that the trajectory of the Asian country is complex and allows a multiplicity of narratives. As Robert Crews has demonstrated in a recent work, in historical perspective Afghanistan is not an isolated, provincial land but a global nation whose merchants, artists and thinkers have contributed decisively

100 With the end of ISAF/NATO, Belgium, Estonia, New Zealand and Poland closed embassies in Kabul.

101 There are three honorary consulates – Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar – linked to the embassy in Islamabad.

102 In 2017, after the original version of this book was published, Brazil indeed opened a honorary consulate in Kabul.

to the material and intellectual progress of Asia in particular and of humanity in general[103].

Specifically, one can understand the Asian country not as a mere theater of war, but also as a democracy in the process of institutional maturation; as an expanding market of nearly 30 million citizens and consumers; as the matrix of an ancestral and sophisticated culture, situated in the historical and geographical confluence of great civilizations; as the seat of the most important virgin mineral deposits in Asia; and as a developing country whose international interests are often in line with those of Brazil. These readings are complementary, non-exclusive.

The second recommendation, a logical corollary of the first, would be to stimulate the creation of genuinely Brazilian thinking about Afghanistan, stripped of fatalistic or Orientalist prejudices. With rare exceptions, our academic[104], journalistic[105] and diplomatic[106] analyses on Afghanistan are exclusively informed by foreign sources – which in turn reflect political agendas and historical experiences alien to Brazil, from the imperial Great Game to the Western "War on Terror", and tend to reproduce prejudiced views of Afghanistan as "a nest of fundamentalisms" a "graveyard of empires" or a "failed state".

103 CREWS, Robert. *Afghan Modern:* the history of a global nation.

104 According to Bank of Theses and Dissertations in International Relations of the Institute of Research in International Relations (IPRI), which catalogs about 3,300 academic documents (consultation in May 2016), fewer than ten doctoral theses or dissertations defended in Brazil related to Afghanistan, and even then only as a case study. Such research, including that of the author, examined, among other subjects, the effectiveness and legality of US military intervention since 2001; practical and doctrinal issues of counterterrorism, counterinsurgency and peacebuilding; and the triangular relationship between Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

105 See note 79, supra, on the rare Brazilian journalists with experience in Afghanistan.

106 Among the more than 2,300 pages of the illustrious compendium of *Brazilian Diplomatic Thought* (FUNAG, 2013), published in three volumes, there is no reference to Afghanistan, either direct or indirect.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has adequate tools to help fill this shortage of Brazilian specialists in Afghan affairs. In addition to editing this volume – a highly commendable initiative – FUNAG could organize seminars focused on the political, economic and cultural specificities of Afghanistan, as well as the potential of bilateral relations. The subject could be included in events such as the Islamic World: Society, Culture and State courses, promoted by MRE and the Federation of Muslim Associations of Brazil (FAMBRAS). The hypothesis of training Afghani diplomats at the Rio Branco Institute, as it came to be considered in recent bilateral contacts, would be equally promising.

Finally, the third suggestion is the most demanding: we must have a sense of urgency. Although the Afghan conflict undoubtedly creates practical obstacles to the deepening of bilateral relations, it is not necessary to wait for the end of hostilities to promote the effective rapprochement between Brasília and Kabul, including the establishment of a mutual diplomatic presence and the resumption of technical cooperation.

An important precedent is represented by another Asian developing country, with a demographic dimension similar to that of Afghanistan and also influenced by British colonialism, which – like Afghanistan – faced a long domestic insurgency, suffered for decades with the scourges of terrorism and sectarian violence, suffered foreign military interventions and, after all, was able to achieve peace, economic development and democratic normality in an autonomous, albeit imperfect, way: Sri Lanka[107]. During the civil war in that country (1983-2009), Brazil and Sri Lanka

107 The analogy between the Afghan and Sinhalese wars is not the work of the author, for it was raised by several of his academic and diplomatic interlocutors in Kabul over the years. Like all comparisons, it is imperfect; it should be remembered, for example, that the Tamil Tigers have always maintained a local ambition, and – unlike the Taliban – have never explicitly allied themselves with terrorist groups with universal pretensions, such as Al Qaeda.

inaugurated resident embassies on a reciprocal basis, multiplied the commercial exchange, promoted several high-level visits and initiated partnerships in agriculture.

There is no insurmountable barrier for something similar to occur with Afghanistan.

Besides the option of installing embassies, already mentioned, other solutions could, at low cost, add content to the relations between Brazil and Afghanistan. It would be feasible to institutionalize a bilateral mechanism for regular political consultations, in a format similar to those that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintains with several countries in the region, such as Pakistan, Kazakhstan and Iran, in order to seek greater convergence between the Brazilian and Afghan chancelleries. In addition to the UNGA and other meetings at the UN, the BRICS mechanism is the ideal platform for Brazil to have direct and regular access to top leaders in Afghanistan, taking advantage of the synergy between such a group and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which has Kabul as an observer and candidate for membership.

It is enough to make recurring the practice of 2015, when there was a joint summit between BRICS and SCO in Ufa. This would be simple to repeat in the years when the BRICS rotating presidency falls on Russia, India or China.

At the United Nations, a promising hypothesis would be to encourage the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) to address the Afghan issue. Such a path would interest Brazil, which recently (2014) chaired the PBC and seeks to strengthen it within the framework of the multilateral architecture of peace and security[108].

108 Although Afghanistan is not on the Commission's agenda, the PBC Working Group on Lessons Learned held two meetings (2007 and 2015) to examine the Afghan experience of institutional consolidation.

By way of conclusion, a broader comment on the role that Afghanistan plays in Brazilian diplomatic thinking could be made.

Since the September 11, 2001 attacks, Brazil understands Afghanistan primarily as the locus of a conservative and "diversionary" redefinition of the international agenda, with greater emphasis to security and militarization, to the detriment of Brazilian priorities, such as trade and development[109].

Our Afghan policy since then may have been tempered and modulated by the critical reflexes of the Brazilian Foreign Office to the most harmful aspects of the post-Cold War international order. By keeping a safe distance from Afghanistan and the Western politico-military enterprise that involves it, Brazil has implicitly moved away from myopic stabilization approaches that favor the use of force and underestimate the need for political dialogue and socioeconomic development; from the selective relativization of the principle of non-intervention; from the temptation to impose liberal political models by means of hegemonic instruments[110]; and in particular from the "outsourcing" of peace and security tasks to military alliances or *ad hoc* coalitions of dubious mandate, to the detriment of multilateralism at the United Nations. In Brazilian diplomatic reasoning, the Western adventure in Afghanistan has become a counterexample to the need for a multipolar and cooperative world order[111].

These positions remain fully valid and current. However, after fifteen years since the fall of the Taliban regime, and after three democratic presidential elections in Afghanistan, the moment may be conducive to dissociating the two levels of analysis. In

109 BARBOSA, Rubens Antônio. *Os Estados Unidos pós 11 de setembro de 2001:* implicações para a ordem mundial e para o Brasil.

110 TOURINHO, Marcos. *For Liberalism without Hegemony*: Brazil and the Rule of Non-Intervention.

111 PATRIOTA, Antonio de Aguiar. Brazil and the Shaping of a Cooperative Multipolar Order.

other words, it would be appropriate to deal with the Afghan government and society *per se*, on the basis of an independent judgment, grounded on Brazilian interests and values, on the merits and risks of relating to Kabul – and not in a subordinate way to the systemic concern about with the consequences of NATO's protracted intervention in Central Asia.

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CHAPTER 13

CONTEMPORARY IRAN: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE AND RELATIONS WITH BRAZIL

Rodrigo Alexandre Oliveira de Carvalho[1]

1. General considerations

Iran, a Central Asian country located in the region that has been known as the Middle East, has always had strategic importance in its geopolitical environment.

Heir to the traditions of ancient Persia and situated at the crossroads of various civilizations (having been one of the most relevant and influential cultures of mankind in its own right), it played a crucial role in the history of classical antiquity and in the formation of Middle-Eastern and Central Asian societies.

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In recent times, the country has gained expanded international visibility, not always for the best reasons, but generally in close correlation with its innate vocation to relevance, often even projected from its regional dimension to the world scene. Revealing, in this regard, is the multifaceted geographical condition that Iran enjoys. In the east, the country borders Afghanistan and Pakistan. To the northeast, its geographical space is demarcated by the beginning of the territory of Turkmenistan. To the west, it neighbors Iraq and Turkey. To the north, it divides its borders with Azerbaijan and Armenia, being also bathed by the Caspian Sea. To the south, there are the coasts of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, separated from each other by the Strait of Hormuz. There are seven immediate neighbors, not counting those who share with that nation the space of the Caspian Sea and the two Gulfs. It is therefore understood why Iran is a country at the crossroads of routes between Europe, the Middle East, the Caucasus, Central, South and East Asia.

The topography of the country also lends itself to the role of instrument for the understanding of its characteristics as a nation, as well as of the spatial distribution of its population. The Iranian landscape is dominated by rugged mountain ranges, which separate several river basins and plateaus. The western part, most populous, is also the most mountainous, with mountain ranges such as those of Zagros and Elburz (the latter, home to the highest point of the country, the Damavand, with 5,604 m). The eastern portion generally comprises uninhabited desert areas, such as Dasht-e Kavir.

The territory of Iran has large plains only on the coast of the Caspian Sea and on the northern tip of the Persian Gulf, to its limits, at the mouth of the Arvand (Shatt al-Arab). Minor and discontinuous plains occur on the remainder of the coast of the Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman.

The Iranian climate is generally arid or semi-arid, although the region along the Caspian Sea is subtropical. Many experts believe that the geography and topography of Iran (and particularly its mountains) have helped to shape its political and economic history over the centuries. As seen, the mountainous region is home to several plateaus, where urban centers were established, based on agriculture. The typical urban arrangement of these areas was characterized by the existence of larger nuclei, around which a myriad of small villages of tribal origin orbited. It should be recalled that the water resources in these areas are noticeably more generous than in other parts of the Iranian territory.

From a historical point of view, present-day Iran is, in general terms and simultaneously, the legacy, on the one hand, of the sophisticated Persian civilization and, on the other, of the Islamic influence, which was imposed following the Arab invasion of its territory in the seventh century. It may be said that the country would be roughly the result of the syncretic mixture and symbiosis of these two significant cultures and references. Its language, for example, is Farsi, which was inherited from its Persian past but is written in Arabic characters, as a result of the islamization of the country, fourteen centuries ago.

A fair comprehension of the current Iranian reality demands some knowledge of its historical and geographical situation, without overlooking the way the country interacts with the international community today. Those who are interested in pursuing this task will be rewarded with the understanding of nuances of one of the most important nations in the world, both from a historical and strategic points of view. They will also be provided with useful elements to identify aspects of the realities of the Middle East and Central Asia, as well as of the broader set of contemporary international affairs, in which these regions play a particularly prominent role.

1. Historical data

The territory currently occupied by Iran has been inhabited since prehistoric times. The nation's written history began with ancient Persia, around 3,200 BC. In about 1,500 BC, certain Aryan tribes of Indo-European origin, originating from Asia, settled on the Iranian plateau, among which were the Medes and the Persians. In 653 BC, the Medes were conquered by the Scythians, a nomadic people of equestrian shepherds. They were able, however, to later free themselves from the Scythian yoke, after which they began to extend their influence to the Persians.

In 555 BC, Cyrus, perhaps the most influential Persian leader, initiated an insurrection against Astyages, king of the Medes. He was victorious and united Persia and Media under his rule. The Persian conqueror, nicknamed "the Great", was the first Achaemenid king and adopted an energetic and ambitious expansionist policy, maintained by his successors, Cambyses II and Darius I (under the latter's administration, the Achaemenid Empire would reach its apogee). As a result of these conquests, the Empire came to dominate a vast area, that stretched from the Indus Valley to the Black Sea, including Palestine and Egypt. It was, in fact, the greatest Oriental empire in ancient history.

Alexander the Great conquered Persia in 331 BC, adding it its notoriously vast empire. After his death, the Persian territory was divided among his generals. This partitioning, which involved disputes and litigation, progressively weakened Persia, leaving it vulnerable to warlike attacks by opponents, who would come later. One of Alexander's generals founded the Seleucid dynasty, which lasted approximately a century, until, on account of successive attacks organized by Persian rebels, it gave way to the formation of the Parthian Empire, in 230 BC. That empire prospered until the moment it came across the colossal forces of the Roman Empire, to the West.

The wear and tear provoked by military clashes with the Romans opened space for a province partially located in southern Iran to proclaim its independence and to the annexation of areas surround it. The Sassanid Empire, the third great Iranian dynasty, was thus born. It is still considered by many as the golden age of the Persians (this period indeed played a pivotal role in the consolidation of the Iranian national identity).

The Sassanid kingdom expanded on the ruins of the Parthian Empire and flourished, cultivating the memory of Achaemenian greatness. The Sassanids spoke the Pahlavi language, ancestor of modern Farsi, and promoted a model of government based on Zoroastrianism, one of the oldest monotheistic religions of mankind, founded approximately 3,500 years ago by the philosopher Zarathustra. The Sassanid emperors used their absolute power to create a clerical hierarchy at the service of the state, in a model very similar to that adopted by the current Islamic Republic.

At its height, the Sassanid Empire stretched from present-day Uzbekistan to Egypt and was envied for its sophistication and development. Persia then experienced a time of great commercial, economic, artistic, scientific and intellectual prosperity, thus becoming a magnet for thinkers of neighboring empires and of all walks of life, who saw in the Persian Empire a safer and more tolerant space for the exercise of intelligence.

In the external arena, though, the antagonism between the Sassanids and their archrival Byzantine Empire (heir, as it is known, of the Roman Empire in the East) weakened the Persian Empire. That situation was aggravated by the incursions of the Huns and the Turks, to the East. This environment paved the way for the subsequent invasion of Persia by Arab tribes, highly motivated by the faith revealed to them by Muhammad and, above all, politically united under the banner of Islam.

The conquest of Persia by the Muslim Arabs, between 641 and 651, would lead to its integration, as a province, first into the Umayyad Caliphate based in Damascus, and from 750 onwards to the Abbasid Caliphate based in Baghdad.

Despite the Arab domination of the Persian nation, there was a fruitful exchange between the two cultures, which was evident, for example, in the adoption by the Abbasid Caliphate of the Sassanid administrative organization and of Persian habits. In the tenth century there was even a revival of Persian literature, heavily wedded to poetry, a tradition that remains in present-day Iran and which undoubtedly represents a central aspect of that country's culture and identity.

In historical terms, however, the Abbasid rule over Iran lasted only for a short period of time. In 946, the Iranian Buyida dynasty overcame the Arabs, fully rescuing the Persian identity and culture. At that time, the Farsi orthography appeared, as a mixture of Arabic letters and grammar, with consistent remnants of the ancient Pahlavi language. The current alphabet used in Iran is derived from this historic symbiosis.

In the beginning of the 11th century, Persia was again captured by foreign forces. This time, the invaders were Sunni warriors of Turkish ethnicity, the Seljuks, who came from deep in Asia and laid down the ideological basis of what would later become the Ottoman Empire. The Turkish warriors were, however, eventually annihilated by Mongol invasions starting from the 13th century.

The Persian territory became, during this period, an area reduced to ruins and debris. By the end of the fifteenth century, the region was fragmented among small states, traumatized by the trail of barbarism left by the forces of Genghis Khan and his successors.

It was in this context that, between 1501 and 1736, Persia came to be dominated by the Safavids. The founder of this dynasty, Ismail I, took the city of Tabriz, transformed it into the new capital, adopted the title of Shah. Its people then reunited the smaller Persian states under its control. The Safavids proclaimed Shiite Islam as the official religion and, through proselytism and force, converted the population to this religious doctrine (a population that, victim of years of Mongol violence, was vulnerable and seeking protection, even if it was of a religious nature).

The golden age of the Safavids occurred during the reign of Abbas I, who reorganized the army and transferred the capital to Isfahan (hence far from the Turkish-Ottoman threat). The decline of Safavid Persia began right after the death of Abbas I, during the reigns of Safi (1629-1642) and Abbas II (1642-1667).

In 1722, Persia was invaded by Afghan tribes, who took the province of Isfahan. In 1736, after expelling the Afghans, Turkman leader Nader Shah, one of the chiefs of the Afshar tribe, founded the Afsharid dynasty. Nader Shah extended his dominions to the East, having invaded India in 1738, where he looted local treasures, later transferred to Iran.

The Afsharid dynasty was succeeded by the Kurdish-Zand dynasty (1750-1794)[2], founded by Karim Khan, a tribal chief of the Fars region and former general in the forces of Nader Shah, who established his capital in Shiraz. Karim Khan ruled until 1779, in a

2 The Zand, who had been exiled by Nader Shah on the steppes of the historical region of the Iranian Coronation, returned, under the leadership of Karim Khan, to occupy their original territory in Lakestan.

climate of relative peace and prosperity. When Khan passed away, however, the Zand dynasty declined sharply and proved incapable of maintaining the stability it had inherited from the its greatest leader.

The country then went through a new period of turmoil that lasted until 1794, when Agha Muhammad Khan Qadjar, head of a Turkish tribe, founded the Qadjar dynasty, perhaps the most wasteful and deleterious in Iranian history. It would remain in power until 1921, moving in an arena where the new powers – imperial Russia and the British Empire – would exert great political influence on the Qadjari kings. Iran, on the other hand and even in this period of decadence, was able to formally maintain its sovereignty as a country.

During the reign of Fath Ali Shah, the country was defeated in two wars with Russia, that had as consequence the loss of Georgia, Dagestan, Baku and the Caucasian Armenia.

There was, on the other hand, a period of modernization in Iran, initiated during the reign of Shah Nasser al-Din. In this time, measures were taken against corruption, schools were created, roads built, as well as a telegraph and a postal system.

To carry out his modernization plan, however, the Shah took colossal loans abroad, which in turn ruined the country's finances, a situation aggravated by the Court's lifestyle, characterized by exacerbated ostentation and luxury. In addition, the aspiration to modernize the country displeased conservative forces, like the orthodox clergymen, who brought about the Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1921, the overthrow of the Qadjar dynasty and the elaboration of a Constitution that limited imperial powers.

One cannot ignore, on the other hand, that the reputation of that dynasty as neglectful of financial austerity and, above all, of the well-being of the Iranian people contributed to their downfall. Within this context, General Reza Khan (later Pahlavi), rose to power in a coup orchestrated by the British. The new leader formally requested the international community, represented at the time by the League of Nations, to refer to his country as Iran ("Land of Aryans"), rather than Persia. The term Iran has always been, in fact, more frequent among the Iranians themselves to denominate their own country.

In 1941, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union invaded Iran in order to assure the *de facto* ownership of the country's oil reserves for themselves. The Shah was forced to abdicate in favor of his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, in whom they saw a ruler who would be more favorable to their immediate interests. In 1953, following the nationalization of the Anglo-American Oil Company, the subsequent conflict between the Shah and the nationalist Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh led to the deposition and arrest of the latter, with the support of Western powers. Until today, this episode is seen by many in Iran as a betrayal of the Persian nation.

The reign of the Shah became progressively dictatorial, especially in the late seventies. With US and British support, Reza Pahlavi continued to modernize the country, but his insistence on crushing the opposition of traditional Shiite clergy and democracy advocates made his regime lose legitimacy and support, giving rise to the Islamic Revolution that brought it down.

In 1979, religious leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini returned to Tehran from France, after 14 years in exile, to start the Islamic Revolution. It should be noted that the Ayatollah had already engaged in intense underground campaigning against the Shah's regime, with proselytism and the collaboration of charismatic Shi'ite clerics operating throughout the Iranian territory.

Supported in its initial phase by the majority of the population and by different ideological factions, the Revolution led to the exile of Shah Reza Pahlavi and the installation of Ayatollah Khomeini as the country's highest leader. An Islamic Republic was then established, with conservative laws inspired by the Sharia, the rigid legal and moral code of Islam, and under the control of the Shia orthodox clergy. Post-revolutionary Iranian governments have openly criticized the West and the United States, in particular for the support given to the Shah. Opposition to the Ayatollah's regime was harshly repressed, causing disillusionment among parts of the population initially engaged in this new political alternative. This was particularly true within the local intelligentsia.

The Tehran regime later went on to support anti-Western militant groups such as Hezbollah in Lebanon, based on the concept of "exporting the Revolution." In 1980, Iran and Iraq engaged in a destructive war waged by Iraqis eager to counter the expansion of the Revolution and convinced that the Islamic Republic was weak and vulnerable. With Western support, Iraq began a tense and cruel conflict that lasted eight years and claimed a significant number of civilian lives. The Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein believed that the invasion of Iran would be an easy task, a fact that revealed a profound lack of knowledge of the Iranian national character, built on the notion of tenacity and on concepts such as martyrdom, sacrifice and self-immolation inherited from Persian Shi'ism.

Domestically, the growing differences between the orthodox clerical establishment and the ideological vanguard factions that initially supported the Islamic Revolution gave rise to the current competition between reformers and conservatives, which has manifested itself in the political sphere. The victory of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the 2005 presidential election has brought renewed tensions between Iran and Western countries, especially as regards the Iranian Nuclear Program, which in turn worsened internal political divisions. In 2009, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was re-elected on international suspicions of fraud, a fact that instigated uprisings among the Iranian population, energetically repressed by the authorities (a fact that was interpreted by some experts as evidence of the country's democratic fragility).

In the year 2013, the moderate cleric Hassan Rouhani was elected president of Iran in the first round, by defeating three conservative candidates with 72% of the votes. The election was held amid a severe economic crisis triggered by the international sanctions imposed on Iran as a result of its controversial nuclear program (and four years after the conservative Ahmadinejad's victory, contested in street protests). He was re-elected in 2017, with 57 per cent of the votes, a fact that was regarded as a verdict on Rouhani's policy of opening up Iran to the world and his efforts to rebuild its stagnant economy.

Iran's economy has experienced slow but consistent growth since the historic agreement with the P5+1 Group (US, UK, France, Russia and China, plus Germany) in July 2015. The so-called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) at first provided for the suspension of multilateral and unilateral secondary sanctions[3] related to the Iranian nuclear dossier.

The path to the complete integration of Iran into the international community has, on the other hand, been full of mishaps and challenges, one of the most important and being its reintegration into the international financial system. The decision of the United States to leave the JCPOA in 2017 and the existence

3 The lifting of secondary unilateral sanctions covers only non-US companies and individuals interested in doing business with Iranian partners in currencies other than the US dollar (European companies, for example, such as Airbus, which has delivered the first aircraft acquired in the post-JCPOA period to state-owned Iran Air). The primary sanctions applied by the United States continue to restrict the formation of trade links between Iranian and US companies.

of unilateral American sanctions related to issues such as human right violations and terrorism sponsorship present a considerable obstacle to achieving this objective in the near future.

2. Internal political situation

President Hassan Rouhani was elected in June 2013 on a platform that envisaged the strengthening of Iran links with the international community, a possible solution to the nuclear issue, ways of tackling the economic sanctions, better relations with neighboring countries and an increasing role in the regional context. Internally, the Rouhani platform had as priorities the recovery of the economy, the promotion of social and economic development and some progress in the human rights arena.

In his first mandate, Rouhani prioritized the nuclear issue. In doing so, he faced opposition from conservatives well placed in the Majlis, the Judiciary and the religious establishment. The president took over the government with a conservative (two-thirds) majority in parliament and often had to deal with the resistance from influential members of the Judiciary, the security apparatus and the religious leadership, especially when he sought to move forward on human rights-related issues and social liberties, topics which were of particular importance to his supporters and to reformist sectors of the Iranian society that helped to elect him.

The Iranian president counted on the strategic support of the President of the Parliament Ali Larijani, a moderate leader who played an essential role in parliamentary articulation, including the ratification of the "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action". The JCPOA represented not only a victory of Rouhani's diplomacy, but also altered the balance of internal political forces. Elections for Parliament and for the Assembly of Experts, held in February 2016, strengthened the Rouhani administration. There was a second round for the *Majlis* elections in April, which resulted in a total of 42 percent of the 290 available seats going to Rouhani's allies. The margin could be even greater, as the independent candidates, mostly sympathetic to the current administration, took 30 percent of the seats. Add to this the fact that the victory of the moderate-reformist leader was undisputed in Tehran: all 30 seats reserved for the capital were occupied, in the first round, by the pro-government coalition. Important conservative parliamentarians of the opposition were not elected and were therefore out of the political game.

In May 2016 Ali Larijani was re-elected as President of the Parliament, a fact which, while on the one hand could be seen as not so auspicious to Rouhani (who expected the election of the defeated reformist candidate, Mohamad Reza Aref), on the other guaranteed the continuity of the vital support provided by Larijani in the legislative sphere.

The political consolidation of the Rouhani group also served as a catalyst for so-called independent parliamentarians or those that represent religious minorities, something that eventually provided the government with a relatively comfortable majority in the Majlis, a prerequisite for speeding up the reform process desired by Rouhani and his supporters.

In the Assembly of Experts, an important collegiate composed of 88 clerics charged with supervising and electing the Supreme Leader, the February 2016 results also favored the pro-government coalition, by re-electing Rouhani and strengthening the figure of Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani, then a prominent political figure in Iran, a former president of the Islamic Republic and former commander of the Revolutionary Guard, aligned with the moderate-reformist group. Rafsanjani passed away in early 2017.

President Rouhani, in addition to being the highest-ranking cleric in Tehran, won a significant victory in that election, which excluded two of his main ultraconservative opponents, Ayatollah Mohammad-Taqi Mesbah-Yazdi and Mohammad Yazdi (it should be highlighted that the latter had took on the Presidency of the Assembly in a previous term).

The Assembly of Experts can play an important role in defining the ideological paths of the Islamic Republic. Although it has no direct responsibility for government policies, it plays the role of interpreter and advocate of the guiding principles of the Revolution. Besides that, it operates as the highest advisory body to the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ayatolah Ali Khamenei. The strong presence of close allies of Rouhani in the Assembly was expected to contribute to a more balanced distribution of power between the Supreme Leader and the President of the Republic.

The death of Hashemi Rafsanjani, however, was seen by experts as unfavorable to the Rouhani administration because of the important role played by the cleric and former president in keeping the Assembly in tune with the agenda of the current government. In any case, the Rouhani faction celebrated the outcome of the parliamentary and Assembly elections when Rafsanjani was still alive. Counting on a parliament more aligned with his government, the president believed that he could dedicate more time to the reforms necessary for the economic recovery of the country in a post-sanctions scenario, as well as to prepare for his re-election in May 2017.

Rouhani was indeed re-elected in 2017, with 57 per cent of the votes, thus fending off a challenge by principist rival Ebrahim Raisi. Of some 41.2 million total votes cast, Rouhani got 23.5. Raisi, on the other hand, got 15.8 million votes. The election was seen by many as a verdict on Rouhani's policy of opening up Iran to the world and his efforts to rebuild its stagnant economy.

The two successive elections won by Rouhani seem to have succeeded in consolidating an important political capital for the current President, regardless of Hashemi Rafsanjani's disappearance. The coalition formed between moderate and reformist leaders brought together traditional elements of the local political establishment (the principled right; the main political faction of the Islamic Republic) and advocates of regime change (the reformist "left"). This constituted a weighty centrist block, capable of supporting the proposals of economic and social reform that the Rouhani government intended to promote.

One must anyhow take into consideration that evaluations are being made regarding the effective success achieved by the Rouhani government in the economic field, a fact that could seal its political destiny, in case the Iranian public considers that the promise of prosperity, based on the opportunities allegedly offered by the JCPOA, have not been fulfilled. Prospects seem particularly bleak at the present moment, due to the current tensions with the United States, its policy of imposing economic restraints to Iran and the American withdrawal from the nuclear deal.

It is therefore necessary to carefully assess the risk that a possible failure of Rouhani in this area would strengthen his political adversaries and provide fuel for an Iranian move towards radicalization and anti-Western sentiment. Political evaluations on the subject should necessarily take this aspect into account.

3. International environment

In recent years, Iran efforts to revitalize its relationship with the international community have taken place in the wake of an envisaged lifting of the multilateral sanctions related to its Nuclear

Program. The original perspective of those involved with that issue was the gradual normalization of Iranian relations with the global community, provided that the country presented enough and transparent evidence of its commitment to a peaceful approach in matters related to the use of nuclear energy.

In July 2015, the United Nations Security Council adopted a Resolution endorsing an action plan, hereinafter referred to as "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action" – JCPOA. It was negotiated by Tehran with P5+1 countries, which are the five permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations, plus Germany. After several preparatory steps, the so-called "Implementation Day" of the JCPOA took place on January 16, 2016, as a reward to Iran for allegedly fulfilling its obligations under the Plan.

The obligations were directly linked to the limitations imposed on the Iranian Nuclear Program. The purpose of the limitations, as highlighted, was to ensure the safe and peaceful nature of Iranian initiatives in the nuclear area. Under the 2015 deal, Iran could enrich uranium to 3.67 percent fissile material, well below the 20 percent it was reaching before the deal and the 90 percent demanded for the manufacturing of a possible nuclear weapon.

Soon after the JCPOA came into effect, the United Nations Security Council received a report from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which confirmed that Iran had complied with the provisions of the JCPOA, a step which led to the lifting of international sanctions applied to the Iranian Nuclear Program in its original format.

It must be said, though, that at that point in time "white sanctions" were still being imposed unilaterally by the United States, a situation which had been aggravated by the existence of residual American sanctions on Iran, on issues not related to the nuclear dossier, such as human rights violations and sponsorship of terrorism. One aspect to be reminded, as a background element, is that US-Iran relations have been particularly complex, since the invasion of the American embassy in Tehran, in the wake of the Islamic Revolution, in 1979.

In spite of that, Iranian authorities have attempted to work within an optimistic scenario for the JCPOA, until in May 2018 the US abandoned the nuclear deal, before reinstating full sanctions against Iran and countries that trade with it. Relations between the US and Iran have since soured. The US sent an aircraft carrier and bombers to the Persian Gulf region, based on the assumption that there is evidence of troubling and escalatory activity related to Iran and its partners. American authorities were particularly vocal in criticizing the Iranian missile program, which is not included in the JCPOA. In May and June 2019, explosions hit six oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman, the US having accused Iran for the incidents. On 20 June 2019, Iranian forces shot down a US military drone over the Strait of Hormuz. Iran accused the US for violating its air space while the US maintained that the drone was flying over international waters.

The most serious flashpoint in that crisis, though, is maybe the fact that Iran indicated that it could end compliance with its obligations under the JCPOA. This would happen in case it considers that it is not obtaining adequate support from the international community, namely the European powers, for the relief of US economic sanctions. Iran revealed in June 2019 that, for the first time since 2015, it breached the limits on uranium stockpiles established by the nuclear deal, in a move regarded by many as aimed at putting pressure on Europe to somehow counterbalance the US sanctions. European leaders had urged Iran not to breach the terms of the deal and an initiative to facilitate financial and commercial transactions between Europe and Iran, called INSTEX, was launched and is on the pipeline. It is though regarded by some Iranian authorities as lacking effectiveness.

There is some speculation about US-Iran talks in the near future, in order to ease the tensions. The current US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, has recently stated that the US is prepared to engage with Iran without pre-conditions about its nuclear program, provided that the Iranian side shows real compromise regarding the nuclear and regional security issues. Tehran, on the other hand, has made clear that it will only consider that possibility in case the current US administration accepts, before any dialogue, to lift the sanctions. The proper evaluation of the ongoing situation thus demands a cautious approach, as the risk of escalation of the tensions is not ruled out.

From a more structural point of view, it should be noted that the current Iranian foreign policy reflects an attempt to avoid international isolation, to widen its viable economic partnerships and to transform the opportunity provided by the JCPOA, no matter how limited it is, into concrete results for the troubled Iranian economy, weakened by years of restrictions. Before the US left the deal, it had allowed Iran, together with reopened markets to its oil exports, to regain international support as well as to resume transactions with strategic partners, such as the European nations.

We have to furthermore consider that Iran is a particularly peculiar nation. It is the only major country in the Middle East and Central Asia to have adopted Shia, a minority current in Islam. Its regional policy is therefore also guided by the need to strengthen its local defense lines. That strategy is understood by Iranian decision-makers as an important dissuasion tool, especially aimed at curbing the negative impact of the articulation of large Sunni countries, whose regional initiatives tend to exclude Iran, favoring the split of the Muslim world. In this context and although controversial, Iran's strategy in the Middle East in countries like Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen, supporting Shiite groups (such as the Lebanese Hezbollah or the Houthis in Yemen) or strategic allies also marginalized in Islam (Alawites in Syria, or Iraqi Shiites), would have as one of its main purposes to facilitate the formation of an axis of entry in the region, which could serve, among other objectives, as a protective corridor against Sunni and even Western hostility.

Unlike other regional powers, Iran has to some extent succeeded in addressing its main internal challenges, especially during the time that the nuclear deal was fully operational. Consequently, until recently it was in a position to boost its regional and international projection. This situation raised concern among Sunni powers like Saudi Arabia, which views with Iran's rise and Shiite influence with particular apprehension.

On the other hand, the possible success of the containment strategy promoted by the international and regional rivals of Iran is ultimately regarded by Iranian policy-makers as threat to the country's own Middle-Eastern dimension and identity, a scenario which is simply not acceptable to Tehran. This is something to be taken into consideration by those interested on following this subject.

As regards its Central Asian dimension, it is worth mentioning Iran's relationship with its two immediate neighbors to the east, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Iran and Pakistan have a relationship permeated by contradictions. The countries have a history of reciprocal support at crucial moments (in 1947 Iran was the first country to recognize Pakistan's independence and, during the Iran-Iraq war, Islamabad provided discreet support to Tehran), they cooperate in the repression of drug trafficking and the action of Baluchi separatist groups operating in the border area. Additionally, they maintain an important joint project in energy integration, which provides for the construction of a pipeline for the transportation of Iranian gas to supply the Pakistani market. Both countries have worked together to support Afghanistan following the US invasion and are home to the largest Afghan refugee communities in the world.

There are, on the other hand, considerable divergences in the bilateral relationship. Pakistan, a Sunni majority country, an ally of the United States and Saudi Arabia, receiving substantial financial aid, and still has an apparently ambiguous relationship with the Taliban, whose Sunni orthodoxy is considered a threat to Iranian security. Iran, for its part, has good relations with India, which invests in the Iranian port of Chabahar, with the purpose of accessing Afghanistan without crossing Pakistani territory.

Despite their differences, relations between Iran and Pakistan are going through a positive moment. In March 2016, President Rouhani held the first visit of an Iranian president to Pakistan in more than a decade, accompanied by a government and business delegation. The visit, despite being criticized by the Iranian press as "unproductive", resulted in the signing of a five-year Strategic Business Cooperation Plan and cooperation agreements in education, culture and health.

As for Afghanistan, since the US invasion Iran has played an important role in that country, with which it shares history, language and culture. The country collaborated with the US in establishing the post-Taliban Afghan government and actively participated in the reconstruction of the country. As is well known, Iran, which did not recognize the Taliban government in Afghanistan, benefited from its fall, although it is a fierce critic of the American presence in the country. The Iranian influence on

Afghan politics, especially on parties linked to minorities close to Iran, creates discomfort among some local politicians who accuse Tehran (and also Islamabad) of acting to "weaken" the country. The north and west of Afghanistan, home to the Dari language majority, derived from Farsi, is considered to be an area of influence of Iran (the south and east being under Pakistan's influence, because they harbor Pashtun and Baluchi populations).

Bilateral trade and Iranian investments in Afghanistan, in areas such as infrastructure, agriculture and health, have risen sharply since the end of the Taliban regime. Afghanistan is the 4th largest destination of Iranian non-oil exports, totaling $ 2.57 billion in 2015. As mentioned, Iran also has a large Afghan refugee community (about 3 million, a third of which are documented), which represent about 97% of the total number of refugees in the country. The policy adopted by the Iranian authorities for Afghan refugees is recognized by UNHCR.

Another relevant issue in the bilateral relationship is border control, subject to instabilities, arising from drug trafficking and the activity of terrorist groups. Afghanistan is the main source of these two serious threats to Iran, which has led Tehran to adopt tough anti-narcotics policies, in addition to the imposition of the death penalty in many cases. The country is also the scene of Taliban activities and has been singled out as one of the main centers for regimentation of militants from the self-styled Islamic State or Daesh. Iran understands that the institutional fragility of the young Afghan government, as well as the lack of economic and social development of the country, creates a favorable environment for the strengthening of radical terrorist groups. It therefore keeps the border areas with Afghanistan under permanent surveillance, subject to a special security scheme. It also seeks to promote stability in the neighboring country, as well as bilateral cooperation in border security.

Finally, Iran's conciliatory action in relation to the former conflict between its northern neighbors Armenia and Azerbaijan over the territory of Nagorno Karabah, should be noted. In general, Iran has an interest in avoiding the resurgence of the conflict, which would generate more instability in that area, seen by Teheran as part of the historical "Greater Iran" (note that this Iranian conception refers exclusively to the cultural and social dimension of their relations with those countries, since Iran does not claim any territorial reintegration in relation to the geographical areas in question). The fact that there are ethnic minorities from those countries in its territory also justifies this position, which has been reflected in the various high-level initiatives of Iran, in favor of a negotiated solution to the Armenian-Azeri dispute.

4. Economic situation and foreign trade

The Iranian economy is the second largest in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the 26th in the world in terms of GDP and the 18th in overall Purchasing Power Parity (note that the largest economy of the MENA region is currently that of Saudi Arabia). In 2015, international trade totaled US$ 143.3 billion, of which US$ 67.7 billion were imports.

The economic sanctions have severely restricted Iranian exports. In 2011, the recent peak of the country's international trade, the general flow was US$ 176 billion, with Iranian imports totaling US$ 59.5 billion. Since then, trade has shown a downward tendency.

The origin of the main Iranian imports (2015), in order of value, is as follows: United Arab Emirates, China, South Korea, Turkey and India, all with values in excess of US$ 2.5 billion. Bilateral trade data with the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, China and Switzerland generally hide trade triangulation, with the aim of circumventing sanctions.

Iran is a major importer of industrial supplies, capital goods, food and other consumer goods. Despite unilateral sanctions, some countries recorded a growth in their trade with Iran: Germany increased its exports to the country by 30% (totaling 2.4 billion euros) and, according to Iranian customs, the entry of products from the United States, equivalent to US$ 110 million, increased by 27.45% in the last nine months of 2014, compared to the previous period.

Iranian exports (mainly oil), are directed to the following markets, in value order (2014): China, India, Turkey, Japan and South Korea. The total amount reached during that period of time was of US$ 4 billion.

In 2016, for the first time since the Islamic Revolution, the country recorded a surplus in the trade balance of non-oil goods. Local statistics indicate that between March 2015 and March 2016 (the year 1394, on the Iranian calendar), Iran recorded a surplus of US$ 946 million. Exports in the period totaled US$ 42.4 billion, with imports reaching US$ 41.4 billion.

There is a great growth potential for the Iranian economy in the short, medium and long terms, provided that its current international political situation improves. In addition to large oil, gas and ore reserves, Iran has a significant and diversified industry, a young and skilled population, competitive agriculture and a relatively efficient science, technology and innovation system. The lifting of sanctions on the country and the regularization of its international trade could certainly boost the expansion of the Iranian GDP in the future.

Aware of these possibilities, a large number of high-level delegations visited Iran, in the aftermath of the JCPOA. They were in search of revitalizing trade relations, access to the Iranian market and investment opportunities. Most of these delegations were made up of European, Chinese and Russian entrepreneurs. Brazil sent a delegation to the country in October 2015, headed by then Brazilian Minister of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade.

It is important to note that, despite the US sanctions, American airplane manufacturer Boeing had concluded an agreement to sell 80 aircraft to Iran, a transaction worth US$ 16.6 billion. It should also be noted that in January 2017 the European company Airbus delivered the first aircraft purchased by Iran Air airlines, in the context of a broad contract for the renewal of the company's fleet.

The Iranian economy itself is heavily dependent on the public sector (61%), whose influence is felt through the activities of religious associations and foundations led by eminent Shi'ite clerics, companies owned and run by the Revolutionary Guard and public or private enterprises subject to full or partial state ownership. Oil export revenues still form an important part of the public budget.

However, despite of having large reserves of oil (4th largest in the world) and natural gas (2nd largest in the world), the Iranian economy as a whole is characterized by a low dependence on this sector. This scenario is due mainly to the context of sanctions, which forced the local government to seek creative ways of minimizing its effects, since the oil sector is directly linked to the external market, thus subject to serious restrictions.

Besides of the impact of sanctions, analysts point out that Iranian problems in the economic field are also due to macroeconomic mismanagement, aggravated by the policies of the Ahmadinejad administration. The Iranian financial system has also suffered serious imbalances due to international restrictions.

Inflation is high and there was a liquidity crisis, due to the freezing of external assets within the context of the sanctions. At the microeconomic level, the economy was affected by the disorderly multiplication of financial actors, consistent disregard for official regulations, low transparency and excessive indebtedness.

On the other hand, the lifting of sanctions, based on the JCPOA, could give the local economy considerable momentum, due to three factors: a significant reduction in transaction costs with Iran (it is estimated that due to sanctions and commercial triangulation trade costs related to the country have increased by at least 10%); enhanced production and resumption of oil and gas exports, especially to the European market, Asia and Oceania.

Frozen Iranian financial assets abroad represent around US$ 100 billion, belonging to the private sector, for the most part, and, to a lesser extent, the government. In case those resources become available somewhere in the future, it will certainly have a very positive impact on the Iranian economy as a whole and on its trade relations with the world in particular.

With regard to the oil and gas sector, the Iranian exports were reduced, due to sanctions, to less than 1 million bpd (barrels per day), a fact that represents direct losses of US$ 160 billion. The limited income from this source, as well as the freezing of foreign investment in the sector, resulted in an indirect cost of US$ 500 billion. According to Iranian officials, that figure is currently required to restore the basic industrial and logistic infrastructure of the oil sector and to expand its production in the forthcoming decades.

The resumption of oil exports in the aftermath of the JCPOA has, in any case, accelerated the re-establishment of trade links with Europe, which absorbed 42% of the Iranian production before the sanctions. Furthermore, China, South Korea, India and

Japan have appeared as relevant buyers. Their future performance will nevertheless depend on the evolution of the economic integration process of Iran, currently threatened by international circumstances.

It is Iran's priority to attract international investment to modernize and expand its oil and gas industry in all segments – extraction, transportation and refining. The country planned to raise between $ 100 and $ 200 billion by launching investment-grade financial bonds. A new model of contract was being drawn up – the "Iran Petroleum Contract". It is believed that the country is waiting for the right economic context conducive to the promotion of that instrument, something that will depend on definitive regularization of its banking relations within the international financial system. In spite of the current adverse political conditions, there is speculation that Iran is carefully studying the potential attractiveness of the new contract together with the world's major oil companies.

The Rouhani administration has been trying to pursue substantive economic advances, as regards the development of the Iranian economy. In order to carry out his work plan, the Iranian president will need to promote a comprehensive review of the legal business framework (what is likely, on the other hand, to galvanize fierce resistance from the current beneficiaries of the *status quo*, such as the Revolutionary Guard). He will seek to strengthen the regulatory power of the Central Bank, to unify exchange rates currently in practice and to curb inflation. The goal of his team is to achieve single-digit inflation. The Iranian government is also set to in due time review tariffs as well as to combat smuggling and trafficking. It will be necessary to restructure the domestic tax system in order to increase internal revenue, thus reducing dependence of the public budget on financing originated from oil exports.

The Iranian government will be committed to promoting the expansion of private sector, both by attracting international investors and by improving the business environment for domestic capital. The participation of Iranian small and medium-sized enterprises will be fostered, due to their relevance to the local economy and its relevant role as generators of income and jobs. As indicated, it is also a government priority to attract foreign and domestic investments to restructure and expand the oil and gas sectors, as well as the aviation, mining, logistics and tourism ones.

The Rouhani administration should also focus in reducing unemployment, which in the last half of 2015 reached 10.7%. Its population is predominantly young and Iran will need to create roughly one million new jobs per year in order to avoid social tensions and to prevent the unemployment rate from growing. A skilled and educated population faces serious challenges to find work consistent with their level of qualification inside the Iranian territory. More than 150,000 young professionals with higher education leave the country each year, in a true "brain drain" trend. Only 40% of the economically active population is in the formal labor market. Although there are no accurate data available, it is possible to say that there is a significant number of workers in the informal economy, in temporary occupations or even in regular jobs which do not include social security benefits.

Another central and strategic topic for the revival of the Iranian economy is the solution of its banking and financial difficulties in the international arena. Operations between Iranian banks and the international financial system have not been fully reestablished, causing great damage to the local economy. Foreign banks fear high fines by US authorities (*i.e.* the Office of Foreign Assets Control, OFAC). OFAC continues to monitor banking transactions with Iran, within the context of US-Iran tensions and on the grounds of unilateral American sanctions against the country, unrelated to the nuclear dossier.

The lack of transparency of the Iranian financial institutions and the impossibility of checking the compliance of their methods with established international practices is another obstacle to their reintegration into the global banking system. The government's priority is to reform legislation and to further monitor the domestic financial sector, with a view to ensuring its international credibility.

As regards Brazil-Iran trade relations, bilateral exchange increased until 2011, when the total trade reached its peak at USD 2.3 billion. Since 2012, though, a downward trend has been in place, due to the impact of the sanctions. The Iranian-Brazilian trade therefore declined to almost half of its historical maximum, retreating to a mere US$ 1.6 billion in 2015. Brazil's exports to Iran are focused on agribusiness products, which are not the subject of restrictions within the context of UN sanctions. The imposition of American unilateral sanctions on Iranian financial institutions has on the other hand affected the availability of adequate credit lines for commercial transactions between the two countries.

The current bilateral trade, far below its historical level, is excessively concentrated in a few primary products, as well as characterized by a great asymmetry in favor of Brazil (in the first half of 2015, Brazilian exports accounted for 99.7% of the total trade, which was US$ 892 million). The main products exported by Brazil to Iran are corn, sugar, soya beans and meat, which are responsible for almost all the bilateral trade. Iran's exports to Brazil, in turn, include dried fruits, cooking utensils, pistachios, carpets and rugs.

Iran has sought to diversify its grain suppliers (there is ongoing dialogue on that topic with Kazakhstan, for example), a move that could potentially affect Brazilian commercial interests. That being said, Brazil is active in defending its market share in that country. In December 2014, Minister of Agriculture Neri Geller visited Iran, in order to discuss sanitary barriers that were having an impact on the Brazilian beef exports to the Iranian market, on account of the BSE (mad cow) disease, detected in Brazilian territory at that time.

The sectors that appear to have the greatest potential for the expansion of Brazilian exports to Iran are civil aviation (renewal of the Iranian civilian air fleet is a government priority and will require around 400 aircraft), industrial machinery and equipment related to the oil and gas market, steel industry machinery, agricultural processing, irrigation and water treatment, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals and veterinary vaccines. The Iranian market also seems capable of absorbing medium and high technology Brazilian products that combine quality and competitive prices.

Brazilian commercial promotion can count on a positive asset as Iran is generally receptive to the image of Brazil, due to its solidarity during the most difficult period of sanctions faced by that country. The hypothetic lifting of the sanctions could in this context potentially make room for Brazilian investments in areas such as civil aviation, construction industry, hydroelectricity, mining, infrastructure and agriculture.

Therefore, the economic and commercial perspectives for Brazil-Iran bilateral economic and commercial interaction are in general positive. Its prospects, on the other hand, will depend to a great extent on the success that Iran achieves in its reintegration into the world financial system and economy.

Regarding its Asian dimension, Iran has presented itself as a logistics and communication platform between Europe, Central Asia and East Asia. In this sense, it invests in the North-South International Transport Corridor (NSTC) project and supports initiatives such as the "Road and Belt Initiative", led and sponsored by China. The latter is, by the way, its main commercial partner, with whom the bilateral transactions already reach 52 billion dollars. Iran has received from China a package of investments and generous credit lines for trade expansion and the installation of infrastructure, on topics of common Sino-Iranian interest.

Iran has sought, in any case, to diversify partnerships, which is why it currently has bilateral investment agreements with more than 50 countries and bilateral commercial agreements with approximately 40 nations. The main advantages of the country as an investment destination are related to the presence of large gas and oil reserves in its territory. In addition, the country is an important producer of zinc, lead, cobalt, aluminum, magnesium and copper.

Iran hopes, therefore, to attract substantial investments to the local economy, as well as joint ventures. The pursuit of indigenous economic development is emphasized by the government. Therefore, if the current international situation of Iran improves, the establishment of partnerships and of co-operation and investments initiatives will, in all likelihood, determine a privileged position for those wishing to operate effectively in the Iranian market.

5. Relations with Brazil

Diplomatic relations between Brazil and Iran were established in 1903. Since then, Brazil has officially recognized the important role of Iran as a regional power, as well as the country's historical and civilizational legacy.

The first agreements of cultural cooperation were signed in the 1950s, during the government of Juscelino Kubitscheck. Iran was one of the first countries to open an embassy in Brasilia and

Shah Reza Pahlavi was in Brazil in 1965, paying the first visit of an Iranian head of state to the country. In 1991, Minister of External Relations Francisco Rezek led a delegation of businessmen on an official trip to Tehran. In 1994, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati visited Brasilia and Sao Paulo.

The bilateral relationship gained momentum in the 2000s, when the importance given to Iran on the Brazilian external agenda was reflected in an intense exchange of high-level visits, accompanied by business missions and the celebration of various agreements and memoranda of understanding. This trend culminated in the visits of the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Brazil, in 2009, and of President Lula da Silva to Iran, in 2010.

Brazil has become a relevant partner for Iran, mainly because of its positive attitude regarding the international attempt to address the issue of the Iranian Nuclear Program. During the Brazilian presidential visit to that country, in 2010, the Tehran Declaration was signed in a trilateral partnership with Turkey. This event is regarded by some specialists as one that could have contributed for the progress of the negotiations on the nuclear issue that were under way between Iran and Western powers. Objections from the United States, then committed to push a new round of sanctions against Iran through the United Nations Security Council, prevented the agreement reached with Brazilian collaboration from being put into practice.

In recent years, Tehran's political isolation and the effects of UN sanctions, as well as sanctions imposed unilaterally by some countries, especially the US, have reduced the dynamism of bilateral relations.

Nevertheless, after a period of certain stagnation, the political dialogue was gradually resumed. There were meetings of Foreign

Ministers Antonio Patriota and Luiz Alberto Figueiredo with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, on the sidelines of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2012 and 2013, as well as the official visit to Tehran by Minister Patriota on the occasion of the inauguration of the current Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, in August 2013.

Minister Mauro Vieira visited Tehran in September 2015. Following that visit, there was a business mission to that capital headed by the then Minister of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade, Armando Monteiro. Both visits are clear evidence of the Brazilian willingness to promote the widening of political and commercial ties with Iran, what includes the private sector.

Iranian Minister of Economy Ali Tayeb Nia came to Brasilia in November 2016 to co-chair a meeting of the Bilateral Economic and Trade Commission, together with the Brazilian Minister of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services. There was also a visit by the president of the Iranian High Council for Human Rights, Mohammad Larijani, in September 2016, with the purpose of resuming the Structured Bilateral Dialogue in the area of Human Rights. In April 2018, Foreign Minister Javad Zarif visited Brasilia, where he met President Michel Temer and held discussions with Minister of External Relations Aloysio Nunes Ferreira.

The agenda of high-level bilateral visits does have the potential of being resumed and intensified at some point in the future, on the basis of both parties' interests and the fact that both Brazil and Iran are well aware of the potential benefits of the process of economic and commercial approximation between the two nations, both of great importance in their respective regions and relevant in the international context.

The Brazil-Iran Political Consultation Mechanism was implemented in 2007 at vice-minister level. There were meetings in the capacity of the Mechanism in Tehran, in September 2009, Brasilia, in August 2011, and again in Tehran, in April 2016.

Brazil welcomed the successful completion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2015, as a multilateral instrument under the auspices of the United Nations aimed at ensuring the peaceful nature of the Iranian Nuclear Program and the progressive normalization of Iran's relations with the international community.

Under a very pragmatic point of view, the JCPOA at first opened the possibility of the resumption of trade between Brazil and Iran, which had been heavily affected in recent years by the sanctions imposed against that country, especially on its banking sector. The economic restrictions imposed on Iran compromised the financial flows that could make Brazilian exports to the Iranian market competitive and viable. In the future, if these issues are addressed, it will be possible to envisage various commercial opportunities for Brazilian entrepreneurs in the Islamic Republic, notably in agribusiness, but also in other areas, such as in the sector of industrial and transportation equipment.

In this context, Brazil has treated Iran as a privileged partner, welcoming missions from various Iranian authorities and business representatives, equally interested in the expansion of the bilateral trade. The Brazilian authorities have also sought to collaborate in the search for a solution to the financial limitations on the bilateral trade, as a way to enable it to realize its full potential.

With regard to new bilateral agreements, it should be noted that, in September 2015 the procedures had been concluded for the entry into force of the Visa Waiver Agreement for Diplomatic Passports, signed in November 2009 and approved by the National Congress in August 2014.

There are also good prospects for an understanding with regard to Agreements on Legal Cooperation in Civil and Criminal Matters, on Extradition, on Transfer of Sentenced Persons and Cooperation and Facilitation of Investments. Brazil also supports the accession of Iran to the World Trade Organization.

6. Perspectives

As seen in this brief article, the peculiar historical and geographical circumstances of Iran have given it a prominent place in the community of nations since time immemorial. The fruit of an ancestral culture that has permeated and influenced various other civilizations and societies as well as of the Islamic doctrine it received from invaders but reinterpreted in its own way, modern Iran is a key country for the understanding of the reality of the Middle East and Central Asia and of relevant aspects of the international interaction in one of the most strategic and sensitive regions of the world.

Due to its geopolitical importance, enhanced by the advent of the Islamic Republic, the country has long been the subject of ongoing study and monitoring by Western strategists, aware that the fate of Iran will have a decisive influence on its vital neighboring area, with echoes to the interests of virtually all modern powers of the global political spectrum.

In this context, notable advances in the process of reinsertion of Iran into the international community have taken place, following the entry into force of the JCPOA. On the other hand, moderate optimism and caution are in order on this relevant topic of the international agenda. Optimism, in the sense that the Islamic Republic seemed to realize with satisfaction that there was indeed external interest in its economic and political reintegration with the world, being after all an economy with

80 million inhabitants and home to one of the main oil and gas reserves in the planet, situated in a region that has long been craving for political stability. And caution, because its reinsertion process is delicate and subject to obstacles and setbacks. Its failure could represent a possible re-emergence of Iranian anti-Western radicalism and antagonism, in case the country is frustrated in its attempt to implement reforms conducive to the economic well-being of its population.

Independently from the results of this process, Brazil counts with the Iranian empathy, due to the fact that, as far as possible, it has historically offered its support during the most severe stage of the sanctions. Iran, on the other hand, is interested in a rapprochement with Brazil, which, in addition to bringing economic and commercial benefits, could give it greater legitimacy in the international arena. In practical terms, it would be appropriate to seek ways to promote the strengthening of commercial and economic ties, which could greatly facilitate the process of political rapprochement with that nation. This should naturally be done with a sense of reality, always taking into consideration the complex political situation and limitations Iran currently faces in the international arena.

Special attention must be paid to the development of the reintegration process of Iran, taking into account that, as emphasized in this text, that country will always make use of its natural vocation for relevance, whatever the result of this exercise may be. The international community will therefore share the responsibility for ensuring that this innate propensity is channeled towards a positive reinsertion that can ensure gains for all parties involved in the process.

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CHAPTER 14

BRAZIL-BANGLADESH RELATIONS: CHALLENGES TO THE BUILDING OF A PARTNERSHIP

Hugo Freitas Peres[1]

A unique opportunity opens up for the young diplomat when he is assigned to a division of the "political" section – an area not limited to specific themes, following all issues related to countries of a region, including domestic affairs. It offers the possibility to delve into political entities that are not prominent in the news or in the academia. It was such an opportunity that I envisaged when I was designated the "desk" of Bangladesh, that is, the diplomat charged with following up on all issues related to that country.

In the first contact, a combination of wonder and admiration. It is challenging for any Brazilian to understand a young Republic that concentrates almost 170 million inhabitants in a territorial extension similar to that of Ceará (148 thousand km²), which has maintained an Islamic religious identity even located practically within Hindu India, and whose territorial borders hardly coincide with ethnolinguistic limits.

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In spite of these peculiarities, Bangladesh is a consolidated state, maintaining borders with India and, to a small extent, also with Myanmar, but in close proximity to Nepal, Bhutan and China. Its geographic position in South Asia, the country's port potential, and the gathering of some 700 rivers, including the mouth of the portentous Ganges (whose name changes to Padma in Bangladeshi territory), Brahmaputra and Meghna, make it a regional actor of great geopolitical importance.

Even more challenging, however, is to understand the links between Brazil and Bangladesh after the independence of the South Asian country. The Brazilian recognition was declared in 1972, a few months after the end of the conflicts that led to Bangladesh's independence. In the same year, Dhaka opened a diplomatic representation in Brazil; two years later, Brazil would become the first Latin American country to open a diplomatic representation in Bangladesh. This rapid advance in the initial period of the bilateral relations shows that, from an early age, Brazilian foreign policy has identified in Bangladesh an important partner for its insertion in the Asian continent.

With a view to analyzing the main features and challenges of the relationship between these two demographic giants, it is necessary to revisit the decisive moments in Bangladesh's history, the development of its economy, its relations with the world and the guidelines of its foreign policy. After this analysis, it will be possible to identify the current stage of relations between Brazil and Bangladesh, as well as consider the means available to raise them to a new level.

1. Formation of Bangladesh

The history of Bangladesh is impressive for its twists and turns. The population, which had already been adept in Hinduism and organized into castes, eventually converted to Islam, in a gradual process that begun in the eleventh century. After becoming the provincial capital of the Mughal Empire in 1610, Dhaka experienced a period of strong prosperity, followed by decay when it lost that condition in the following century. The country went through two traumatic processes of independence: the first in 1947, when it emancipated itself from British rule; the second in 1971, the year the country seceded from Pakistan. It was also the scene of *coups d'état*, major famines and natural disasters. In these crisis episodes, losses of human life have sometimes reached numbers similar to those of major armed conflicts.

1.1. The Pakistani stage

The present territorial format of Bangladesh was defined at the time of the Indo-Pakistani separation in 1947. Had the ethnolinguistic principle been followed, its borders would have extended further west, encompassing the present Indian state of West Bengal. The partition of British India was, however, based on religious nationalism. Therefore, present-day Bangladesh emerged as East Pakistan, a non-contiguous province of the Pakistani Federation. The boundaries were defined according to the predominant religion in each area and, alternatively, territorial similarity. Thus, a unique situation was created, in which two political entities were joined by religion but separated by geography and, to no lesser extent, culture, language and ethnicity.

The partition based on religious nationalism created a framework conducive to sectarian conflicts between Hindu and Muslim communities. The persecution of Muslims scattered across neighboring Indian states and the repression of Hindus in East Pakistan, as well as deaths and consequent religious upheaval, generated migratory flows tremendously deleterious to the economy and urbanization of both countries. Only in the first five years of the partition, it is estimated that at least 1 million Muslims migrated to East Pakistan, whereas between 4 and 10 million Hindus left the Pakistani province for India (KEAY, 2014, 56).

From the beginning, there were indications that the union of distant provinces on the basis of religious nationalism would create problems. The very name of the country, "Pakistan", had been conceived as an acronym that referred only to the Muslim-majority regions of the northwest[2] (KEAY, 2014, p. 40; LEWIS, 2011, p. 58). It was not even considered to include the eastern province in the name of the country, although it harbored more than half the population at that time (55%, with more than 60 million inhabitants). In contrast to their demographic weight in the newly formed country, Eastern Pakistanis were underrepresented in the Pakistani bureaucracy and government, their language was not endorsed, and they were overlooked in government spending (KEAY, 2014, p. 108-110). No less relevant, they had more ethnic homogeneity than Western Pakistanis. In the eastern part there was an almost absolute predominance of only one ethnic group; Bengali. To the contrary, in the west, there were four representative ethnic groups, each with their own language – the Punjabi, the Pashtun, the Sindi and the Balochi. The absence of pronounced ethnic rivalries in the yet to become Bangladesh increased their capacity to reach consensus about common political interests, whereas in West-Pakistan the political class was more fragmented by regional interests. The perception that the interests of Dhaka did not coincide with those of Karachi (after 1967, Islamabad) and that they were not fairly represented intensified in the 1960s. Three factors exerted decisive influence. Firstly, the Indus Waters

2 Created in 1933 by Muslim activists, the name "Pakistan" literally means "land of the pure" in Urdu and Persian. In addition, it is an acronym that refers to five regions: Punjab, Afghani, Kashmir, Sind, and Baluchistan.

Treaty. Negotiated by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan's President Ayub Khan, the treaty granted India exclusive rights over many eastern rivers, which concerned the eastern province, while Pakistan kept its rights over the western rivers. Secondly, the constitution of 1962, approved under martial law, centralized powers in the figures of the president and the army, contradicting the autonomous demands of the eastern province. Finally, the Bengalis did not share with equal intensity the Pakistani claims for the state of Jammu and Kashmir, a region adjoining Western Pakistan, mostly Muslim, but since the partition under the control of India (KEAY, 2014, p. 163).

The Indo-Pakistani War of 1965 aggravated the East Pakistani resentment of what they perceived as neglect and exploitation on behalf of the West. During the conflict, triggered by the infiltration of Pakistani forces in India-controlled Kashmir, the central government sent insufficient detachments to protect eastern Pakistan, although that province served as a stage for some Pakistani attacks. To the relief of the eastern side, India restricted its military operations to the western side. Additionally, most of the resources to finance the war were withdrawn from the eastern province, which was the country's main source of foreign exchange (KEAY, 2014, 109).

East Pakistan had not only a population larger than that of West Pakistan, but also more developed export-oriented economic activities. Although the most industrialized part of the Bengal region had remained with India, East Pakistan stood out as a jute producer, which became Pakistan's main export product in the 1960s. Foreign currencies from this activity were used mainly to finance imports destined for the industrialization of West Pakistan. To aggravate the picture, the funds from foreign donations were also applied in the western part of the country.

The disproportionality of the destination of the national budget, in particular, reflects the different growth rates between West and East Pakistan, which were always higher in the former, resulting in a widening income disparity – from approximately 20% in the early 1950s to 50% at the end of the 1960s, in favor of West Pakistan (RAGHAVAN, 2013, p. 7; LEWIS, 2011, p. 68).

Feeling politically and economically deprived, East Pakistan began to advance ever more extreme demands for autonomy. Stirring things up further, just one month after the first general parliamentary elections in Pakistan, scheduled for December 1970, a cyclone killed more than 200,000 people in East Pakistan (SAUNDERS, 2014). The inaction of the central government to counteract the consequences of this tragedy further heightened the resentment towards the prevailing political system, with direct implications in the elections. In the 1970 election, the Bangladeshi nationalist party, the Awami League, won 160 of the 162 seats allocated to East Pakistan in the new parliament, while the second largest party, the Pakistan People's Party, won 82 of the 138 seats reserved for West Pakistan (LEWIS, 2011, p. 67). Based on this result, it would be up to the Awami League to head the new government. This expectation, however, was frustrated.

The All Pakistan Awami Muslim League was founded in 1949 with the declared purpose of defending popular interests against the landowners represented in the Muslim League, a party that had fought for Pakistani independence. After the protests for the inclusion of Bengali as the official language of the Pakistan along with Urdu in 1952, the party gradually adopted nationalist and secular principles, being renamed Awami League. One of its founders, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman became the protagonist of the Bangladeshi independence process.

With the victory in the 1970 elections, the Awami League had the prerogative to appoint Mujibur Rahman as prime minister of Pakistan. In this position, the leader of East Pakistan wanted to assert his campaign promises, which included moving the National Assembly from Islamabad to Dhaka and granting almost complete autonomy to the eastern province, which would then define its taxation and print its own currency to solve the problem of unequal transfers. According to this proposal, the central government would restrict itself to the attributions of national defense and foreign policy. It was thus evident that the aim of the eastern political class was not so much to control state power as to gain a high degree of provincial autonomy (KEAY, 2014, p. 185; LEWIS, 2011, p. 69).

Neither the political elite of West Pakistan nor the Pakistani military, coming mainly from the western part, were willing to yield to these demands. In March 1971, two days before the date on which the National Assembly was to convene, the acting President, General Yahya Khan, announced that the beginning of its activities would be postponed. Feeling betrayed, the eastern Pakistanis began a general strike and launched themselves into protests, no longer for autonomy, but for independence, backed by the Awami League.

The reaction of the Pakistani army was brutal. Through "Operation Searchlight", which began on 25 March, military forces detained Mujibur Rahman, imprisoned him in the western province, and persecuted thousands of students, intellectuals, and members of the Awami League. Bangladeshi nationalism was, however, underestimated. Rebel groups and popular movements organized themselves into militias. The war intensified in July, leading to the adoption of even more brutal tactics by Pakistani troops, with the collaboration of members of the Bangladeshi wing of Jamaat-e-Islami. Several war crimes were committed, including, it is suspected, genocide. Although no precise estimates exist, it is alleged that between 1 and 3 million civilians were killed, about 200,000 women subjected to sexual violence, and between 8 and 10 million people fled to India in search of refuge. In all cases, the main affected were Hindu citizens, who at that point made up to 20 percent of the population of East Pakistan, being specifically targeted by the Pakistani army (LEWIS, 2011, p.71; KEAY, 2014, p. 186-187).

The growing flow of refugees that crossed the Indian border generated a great burden on a country already facing difficulties in caring for its own population, a fact that caused India to become directly involved in the conflict. Until December 1971, while welcoming the eastern population into refugee camps, the Indian government also trained insurgent Bangladeshi forces to combat the Pakistani army. As the influx of refugees intensified and the monsoons were about to come to an end, Indian troops decided to invade East Pakistan. In 13 days, the Pakistani military surrendered, making effective the Bangladeshi declaration of independence, proclaimed by Major Ziaur Rahman (future president of the Republic) on March 26th (SAUNDERS, 2014).

The way through which Bangladesh achieved its independence helps understand the main challenges facing the country nowadays. The union with the Pakistani state, at the time of the partition, was based on the common Islamic identity, the only factor that justified the separation from India. Nonetheless, the continuity of the colonial experience, through the transfer of resources from East Pakistan and the distancing from federal decision-making instances, led to the strengthening of resistance and the union of the people around the Bengal language and culture. Bangladesh's identity has thus come into existence in two stages, each emphasizing a distinct narrative: the first, centered on the Islamic religion in contrast to Hindu India; the second, based on ethnic, cultural and secular values. The political history of Bangladesh reflects, up to the present, the clash between these two narratives.

1.2. Political developments in Bangladesh: the quest for stability

Once independence was achieved, the Awami League leader, Sheikh Mujibur, had to lead the process of "building order" in Bangladesh. The challenges were tremendous: the already deficient infrastructure had been devastated by the cyclone and the war of liberation, the small political and intellectual elite had been partly eliminated, and the institutions were fragmented. Moreover, Bangladesh had been for centuries under foreign domination, whether it was Mughal, British or Pakistani, so the new country had no experience with self-government, let alone in a democratic context.

The political and economic decisions adopted by Sheikh Mujibur during his four years government resulted in even more complicated conditions for the country. Favorable to state control of the economy, he increased the size of the public sector, which took control over more than 90 percent of the industrial production. Administrative difficulties, fiscal and monetary disarray and endemic corruption resulted in a decline in productivity, with a strong impact on the quality of life of the population: in 1973, agricultural production fell 84% compared with the previous three years, while industrial production reduced by 66%. After the first oil crisis, the Bangladeshi economy collapsed, and in 1974 a devastating famine caused the death of approximately 1.5 million people (ZAMAN, 2012, p. 159; LEWIS, 2011, p. 80).

In 1975, without popular support, Sheikh Mujibur attempted to establish an authoritarian government by institutionalizing a one-party system. In August of that year, military officers staged a coup, which resulted in the murder of Mujibur and his family, with the exception of two daughters, who were in Europe at the time. One of them, Sheikh Hasina Wajed, would become prime minister for the Awami League 21 years later.

After an interregnum of governability, in which several violent military coups succeeded, General Ziaur Rahman consolidated his command. Governing between 1976 and 1981, he rehabilitated the private sector and mobilized opponents of the Awami League, such as groups within the armed forces opposed to the approach to India, right wing sections of the political spectrum and Islamist parties. In 1978, he founded the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which would become one of the country's leading political parties, alongside the Awami League. The BNP took on a liberal economic orientation and began to place more emphasis on Islamic religion and conservative values. With regard to foreign policy, it adopted a more autonomous stance towards the relationship with India. In spite of the improvement on economic performance, Zahir Rahman went through the same process of loss of popularity as his predecessor. During five years of government, he suffered 20 attempts of coup. In May 1981, he was killed during the 21st attempt.

After nearly a year of government by Ziaur Rahman's former justice minister, Abdul Sattar, a new military coup succeeded in establishing a more stable system. This time, General Hussain M. Ershad would govern Bangladesh for nearly ten years, during which democratic processes were gradually reintroduced. The 1980s saw the emergence of the two protagonists who still dominate the Bangladeshi political scene. On the one hand, Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman's daughter, Sheikh Hasina Wajed, who became the leader of the Awami League; on the other, the widow of General Ziaur Rahman, Khaleda Zia, emerged as the leader of the BNP. Both parties started offering political alternatives to the military, and succeeded to remove Ershad from power and introduce parliamentary democracy through popular mobilization.

The democratic period in Bangladesh began in 1991. Since then, two parties – and two leaders – have taken turns in power: the BNP, with Khaleda Zia ahead; and the Awami League, led by Sheikh Hasina. The first took the post of Prime Minister between 1991 and 1996; the second, for the following five years. Khaleda Zia returned to government in 2001, until it was succeeded by a transitional government in 2007, which was responsible for conducting elections in a neutral manner. As occurred in 1996 and 2001, an interim non-partisan administration was formed with the responsibility of organizing general elections, for three months term. On that occasion, however, the transitional government declared a state of emergency and postponed for two years the elections originally planned for January 2007, under the pretext of improving the electoral system. With the return of the democratic process, general elections were held in January 2009, and Sheikh Hasina became, for the second time, Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

The alternation between BNP and the Awami League in power was broken for the first time since the beginning of the democratic era in the 2014 elections. Held in January of that year, the electoral process was marked by violent protests and strong instability resulting from a boycott followed by 28 of the 40 registered parties, including the BNP. The party demanded that the elections be preceded by an interim transitional government – as was customary in the country. However, the Awami League suppressed the transitional government, which had postponed elections for 2007. As a result of the boycott, the outcome of the elections largely favored the ruling party, so that the 10th Bangladeshi Parliament largely backs the decisions of the Executive, facing a weakened opposition.

Throughout these fifteen years of democracy, regardless of the ruling party, important achievements were made in the areas of economic development, poverty reduction and human rights protection. However, much progress still needs to be made regarding the independence of institutions, the fight against corruption and the improvement of democratic mechanisms. Party or even personal disagreements between the two leaders often resulted in the calling for violent protests; religious extremist groups have gained political influence, and there is still little confidence in the electoral process. It is noteworthy, notwithstanding, the improvement in Bangladesh's social indicators, even disproportionately to the advance of economic statistics. According to World Bank data, Bangladesh's per capita GDP increased from US$ 310 in 1991 to US$ 1,080 in 2014 – still below the regional average of US$ 1,496. The social framework, however, presented a better evolution compared to other countries in the region. Life expectancy at birth increased from 58 years in 1991 to 71 in 2014. During that same period, the under-five mortality rate fell from 143 to 39 per 1,000 inhabitants. The poverty rate, in turn, reduced from 56% in 1991 to 22% in 2015. These numbers are even more meaningful if we consider that, at the beginning of re-democratization, India's per capita GDP was 50% higher than Bangladesh`s, while it is now almost 100% higher. Nevertheless, many Bangladeshi social indicators, including those presented above, outweigh those from India.

The challenges are still immense. Bangladesh ranks eighth on the list of most populous countries in the world, but 92nd when it comes to territorial extension, making it one of the most densely populated nations of the world – more than 1,220 people per km², whereas in Brazil this number does not exceed 24. Dhaka, the capital, currently with 18 million people, is considered the most densely populated city in the world. Taking into account that 66% of the Bangladeshi population still lives in rural areas, urban infrastructure will have to improve greatly in order to accommodate the flows of migrants who gradually leave the countryside.

The educational deficit, combined with gender bias, also creates serious distortions. Over 40% of the population is illiterate. Regarding women's rights, a report published by Human Rights Watch (2015) has identified Bangladesh as the country with the highest marriage rate of underage females. Although there is a law stipulating a minimum age of 18 years for women to get married, this legal provision has not been effective. Among the total female population in the country, 65% marry before the age of 18, 29% before the age of 15, and 2% before the age of 11.

In addition to all these economic and social challenges, Bangladesh is facing a new threat: terrorism, associated with the strengthening of religious extremism. Since its birth in 1971, the South Asian country, which has the fourth largest Muslim population in the world, was considered free from religious terrorism. Nonetheless, a series of bomb attacks, followed by suicide bombings against judges in 2005, has put Bangladesh on the map of terrorism. Among the various causes that explain the strengthening and radicalization of Islamic groups in that country, two stand out. On one hand, there is great frustration with the Bangladeshi political system, overly personalized and largely impenetrable to citizen participation. On the other hand, there is the unresolved question of the search for a national identity, which has oscillated between ethnic-cultural factors and identification with the Islamic religion (MISHRA, 2012; ZAMAN, 2012).

Recently, a wave of murders of secular bloggers, journalists, foreigners and gender and religious minorities has further intensified social conflict in the country. There have been more than 20 cases since 2013. Although international terrorist networks such as Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State have claimed some attacks, the ruling Awami League party claims such groups do not operate in Bangladesh. The delay in investigating and punishing these crimes, in contrast to severe punishments imposed on opposition party members, has provoked criticisms of police and justice appropriation by the Awami League (CHOWDHURY, 2014; BBC, 2016).

The magnitude of the challenges Bangladesh currently faces has led to its ranking in the top 15 countries at high risk of "state bankruptcy" in the "Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds" report. But that is too pessimistic a view. Bangladesh has all the attributes to become a prominent actor in the region, given its resilient and dynamic population, booming economy and a young democracy, which is still consolidating. Positioned between India, Myanmar and China, although it does not border on the latter, the country has been the stage of a Sino-Indian dispute over influence, which has translated into investments in the productive sector and in infrastructure, especially energy and transport. Once the young South Asian nation overcomes the political challenges it currently faces, it tends to become one of the most relevant countries in the region and in the world.

1.3. Economic Modernization: the search for development

Bangladesh is one of the world's poorest countries, struggling to provide food and basic services to its nearly 170 million people. For many years, state policies associated with chronic corruption have hampered the development of productive activities. Nevertheless, once the country opened up to international trade, labor-intensive industrial sectors began to boost economic growth – which rose from an average of 3 percent a year in the 1980-90 decades, to an average of 6 percent since the turn of the millennium.

Remembering that Bangladesh is still a predominantly rural country, the agricultural sector makes up about 20 percent of the GDP and employs around 50 percent of the workforce. Most agricultural workers are dedicated to subsistence farming of rice, with limited financial and technical resources. Wheat is the second most important crop, and corn, tea and jute are all relevant to the country's external sector. Bangladesh's frequent droughts, floods, and cyclones have led to irregularities in supply, so the government is forced to import goods and develop programs to reduce poverty and build a sustainable food security system.

The main booster of Bangladesh's growth, since the turn of the century, has been industry, which already accounts for 30 percent of the GDP. Favored by the abundance of labor, the textile industry came to dominate the country's manufacturing sector, raising Bangladesh to second position among the world's largest clothing producers, only behind China. This South Asian country now has more than 5,000 registered manufacturing units, employing approximately five million people, 80 percent of whom are female. Total clothing exports already account for 80 percent of the tariff (over US$ 30 billion), and this sector currently contributes almost 20 percent of Bangladesh's GDP. Occupational safety in this sector was questioned in 2013, when the *Rana Plaza* building, where several textile factories operated, collapsed, victimizing 1,100 workers. Following agreements with importing countries, however, the situation has been normalized.

Another growing industrial sector is pharmacology. Bangladesh has been favored by the effects of the 2001 TRIPS Agreement on Public Health within the World Trade Organization, which provides less restrictive intellectual property rights for relatively underdeveloped countries. Since then, Bangladeshi companies have been able to export established patent remedies without suffering commercial retaliation. Between 2000 and 2015, the number of drug manufacturers rose from 173 to 300, employing more than 100,000 workers and exporting US$ 69 million in medicines in 2014, to more than 100 countries (LIGHTCASTLE ANALYTICS, 2015).

In addition to the export sector, remittances of salaries are an important source of funds for Bangladesh. Today, around 8 million Bangladeshi people work overseas. The main recipient countries are India, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. These mostly unskilled workers remitted approximately US$ 15 billion to Bangladesh only in 2015 – equivalent to 8 percent of the country's GDP that year (UN, 2015).

The good economic performance in the recent years was the basis for the country's inclusion in the group called "Next Eleven", in a report prepared by Goldman Sachs in 2005. Following the same line that led this investment bank to create the "BRIC" acronym, 11 countries were identified as possible competitors for the G7 by 2050, taking into account factors such as energy potential, infrastructure, urbanization, human capital, and technology. In the case of Bangladesh, the high demographic density, the still incipient process of urbanization and the potential for growth, corroborate its presence in the group (O'NEILL, 2007).

In this context, while Bangladesh faces immense economic challenges, there are reasons for optimism. The country has been able to enter into global value chains, especially in labor-intensive sectors; industry gains an increasing share of the GDP, and the internal market has great potential for development. Besides, Bangladesh has become the focus of investments of the major Asian economies, especially India, China and Japan, who are seeking to consolidate their influence on that strategic regional actor. If this South Asian country is able to maintain its current growth rates while ensuring a concomitant process of social inclusion, it can confirm the projections and join the ranks of the world's largest economies.

2. Bangladesh in the world

The international performance of Bangladesh combines the fears and sensibilities of a state with a small territory situated between two Asian powers, India and China, with the interests of a country that wants to develop international cooperation and trade. In this perspective, Bangladeshi foreign policy adopts, on the one hand, a regionalist approach, through which it intends to approach actors who represent a counterbalance to the inescapable Indian influence; on the other hand, through a globalist approach, it attaches great importance to international law, pursues cooperation in multilateral organizations and values joint initiatives with developing countries.

Geographical proximity and cultural and historical identity make the relationship with India the main defining element of Bangladeshi foreign policy. The two countries share more than 4,000 kilometers of borders, consisting of densely populated regions, more than 50 rivers and enclaves and "exclaves" (*i.e.* an enclave within another enclave). Bengali, the national language of Bangladesh, is also spoken in India by more than 50 million people in the contiguous state of West Bengal. Regarding trade, India is the second largest source of imports, after China, although the country is not among the main export markets, in which the United States and European countries are successful. India's gigantism inspires caution in Bangladesh regarding the preservation of its autonomy and territorial integrity.

Traditionally, Bangladesh's relations with India have become closer under Awami League governments, the party that led the liberation struggle in 1971, whereas under BNP governments, leaning towards Islamism, Bangladesh's relations tends to focus more on Pakistan. The Awami League's return to power in 2009 has positively affected bilateral relations with India. In 2015, New Delhi offered a US$ 2 billion credit line to Bangladesh, the largest foreign loan of India's Exim Bank to date (GUPTAL, 2015). In the same year, a border agreement of 1974 was re-signed, which may contribute to attenuate disputes, build trust and enhance connections between the two countries.

The relations with Pakistan, in contrast, are marked by historical resentment and distrust, but spurred by strategic circumstances. Although initially hostile, the bilateral dialogue improved with the recognition of Bangladeshi independence by Islamabad (1974) and the establishment of diplomatic relations (1976). The quick normalization of relations, despite the traumatic liberation war, can be ascribed to shared security concerns about Indian preeminence in the subcontinent, which encourages Dhaka to pursue closeness with its neighbor's greatest adversary (Jacques, 2000, p. 14). Recently, however, allegations that Islamabad maintains spies in Bangladesh, as well as the carrying of trials of nationals who committed war crimes in 1971 at Bangladeshi courts – the majority being members of the Jamaat-e-Islami party, allied with Pakistan and against independence – has generated some attrition in bilateral relations.

China's growing international projection has offered Bangladesh another option to counterbalance India, which Dhaka has effectively handled as a way to preserve autonomy and to finance the country's development. In recent years, China has not only replaced India as Bangladesh's main trading partner, but also become the largest supplier of military equipment. Meanwhile, China's trade and military expansion initiatives have had positive implications for Bangladesh's development, as the country plays a central role in the "New Silk Road" projects in their terrestrial and maritime versions, and in the "Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor", aimed at building infrastructure for the integration of Asia and Europe. Bangladesh was also one of the first countries contemplated, in May 2016, by funding of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which is controlled by Beijing.

Another important aspect of Bangladesh's foreign policy is its participation in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The concept of the Association was first proposed in 1977 by the President of Bangladesh, Ziaur Rahman, and quickly received the support of the leaders of the region's smaller nations, who understood it as a useful tool to protect themselves from Indian preeminence. Established in 1985, SAARC was not intended as an economic block, but as an organization for the promotion of cooperation among member countries. Throughout the 1990s, however, a number of agreements were signed with the aim of turning South Asia, still the economically less integrated region of the world, into a free trade area. Although SAARC still faces difficulties in deepening economic integration, it has been successful in promoting cooperation in specific areas such as health, response to natural disasters and infrastructural interconnection of the countries in the region.

Moving from the regional to the global scenario, Bangladesh actively participates in multilateral forums, where it adopts positions consistent with its condition of less developed country, especially with regard to financing and trade preferences. Since the Cold War period, the South Asian country has maintained a peaceful, cooperative and independent behavior, meaning that it has never aligned its positions to the ideologies or strategic interests of any great power. It was elected twice for non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and currently has a distinctive place as the largest supplier of UN peacekeeping troops.

During 45 years of independence, Bangladesh has been able to build friendly relations with its neighboring nations and the world, as well as to participate in international organizations in a responsible and constructive way. In line with an increasingly multi-polar world, Dhaka has also been expanding its diplomatic network: in 2012, it initiated the process of opening six new Embassies, most of them in Latin America and Africa. Thus, positioned in a strategic region with great demographic weight, a rapidly developing economy and a foreign policy increasingly influent, this young South Asian republic represents a valuable partner in the international political scene of the 21st century.

3. Brazil-Bangladesh relations: a partnership under construction

The establishment of relations between Brazil and Bangladesh began in the context of the universalization of Brazilian foreign policy under the military governments of Generals Emílio G. Medici (1969-1974) and Ernesto Geisel (1974-1979). During this period, Brazilian diplomacy placed a strong emphasis on economic development, autonomy in foreign policy and the diversification of partnerships – guidelines that met Bangladeshi aspirations. The two countries established diplomatic relations in early 1972, and within a year Dhaka opened an Embassy in Brasilia. The Brazilian official presence in Bangladesh, in turn, began with the opening of the Embassy in its capital, in 1974. This was also the year of the resumption of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, signaling a broader policy strategy by the Brazilian foreign policy of insertion in the Asian Continent.

The opening of a Brazilian diplomatic representation, the first of a Latin American country in Bangladesh, was of great importance for the political approximation between the two countries. However, oil price shocks severely affected the economies of Brazil and Bangladesh in the 1970s, limiting trade possibilities. The political vicissitudes experienced by both countries in the 1970s and 1980s hindered any effort to deepen the dialogue.

Given this situation, in more than 20 years of diplomatic relations, only two agreements were signed: for trade, in 1976; and for cultural and educational cooperation, in 1988. Political dialogue remained low profile, while trade remained negligible and concentrated on a few commodities. Not surprisingly, therefore, during a time of budgetary difficulties, the Brazilian Embassy in Dhaka was selected to be deactivated, which occurred in 1998. The Embassy of Bangladesh in Brasília, in turn, would be deactivated four years later, in 2002.

Changes in the domestic and international contexts led to a new initiative of approximation in 2010. Both countries went through a period of democratic stability, favored by rising commodity prices in the previous decade. For Brazil, the developing countries in general, and Asia in particular, became increasingly important: more than half of Brazilian exports flowed to the developing world- in 2009, China became Brazil's largest trading partner. Bangladesh, in turn, had an average GDP growth higher than 6% for more than five years. In the international scene, developed economies were more affected by the financial crisis of 2008, while emerging markets gained share in the global economy and financial governance.

In the wake of these changes, the Embassy in Dhaka was reopened in 2010 and the Bangladeshi Embassy in Brasília in 2012. Bangladesh had by then become Brazil's second largest trading partner in South Asia, only behind India. Since then, commercial relations between the two countries continued to grow. From a total exchange of US$ 626 million in 2010, the volume more than doubled to US$ 1.3 billion in 2015. Interestingly, unlike many countries, the crisis in Brazil did not affected exports to Bangladesh, which rose 32% from 2014 to 2015, when they reached US$ 1.147 billion. Throughout the historical series, the trade balance has always been frankly favorable to Brazil.

Not only the volume but also the quality of trade has improved, albeit to a lesser extent. Brazilian imports from Bangladesh ceased to be limited to jute, which does remain an essential component for bagging domestically produced coffee. Textile products now make up more than 80% of the imports, which also includes medicines. As for the Brazilian exports to Bangladesh, agribusiness products such as sugar (60%) and maize (24%) still dominate. But there are also exports of compressors, textile machinery, light armaments, hospital equipment, among others.

The diversity of Brazilian exports, despite the modest volumes, indicates the market potential for national products of higher added value, the trade of which can be stimulated by governmental initiatives. A first step is to reduce mutual unawareness and bring the business sectors of both countries closer together. Creating channels of dialogue between Chambers of Commerce is a possible start. The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in contacts with the Brazilian Embassy, has already shown interest in expanding trade and attracting investments from Brazil. Other measures that may be encouraged by the public sector are the organization of trade missions and participation in trade fairs.

There is also the possibility of negotiating a MERCOSUR-Bangladesh Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA). The point of greatest controversy would lie in the textiles sector, where Bangladeshi industry is very competitive, partly because it does not follow the same labor standards as the MERCOSUR countries. But the block already has a PTA with India, in force since 2009, in which only sectors of mutual interest are contemplated. A similar agreement could be negotiated with Bangladesh, with the objective of enhancing complementarity between the economies of MERCOSUR member-countries and this South Asian country.

From the political point of view, despite the reopening of Embassies, the relationship evolved less than bilateral trade. It is important having in mind that relations with Bangladesh make up the framework for insertion of the Brazilian foreign policy into one of the most dynamic regions of the world. Given the strategic position of this South Asian country, besides being the object of a Sino-Indian dispute over influence, approaching Dhaka will allow not only raising the profile of the Brazilian presence in the region, but will also allow for close monitoring of the evolution of the political and security situation in Asia. In addition to this, Bangladesh participates in a number of international organizations, so bilateral cooperation can have positive effects at both the regional and multilateral levels- or even at the interregional level, in case of an approximation between MERCOSUR and SAARC.

In the opposite perspective, Brazil also stands out as a strategic partner for this South Asian nation. Brazil is among the 10 largest countries in the world in terms of economy, demographics and territory, provides more than 2% of Bangladesh's imports and is the only South American country to have a resident Embassy in its capital. Bangladesh, as one of the world's largest recipients of international aid, is looking for partners to improve social programs, which it has already developed with considerable success- in 2006, the Bangladeshi Mohammed Yunus was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for the implementation of microcredit projects. An international reference in social technology, Brazil can offer cooperation in the areas of assistance programs, agricultural development and basic education. Indeed, Bangladesh is already part of the group of 18 priority countries to participate in the initial activities of the Center for Excellence against Hunger, a partnership of the Brazilian government with the United Nations World Food Program, which aims to encourage capacity development in the field of food safety, nutrition and school feeding. Many other initiatives can be contemplated.

Despite the growing importance of bilateral relations, there is a lack of high-level political contacts between the two countries. The only visit of a foreign minister from Bangladesh to Brazil occurred in 1992, in the context of the Rio Earth Summit (ECO-92). Although Brazil frequently receives ministerial visits from Bangladesh, especially from trade and agriculture-related portfolios, Brazilian ministers have not yet carried out bilateral activities in that country.

An auspicious change in this dynamic took place on 20 March 2017, when the Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of a Bilateral Consultation Mechanism was signed in Dhaka, followed by the first meeting of the mechanism. The agreement determines that political consultation meetings will be held every two years, alternately in Brazil and Bangladesh, chaired by senior officials of the Foreign Service. The periodic meeting of authorities of both parties under these mechanisms has the power to catalyze the process of identification of mutual interests and the negotiation of agreements, as it encourages the parties to make progresses on these issues. It also opens up opportunities for further dialogue on themes of mutual interest and coordination on multilateral discussions.

The First Meeting of Political Consultations was presided over by the Department Director of Central and Southern Asia and Oceania, Minister Ary Quintella, and, on the Bangladeshi side, by the General Director of the Americas, Abida Islam. I had the opportunity to participate in it. Representatives from various ministries of Bangladesh were present at the occasion, allowing for a broad and in-depth discussion of various areas of bilateral relations, including defense, agriculture, trade and investment, coordination in multilateral organizations, cooperation between diplomatic academies, and others. As immediate results of the meeting may be highlighted the removal of a legal impediment to the participation of South American companies in bidding for the purchase of defense equipment for the police of Bangladesh, enabling the participation of a Brazilian company that subsequently won the bid, and the beginning of negotiations for a memorandum of understanding between diplomatic academies.

It is a sad reminder that the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding and the holding of political consultations was preceded by the funeral in Dhaka of Ambassador Mohamed Mijarul Quayes, who had been at the head of the Bangladeshi Embassy in Brasilia since November 2014, and worked hard to achieve this mechanism. The Ambassador's confidence in the potential of the relationship between Brazil and Bangladesh was essential during the negotiation process. Ambassador Quayes died on March 10 in Brazil, after a prolonged illness. In Brasilia, the Secretary-General of Foreign Affairs conducted the funerary ceremony.

The geographical and cultural distance between Brazil and Bangladesh, instead of separating, can be conceived of as an element of union between the two countries. They can benefit from positive bilateral relations, marked by the search for convergence and the absence of conflicts. The sharing of diverse principles in multilateral organizations already represents a facilitator. Bangladesh, for example, was the first South Asian country to become a member of the International Criminal Court in 2010 – Brazil had participated in its establishment and adhered to the Rome Statute in 2002. Both share views on improving global governance, in the sense of making it more transparent, democratic, inclusive and efficient, as well as on environment, South-South cooperation and the fight against poverty.

Even with few government actions, the societies of the two countries have gradually reinforced contacts. According to available data, the Brazilian Embassy in Dhaka issued 108 tourism and business visas in 2012; this number more than tripled in 2014, to 326. In the case of Bangladesh, its Embassy in Brasilia has issued 356 visas to Brazilian citizens since the reopening, in 2012. The national authorities are concerned, however, about the increase in attempted illegal immigration of Bangladeshis to Brazil, in search of better living conditions. The Bangladeshi Embassy estimates that there are 2,500 Bangladeshi residing in Brazil, while the Migration and Human Rights Institute estimates that the correct number is closer to 3,500. Regardless of the legality of the immigrants, the presence of a substantial Bangladeshi community in Brazil tends to strengthen social and cultural ties between the two countries.

In this context, relations between Brazil and Bangladesh have been historically cordial and friendly, but far below their potential. The commercial dynamics have outpaced political ones, showing rapid growth and diversification, and in the case of Brazilian exports without being accompanied by initiatives of political approximation. Although economic demands often stimulate bilateral dialogue, this relationship will not advance satisfactorily if the Brazilian and Bangladeshi governments do not direct it and give it a boost. Therein lies the greatest challenge in bilateral relations: to involve the governments and societies in initiatives of approximation that allow for a deepening of the existing interaction level, with an emphasis on the commercial area.

As a young diplomat, it is stimulating to reflect on Brazilian foreign policy towards a country that is still out of the "spotlight" but has one of the highest growth rates in the world and which may, by 2061, have a population equal to or higher than that of Brazil (BBS, 2015). If both countries can create political mechanisms that strengthen dialogue and increase and diversify the bilateral trade, in the future I will be proud to see Bangladesh among Brazil's main partners, knowing that I had the opportunity to contribute to the construction of this partnership.

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