

CAPE VERDE AND THE ATLANTIC SPACE

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Introduction

Traditionally when we look at the World Map it is usual to see the Mercator cylindrical map projection, centered on the Euro-Atlantic region; but in Geopolitics we know that there are several perspectives of the same geographical reality, and that the center of the Map is chosen according to our notion of belonging to a certain space. And in the background, different historical experiences result in distinct interest narratives and normative preferences in commerce or security. For example, Nicholas Spykman (1969), in a fine extension of the Thomas Mahan tradition, considered in his analysis the American Continent as central, demonstrating how it holds a favorable geographic position because it is facing the two oceans (the Atlantic and the Pacific) which gives it access to the main commercial routes of the world.

In International Relations and Geopolitics it is common to say nowadays that there was a transition from the centrality of the political and economic power of the Euro-Atlantic area to the Asia-Pacific region (Nye 2014; Biscop et al. 2015). But in our approach our objective is to show that there is a reaffirmation of the Atlantic Space, especially by maintaining the geoeconomic importance of the European Community by the new dynamism of the transatlantic link, but above all by the interest shown by the emerging and re-emergent powers in the South Atlantic.

In this scenario, Cape Verde has an integrating role throughout the Atlantic Space due to its geographic location that strengthens several belongings. The country is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and has a Special Partnership with the European Union (EU); at the same time it is a part of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) and has hosted military exercises of the North Atlantic Treaty Organi-

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zation (NATO) in its territory, reason enough to shift our curiosity towards a geopolitical study relating this archipelago of the African coast with the Atlantic Space.

The Atlantic Space

From a geographical point of view, the Atlantic space encompasses 86 million and 560 thousand square kilometers, or 23.9% of the land surface, covering 30 countries in the Americas, 11 in Europe and 24 in Africa (Correia 2010), all of them very heterogeneous from the political, economic, social and cultural point of view.

This immense body of water connecting the North Pole to the Antarctic includes the Gulf of Mexico, the North, Baltic, Caribbean, Black and Mediterranean Seas, and it is possible to consider six accesses: two in the north (northeast and northwest), two in the center (the Panama Canal and the Strait of Gibraltar) and two in the south (Drake Passage, Cape of Good Hope), having its smaller width between Natal (Brazil) and Freetown (Sierra Leone), defining the line that joins these two points as the geopolitical equator (Correia 2010).

The vast space of the Atlantic Basin is characterized by its accentuated heterogeneity parallel to increasing factors of interdependence. In this space, we find a community of shared values such as democracy and free trade, which coexist with different political, economic, social and cultural traditions in different regions and countries (Grevi 2016). In the Atlantic space, we find different levels of economic development, institutional and security stability, ideologies, religious cleavages, family organizations and interpretations of values such as the Human Rights.

From the geopolitical point of view, the North Atlantic is more homogeneous than the Middle or South Atlantic, characterizing the so-called West, a shared community of common values.

Political Regimes and Systems

Analyzing the map from a point of view of regimes and political systems we find that in the Atlantic area, most countries are democracies, more precisely 62 democracies, 12 regimes considered hybrids and 7 authoritarian regimes (Gratius 2015); in Europe, democratic regimes predominate (88% of countries), with a smaller percentage in America (only 2/3 of countries) and only 20% of countries are considered democracies in Atlantic Africa, 43% are

autocracies and 37% are hybrid regimes (Gratius 2015)².

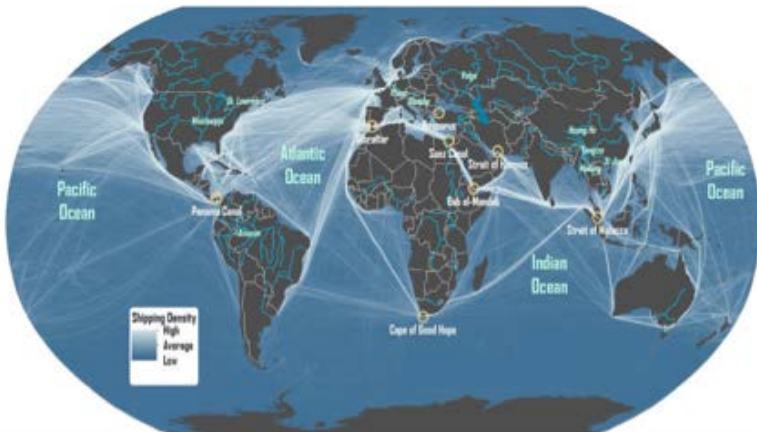
On the other hand, we also verified the existence of a multiplicity of political units in a fragile condition (weak, failed or collapsed). According to the Fund for Peace index of 2016, in the Atlantic Basin there are 12 political units in this situation, of which 11 are in Africa and one in the Caribbean, Haiti³.

Economy and resources

The economic and investment interdependence in the Atlantic basin has been increasing since the beginning of the century. Its intensity varies, since there is great diversification and differentiation of the economies. Between North America and Europe, trade accounts for 40% of the total crossing the Atlantic, followed by EU-Africa trade (21%) and between North and South and Central America trade (18%) (Grevi 2016).

Figure 1 represents the traffic of ships in the several existing maritime lines of communication, with a higher density between the two development poles in the North Atlantic, USA and Europe, which reflects the commercial dynamics between the two margins, but we can also verify a significant South-North sea traffic, for example, the one expressed in the figure, which portrays the density of traffic between Brazil and the rest of the world.

Figure 1 – Domains of maritime circulation



Source: European Union External Action 2014.

² For further statistical data, check <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2016>.

³ For further data, see <http://fsi.fundforpeace.org/>.

Maritime traffic in the Maritime Communication Lines (Linhas de Comunicações Marítimas, LCM) of the Brazilian coast accounts for an average of 359 daily merchant ships (MS/d) and annually moves more than 350 billion dollars. Among these, can be highlighted:

Figure 2 – Major Brazilian Maritime Communication Lines (LCM) that cross the South Atlantic

- LCM with Europe and North Africa, with 215 MS/d;
- LCM with North America, the Caribbean and northern South America, with 68 MS/d;
- LCM with the Brazilian coast, with 359 MS/d;
- LCM with the Gulf of Guinea (central Africa), with 40 MS/d;
- LCM with the Southern Cone and the Pacific Ocean, with 77 MS/d;
- LCM with southern Africa, the Middle East, and Asia through the Cape of Good Hope (Cape Route), with 65 MS/d.

Source: Guerra 2011.

Despite the significant numerical expression, the South Atlantic is still considered an ocean of transit (Correia, 2010), and the main routes are along the American and African coast. It should be noted, however, that the main South-North routes cross the geopolitical equator and pass close to Cape Verde, which highlights the importance of this and other Macaronesia (Azores, Canary Islands and Madeira) archipelagos.

In a region that can be considered its energy system, the Atlantic Space possesses a large part of unexplored fossil reserves, including 40% of the oil, 20% of the natural gas and 40% of the world coal (BP 2015), also having 67% of the technically recoverable reserves of shale gas, 77% of the installed capacity of solar energy, 64% of the wind energy and 59% of the geothermal energy (Kraemer and Stefes 2016).

The largest proven oil reserves are concentrated in the Americas and part of the Atlantic Africa. In Brazil, for example, oil reserves will be about 46 billion barrels, with the possibility of reaching 70 to 100 billion oil barrels, in addition to a large volume of gas; in Venezuela, the reserves are estimated at 80 billion barrels (Hanson 2008).

In the region of the Gulf of Guinea, oil production accounts for about 16% of the world production. In this unstable region, almost all the oil fields

are located offshore, which guarantees them some security, away from the instability that ravages the continental area (Guedes 2013). This region also includes the Congo Basin (the second largest water and forest complex in the world after the Amazon), which covers nearly two million square kilometers.

Threats to Security

There are also several threats to transnational security in the Atlantic, the most serious being the previously mentioned weakness of the State. The weakness of the State can and should be related to the other threats, since, having no power or control over the whole of its territory, States are permeable to the germination and development of the most diverse forms of subversion (Garcia and Ferro 2013).

Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs), with the funds generated, acquire a level of power that competes with the States of the region. They express this power by the ability to create various forms of instability in the countries they operate, wide-ranging instability, from social to economic, from political to psychological. At the same time, they attempt to indirectly gain political power through the corruption of their sovereign organs and their officials, in order to intimidate the established power to guarantee complete freedom of action in their criminal activities. This situation further undermines the weak State structures.

In the west bank, we can highlight the criminal violence of the drug cartels and the thousands of deaths caused by their actions⁴. Countries such as Guatemala, Honduras, or Mexico struggle to contain the high levels of violent crime that affect state authority (Grevi, 2016).

In West Africa, a region where most countries are among the world's poorest, drug trafficking is estimated at hundreds of millions of dollars. Drug trafficking networks often take advantage of the structural weaknesses of countries such as Guinea-Bissau and, with the approval of local elites, have turned the region into a significant transit center for Europe's distribution route⁵.

In the 2014 report of the *West Africa Commission on Drugs*, data pre-

4 According to the Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015, published by the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development (2015), Central and South America, the Caribbean and South Africa lead in the number of violent deaths.

5 On this subject, the details are in the 2014 report of the West Africa Commission on Drugs, which analyzes the transformation of Guinea Bissau into a major drug center distribution in West Africa: <http://www.wacommissionondrugs.org/report>.

sented for 2010 shows that most of the cocaine flow from Latin America to West Africa this year crossed the Cape Verde archipelago from where it was headed for the coast Atlantic region; from this analysis it can also be concluded that Cape Verde is one of the main points of transit between Latin America and the African continent.

Despite this weakness, Cape Verde is considered a success story on the African continent in terms of socioeconomic development and democratic resilience, somehow a pole of stability in a volatile region (Santos, 2014). However, there have been major funding difficulties, particularly for the training of its security forces and services. However, this vulnerability is being covered by international aid, including the inauguration in 2010 of the US-funded Maritime Safety Operations Center (*Centro de Operações de Segurança Marítima*, COSMAR).

These threats are also related to Regional Levels of Conflict. There are numerous conflicts in the Atlantic space, and just to mention the most relevant ones: in the Middle East we have the persistent Israeli-Palestinian problem, the Syrian civil war, and in Iraq, where Daesh asserts itself as a subversive phenomenon on a global scale; in Europe, the problems with Russia remain due to the situation in Ukraine and Georgia; in Turkey, beyond internal convulsions, there is the Cyprus issue and again the Kurdistan problem; in North Africa there remains the issue of the status of Western Sahara, conflicts in Libya, Mali and all manifestations of instability and insecurity in the Sahel; in sub-Saharan Africa we highlight all the conflict in Nigeria, both around the Niger Delta and the Boko Haram; and we should mention the humanitarian disaster in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where violence is endemic.

In the Gulf of Guinea space, piracy represents a clear example of threat that can endanger Western economic and energy security, since this criminal activity prevents the free circulation of goods (among which hydrocarbon ones) in the lines of maritime communication. The piracy phenomenon that manifests itself nowadays in the Gulf of Guinea is responsible for 600 attacks from 2002 till 2012, severely affecting local economy and port activities (Grevi 2016). In 2012, the Nigerian government estimated that 400.00 barrels were stolen daily, at a total monthly cost of one million dollars (Chatham House 2013).

It is interesting to notice that the TCOs that operate in the region, searching for some support of the people, take on some forms of social responsibility, replacing the States in the construction of roads, schools and hospitals.

In addition, in Africa there are economic disparities and exponential

population growth. This breeding ground on the West African coast raises factors that ultimately encourage irregular immigration, forcing populations to move in search of safety and welfare.

The migratory element (as a generator of tension and some instability), with the flow oriented predominantly to the Western countries, where the new communities are hardly integrated in the local societies, increases the expansion of disenchanted and potential affiliates and Combatants for the alternative presented by global subversion.

Irregular immigration, from which the TCOs take advantage, leads to the exploitation of human misery. Look at the dramatic situations of those who seek in the European dream to lessen their misery. In the boats that go to the north bank of the Mediterranean or to the Canaries we find people from all over the African continent. They come mainly from West Africa, but also from Sudan, Chad, Horn of Africa and even from Southern Africa. These immigrants in search of security and welfare are at great risk of life. Many of them cannot remain in the transit countries, which become their final destination. They even stay for years and stage their “jump operation”, which also allows them to have several informal jobs during the trip, which will ensure them to pay for the next step (IOM 2005).

The migratory phenomenon accompanies the Cape Verdean people, and it is inevitable to speak of this phenomenon when talking about the country. Today, as a result of the emigration of several decades ago mainly to Europe, the United States, and Africa, the country has a large diaspora spread around the world and estimated at around 500 thousand citizens (Cardoso 2006). That is, accordingly to the 2010 census, a number similar to those in the archipelago⁶, which strengthens the idea of a global nation in the foreign policy of this small state and serves as a “link in the integration of Cape Verde internationally” (Madeira 2016).

Human mobility also enhances the transfer and sharing of knowledge and culture. In the case of Cape Verde, its diaspora can be considered “a transnational community because emigrants function as a link between Cape Verde and the rest of the world. They support a social relationship between the host country and the country of origin” (Cardoso 2011), providing an important contribution to the country’s economy with its remittances, while also bringing new business models based in the learning achieved in the countries of destination (Ridout and Goerg 2016).

⁶ According to data from the 2010 Census, the Cape Verdean population was 491,875 residents, more about this subject can be found in the website <http://www.ine.cv/dadostats/dados.aspx?d=1>

With the economic and financial crisis and the instability that has plagued several countries in the region, Cape Verde has also become a destination country for emigration, mainly due to free movement policies for ECOWAS citizens. This situation contributes greatly to the intellectual, political and academic debate about the country's integration in that community (Madeira 2013), its economic impact, but above all the cultural and identity impact.

International Organizations

The Atlantic space represents one of the most integrated regions due to the role played by several International Organizations, of the most diverse purposes. Without being exhaustive: the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Community of Portuguese Language Speaking Countries (CPLP), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone (ZOPACAS). These organizations eventually constituted a network of platforms that connect these Atlantic countries and, concomitantly, "contributed to the diversification of foreign relations for many countries of the global South" (Ridout and Goerg 2016).

In our essay, only three of these International Organizations that possess relevant politics and practices to the Atlantic security will be addressed.

The European Union

The Atlantic, which characterizes EU's western frontier, is the great maritime space that defines two thirds of European borders, involving four seas (the Baltic, the North, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea) and many archipelagos, with some of them being considered as in an ultra-outlying position, such as Reunion, Guyana, Madeira and Martinique.

The sea has a significant value in the European economy, since the maritime regions represent 40% of Europe's GDP. The EU also owns 40% of the maritime transport's global fleet. One clear example of the importance that the bloc attributes to the sea is the existence of six agencies whose main concern are sea issues (Frontex, EDA, EMSA, EEA, ACCP, ESA) (Correia 2010), still existing a handful of diverse politics regarding the sea, in which we can emphasize the Blue Book (an EU integrated maritime policy), the Atlantic Action Plan, and the Maritime Security Strategy.

The execution of the strategy to the Atlantic defined by the European Commission demands a great effort by communitarian institutions, member States and even private entities. In the Atlantic Action Plan, to be executed until 2020, there is the establishment of the priorities regarding the investigation, the investment and the reinforcement of competences, which the States may follow as to promote the “blue economy” in the Atlantic region, in a sustainable and inclusive way in the coastal regions.

The Atlantic is vital for EU’s security and welfare; besides the threats and the risks manifested in the maritime global dominium, we must consider that it is through the sea that EU processes 90% of its international trade and 40% of its internal one (Rodrigues 2014). The EU strongly depends on the import of petroleum (88.4%) and gas (65.3%) derived especially from the Middle East and from the Eurasia (Eurostat 2015), being, however, passing through a process of diversifying its supplying sources, including the Atlantic, in such a way that the imports from Africa have grown from 18% to 23% between the years of 2006 and 2014; only in 2014, Europe represented 45% and 20% of the Nigerian and the Angolan exports, respectively (Grevi 2016). In this way, it is imperative to guarantee the freedom of circulation in the sea and the security of its supply.

The goal of the Maritime Security Strategy, adopted in 2014, consists in the defense of the maritime interests that Europe needs to safeguard in the nearby sea area (the one concerning the spaces under the state members’ jurisdiction and its proximities in the high sea), as well as further maritime interests (the security of vital navigation routes, transportation and distribution networks) that may be threatened (Rodrigues 2014).

This strategy aims to enhance EU’s response and it integrates five areas of action: external action; maritime alert; vigilance and information sharing; capacity enhancement; risk management and protection of critical maritime infrastructures; crisis response and, also, innovation and investigation in maritime security, education and training.

The greatest “systemic” threat, nonetheless, is not a result of the current competition between the great powers. On the European side, it is possible to verify a severe identity crisis of the EU as a relevant Organization. In this sense, one can consider that one of the most significant threats is the internal one, and it embodies the renationalization of its External and Common Security and Defense Politics (CSDP).

In a period when memory and history impose themselves upon the treaties, in which we witness at the same time movements against the integration and favorable to the self-exclusion in the EU, we shall properly analyze the consequences brought by such phenomenon to European security and

defense.

The EU has adopted, still, a joint strategy with the AU, based on the principles of belonging and joint responsibility, as well as it has developed several dialogue and cooperation mechanisms in partnership with sub regional African organizations. In the security scope, there are numerous initiatives⁷, particularly in the West Africa and the Sahel regions, involving the ECOWAS, in order to contain the illicit traffic, the piracy and the terrorism. It also had a prominent role in supporting the definition of an African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and in projecting military forces under CSDP in support of reforms on both the security and the defense sector in Niger and Mali.

Moreover, as it will be further seen, the US and Brazil are also conducting naval exercises in the west African coast involving regional navies, contributing, therefore, to their training and capacity building.

In Africa's Atlantic coast, the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), which comprises eight countries of the region, also has an important role, especially in the coordination and information exchange, contributing to regional maritime security.

NATO

It is mandatory to talk about the Atlantic Alliance whereas speaking of security in the Atlantic, which represents a regional alliance with global interests, but that is, also, par excellence, the promoter of the transatlantic connection, maintaining its position as Europe's most important security mechanism.

NATO, aiming at guaranteeing its interests, since its creation, ensures the control of the sea, at least in the North Atlantic. Nowadays, however, in the current maritime security environment, as non-State threats begin to arise and as Russia reemerged, the Alliance, through a maritime strategy adopted in 2011, sought to not only enhance its contribution to defense and security, but also to promote its values. This strategy materializes through its naval operations in four areas: dissuasion and collective defense; crisis management; cooperative security; and maritime security. Regarding the maritime security itself, always within the strict respect of the law, NATO is able to watch and patrol any area defined by the Council, as well as to contribute to the energetic

⁷ The EU Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020 and the Sahel Action Plan 2015-2020 are examples of such.

security, being here included critical infrastructures and maritime communication lines (NATO 2011).

It is worth mentioning that Cape Verde also has a strategic importance for NATO. We may here recall that, in 2005, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs from Bulgaria, Salomon Passy, formally proposed the inclusion of the State of Cape Verde in the Atlantic Alliance; furthermore, in July 2006, NATO managed to fulfill the firsts military exercises in Africa, namely the exercise Steadfast Jaguar (Guedes 2012).

ZOPACAS

In the Security and Defense scope, Cape Verde is still part of another international organization with interests in the South Atlantic, ZOPACAS.

ZOPACAS, created by a Brazilian initiative during the 1986 United Nations General Assembly, comprises 24 countries. Such organization is characterized for being more like a forum “to discuss the management of the South Atlantic space than a military or political entity” (Ridout and Goerg 2016) and has as its main objective the promotion of regional cooperation and the maintenance of peace and security in the South Atlantic region. Besides cooperation initiatives, initiatives of political-diplomatic character stand out, particularly in protecting the environment, avoiding the nuclear proliferation and finding pacific solutions to conflicts between the integrating parties.

ZOPACAS is not a regional integration organization, presenting itself more as a structure that gathers all the countries of the region, fomenting cooperation and interaction agreements in the South Atlantic, than a space for joint action (Guerra 2011). The organization arose revitalized in 2013, after the VII Ministerial Reunion in Montevideo, inserted in a context in which Brazil had already discovered its oil fields in the Pre-Salt layers, in São Paulo’s seacoast; in which the US resurrected its IV fleet, almost 60 years after its dissolution in 1950; and finally, in which an increasing presence of China in South America can be verified.

The VII ZOPACAS’ Ministerial Meeting took place at city of Mindelo, in Cape Verde, between May 20 and 21 2015, having the participants approached cooperation subjects in the areas of maritime security, oceanographic investigation, maritime transportation, university cooperation and technological information and communication (Panapress 2015).

In this complex context of struggling for the affirmation in the South Atlantic space, Brazil invested in a cooperation with a “South-South” character, and the progressive reinforcement of ZOPACAS’ role was relevant, as

well as the role of other forums, such as the IBAS (India, Brazil and South Africa). The maritime cooperation between Brazilian, Argentinian, Uruguayan and South African navies had established itself as a reality due to the regular naval exercises, such as the ATLASUR and the IBASMAR, which, during 2008 and 2010, jointly exercised IBAS forum's naval forces (Pereira 2013).

In spite of these cooperation actions, there is still a gap in an institutional articulation of both the Atlantic margins, through which circulate the most diverse threats.

The South Atlantic

The Atlantic continues to be of great interest to the US, considering that the country possesses five different command fighters responsible for significant areas of the ocean (EUCOM, AFRICOM, CENTCOM, SOUTHCOM, NORTHCOM), as well as three fleets that project its naval power in the region: the second, the fourth and the sixth fleets.

More recently, the South Atlantic has brought to light new US interests in the area, leading to the creation of AFRICOM in 2008, and the rearrangement of the fourth fleet, in order to lessen the country's progressive loss of hegemony in the region. These interests are not apart from the oil reserves' discovery in the Brazilian offshore and in many of the Guinea Gulf countries, both of which, besides representing local supplying alternatives, have also a more persistent stability when compared to the traditional sources in the Middle East and the Central Asia, that are subject to significant and recurring convulsions.

Completing the diversity of interest here addressed, one can add Angola's ambitions to achieve its oceanic capability (Correia 2015), and we can also ask who, from a military perspective, controls the Atlantic space? If, in one hand, in the North we may consider NATO or even the US, in the South, on the other, despite Brazilian intentions in this oceanic space, there is a significant set of islands under British sovereignty: Ascension, St. Helena, Tristan da Cunha, South Georgia and South Sandwich and Falkland, that form an arc that disputes with Brazil this space. Moreover, as the holder of such islands, the United Kingdom still claims thousands of square miles at the bottom of the ocean.

The reactivation of the fourth fleet without any previous consultation of regional partners had not been taken for granted by a number of South Atlantic states. From a Brazilian point of view, such move figures a threat to the maritime oil reserves. Some authors, such as Moniz Bandeira (2008), sug-

gest the deflagration of a second Cold War, involving South America, “where US’ penetration constitutes an element of instability and concern”. Then, the Brazilian president, Lula da Silva, stated that “when the US established as a priority the reinforcement of the Atlantic’s Fourth Fleet, we must clearly worry. The country allegedly does it for humanitarian reasons, but we did not ask for this, nor did anyone”. In this sense, Brazil’s president engaged on the re-equipment of Brazilian Armed Forces, on the enhancement of defense industries and also on a concrete proposal to UNASUR regarding the creation of a regional defense organism, the South American Defense Council (Fonseca 2011).

During Lula’s presidency, Brazil approved, in 2005, a new National Defense Policy and, in 2008, the National Defense Strategy, through which the defense priorities to both the green and the blue Amazon are highlighted. The country has also assumed the position of maritime power in the South Atlantic, being the main driving force of South-American regionalism and South-South cooperation (Grevi 2016). At the corporate level, for instance, construction, mining and agro-industrial companies’ investment in Africa was notorious, especially in Angola; Brazil’s diplomatic network more than doubled since 2002, currently counting with thirty-eight official representations, situation that contributes for the country to represent 70% of the trade between South America and Africa (Kotsopoulos 2014).

In this sense, we may consider that South-South cooperation became a priority in Brazilian foreign policy agenda, as a way of promoting the country’s international insertion, and that such cooperation constitutes, nowadays, the essence of Brazilian Cooperation Agency (Aguilar 2013).

One of the different types of cooperation is designated by the term “technical cooperation”, having its fundamentals on the technical support, counting with the sending of specialists in determinate sectors of activity in order to build capacity of the population in areas of knowledge with a lack of technical resources (Aguilar 2013).

The technical-military cooperation also plays a major role: among others, cooperation agreements have been signed with Cape Verde (1994), South Africa (2003), Guinea-Bissau (2006), Namibia (2009), Nigeria, Senegal, Angola and Equatorial Guinea (2010), besides the already mentioned naval exercises between both sides of the Atlantic. It is also worth pointing out that, in CPLP’s scope, there exercises from the Operation Felino series and periodical meetings involving the Defense Ministers and Chiefs of State.

Moreover, Brazil has established a strategic cooperation with South Africa, in 2007, and with Angola, in 2010. In the economic level, MERCOSUR (Southern Common Market) and SADC (South African Development

Community) concluded, in 2009, preferential trade arrangements (Grevi 2006).

In the South Atlantic, it is still important to consider the diverse interests of various political units regarding the extension of the maritime platform, which, in the Brazilian case, concerns the so-called Blue Amazon, that, roughly speaking, corresponds to an increase of 50% of its territorial extension. In this vast space the south region of the Atlantic is located and it is still possible to evidence divergent interpretations regarding the border delimitation between UK's and Argentina's sovereignty in the region of the Falklands/Malvinas. Such position contrasts with the one in West Africa, where six⁸ countries gathered to jointly request and mutually recognize its pretensions of expanding its continental shelf.

In the level of language at the Atlantic's space, several *lingua francas* (English, Spanish, Portuguese and French) are expressed, which facilitate the communication between the numerous political units and its respective populations, promoting the socialization and the negotiations, and being also significant forums of cooperation among the Atlantic countries⁹. In the South Atlantic, the "Oceano Moreno" by Adriano Moreira (1993), the presence of the Portuguese language is more expressive in the virtuous Brazil-Cape Verde-Angola triangle.

In this sense, we may consider that such space has Lusophony in its center and, furthermore, that the CPLP sought to play a distinctive role on the definition of development and cooperation policies, as well as on the decision-making process of creating a stable security architecture.

Cape Verde in the Atlantic space

When speaking of Cape Verde in the complex, heterogeneous and dynamic context of the Atlantic space, it is important to remind the geopolitical author Spykman (IAEM 1982), for whom "the geography is the most important factor of the national power, because it is the most permanent one", being also important to remember that the geopolitical value of a determinate space is only circumstantial and depends on the importance attributed by other states (Correia 2010).

8 These six countries are Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Sierra Leone. Regarding this subject, more details can be found in http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/wa775_14/wa7_es_en_sept2014.pdf.

9 Regarding more specifically the Portuguese language, we can mention an important study conducted by Luís Reto (2012), about the economic potential of the Portuguese language.

This small archipelagic country, situated 500 km from African west coast, possesses a territory of 4033 km² and has approximately 500,000 inhabitants. Such characteristics impose to Cape Verde great challenges in the political context, both regional and internationally.

The first great challenge is the one of affirmation and even survival. In this challenge, we can also include the issue of belonging whether to Europe or to Africa¹⁰. This debate, that has been going on for decades, is far from being consensual in Cape Verde.

If we approach this issue exclusively from a geographic perspective, the country is closer to Africa; nevertheless, the notion of belonging includes other factors, such as identity and culture both perennial in geopolitics. Cabral and his contemporaries have always defended africanity and, consequently, a broader integration in the regional African context (Cabral 1978). This approach, however, does not represent a consensus, since that many argue in favor of a previous European identity and an integration into Western civilization (Madeira 2013).

Nowadays, such debate focus on whether promote a stronger integration with ECOWAS or in the enhancement of the Special Partnership with UE, balancing its possible benefits and challenges. If the path chosen is the ECOWAS one, Cape Verde will become the only insular state to integrate a community of fifteen states and holder of approximately 250 millions of consumers (Monteiro 2016). However, the organization's integration project is not yet consolidated, and the situation is aggravated by several cultural, religious and political difficulties among its members, as well as divergences regarding the free circulation of people, goods and capital. If the choice favors a greater regional African integration, the interaction of internal/external, geopolitical, economic, demographic, cultural and religious factors will continuously turn into a slow and complex process.

The other option, the Special Partnership with EU, established in 2007 (under Portuguese presidency), "represents a political approach that surpasses the mere relationship between the giver and the beneficiary" and does not constitute an alternative to the Cotonou Agreement. This partnership embraces an action plan based on six pillars: good governance; security/stability; regional integration; technical and normative convergence; knowledge socialization; fight against poverty; and development (UE 2007).

Since this Special Partnership takes into account regional integration, this will allow Cape Verde to establish a bridge between the two continents (Madeira 2015). On one hand it prioritizes closeness to further peripheral

¹⁰ For further information, see Madeira 2013.

regions and the rest of the Union, and on the other, a simultaneous intensification of regional relations in the ECOWAS scope (UE 2007).

Both of these options must pass through a process of reflection and evaluation of the opportunities and disadvantages. If a stage of greater integration is reached, one must create instruments that will minimize the country's vulnerability and fight against phenomena that may endanger the archipelago's security and sovereignty (Madeira 2015).

In our point of view, in an even more global world, in order to guarantee its freedom of action, Cape Verde must establish coherent, and, foremost, convenient alliances, improving multilateralism and "looking forward to the mobilization of comprehensive political-institutional solutions, capable of overpassing the vulnerabilities of an insular country" (Monteiro 2016), in such a way that reinforces its connections with Africa, Europe, Brazil, China, the US, CPLP and the South Atlantic.

The second challenge is directly attached to the security issue, in which the combat against the most diverse forms of transnational organized crime is included. The socioeconomic development, considered as a third challenge, will only be fulfilled with a good governance and a deep institutional consolidation, which are likely to drag foreign investors' attention and, consequently, to significantly improve development.

Conclusion

From the previous description, we may conclude that the Atlantic - notably an heterogeneous space, where challenges are complex, multidimensional and globally scaled, and where there is a lack of institutional articulation - had not lost its centrality to international relations, having, therefore, reaffirmed itself, both from an economic and from a security perspective.

In order to preserve its differential, Cape Verde must keep the advantages brought by the images of good governance and political and social stability, also needs to gradually reduce its vulnerabilities throughout a multiplicity of partnerships, putting its sovereignty on service of the international community.

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to show that the centrality of the Atlantic continues to be a reality, above all, by maintaining the geo-economic importance of the European Community, by the new dynamism of the transatlantic link but mainly by the interest shown by emerging and re-emergent powers in the South Atlantic. In this context, Cape Verde plays in the Atlantic an interesting integrating role.

KEYWORDS

Geopolitics; Atlantic; Cape Verde.

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