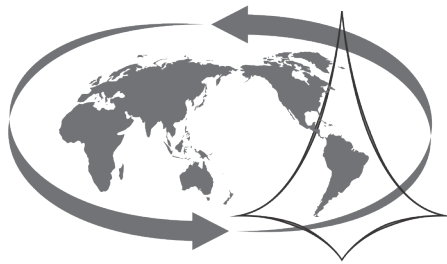


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## About the Journal

*AUSTRAL: Brazilian Journal of Strategy and International Relations* was the first Brazilian journal in the field of International Relations to be fully published in English (2012). It is an essentially academic vehicle, linked to the Brazilian Centre for Strategy & International Relations (NERINT) of the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). Its pluralist focus aims to contribute to the debate on the international political and economic order from the perspective of the developing world.

The journal publishes original articles in the area of Strategy Studies and International Relations, with special interest in issues related to developing countries and South-South Cooperation – its security problems; the political, economic and diplomatic developments of emerging countries; and their relations with the traditional powers. *AUSTRAL* is published semi-annually in English and Portuguese. The journal's target audience consists of researchers, experts, diplomats, military personnel and graduate students of International Relations. The content of the journal consists ensure the publication of authors from each of the great continents of the South: Asia, Latin America and Africa. Thus, the debate and diffusion of knowledge produced in these regions is stimulated. All contributions submitted to *AUSTRAL* are subject to rigorous scientific evaluation.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

As *AUSTRAL* celebrated its tenth year anniversary of the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian military conflict in February 2022, still active when this issue was closed, had a huge and multiple worldwide impact. It comes just six months after the shocking US withdrawal from Afghanistan, now ruled by the Taliban. The return of a conventional armed conflict between industrial countries, in the middle of Europe, diluted the theoretical narrative of a post-Cold War Kantian Peace, marked only by confrontations between non-state insurgent armed groups. The Euro-American strategy of containing countries through international sanctions, on the other hand, proved ineffective in the face of Russian determination, which used oil, gas and cereals in an economic war that affected the West, still not recovered from the effects of the pandemic. Sanctions were followed only by rich industrial countries, and even then, not fully.

War also affects the geometry of the world order, as Ukraine is formally armed and supported by NATO, contributing to Sino-Russian convergence on a global level. It also represents a prelude to greater tension between the United States and China. However, there is another relevant aspect: the Western media profile in the coverage and analysis of the war event. The lack of scientific and objective analysis of the causes and forms of war is worrying, which and when they exist are blocked from being disseminated to the general public. The public follows purely superficial and emotional versions of events, through selected images. However, behind the “consensus”, significant realignments in the international order can be observed, as well as the unfolding of the international crisis.

As of this issue, *AUSTRAL* presents eight articles, with authors from countries not yet represented: Oman, Jordan, Vietnam and Peru. The first two are general in nature, addressing the Sino-American hegemonic shift through Giovanni Arrighi's accumulation cycles and the power of American digital technology multinationals. Afterwards, the role of China in the stability of the Taliban's Afghanistan is analysed and then, in the same region, the role of the Sultanate of Oman in the Yemen Civil War. Next, there is an article on Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific, based on the perception of analysts from the region itself. Another innovative topic, in the context of slow and interminable negotiations between the European Union and Mercosur, is a

historical analysis of the contradictions between the European Community and Latin American integration in the late 1980s. Also original is the discussion on the civilizational divide of the far-right from the perspective of German politics. Finally, Mozambique's foreign policy under the presidencies of Samora Machel and Joaquim Chissano receives an exciting overview.

NERINT Strategic Analysis provides readers with three articles on Russia and Ukraine. Although is a text written in the heat of events, they form an extremely objective view of the forces in confrontation. Subsequently, the Summit of the Americas is analysed in the context of the weakening of Washington's policy for the continent and another on the frustrated appointment of an Ambassador to Brazil. The following text, authored by an experienced retired Brazilian diplomat, analyzes an important topic for reflection in the year of the bicentennial of Brazil's independence: the role of Brazil's relationship with China and the South Atlantic for the development of the world order. Finally, the wave of violence that shook Kazakhstan at the turn of the year is analysed in the context of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, which relates to the first texts, dedicated to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

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**Disclaimer:** *AUSTRAL prioritises British English as the standard variety of the English written language. Some English translations, however, may be written under the American English dialect.*



# THE SYSTEMIC CYCLES OF ACCUMULATION IN THE WORK OF GIOVANNI ARRIGHI: THE 2008 CRISIS, THE END OF US HEGEMONY AND THE ROLE OF CHINA<sup>1</sup>

Analúcia Danilevicz Pereira<sup>2</sup>  
Igor Estima Sardo<sup>3</sup>

## Introduction

Giovanni Arrighi, deceased in 2009, left a very important legacy for the explanation of power dynamics in international relations and the formation of the Modern World System. Starting from the Systemic Cycles of Accumulation (SCAs) as a theoretical-conceptual tool, Arrighi uses the general formula of Capital, by Karl Marx, to conceptualize the SCAs and their successions, as the process that regulates the relations between the capitalist powers of the World-System.

For Arrighi, each cycle is formed by a moment of material and commercial expansion (M-C), which is interrupted by a moment of crisis of capitalism, opening space for a financial expansion of this cycle (C-M') to, then, finally, reach a last crisis and its downfall. From there, a new cycle begins:

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on Igor Estima Sardo's Course Completion Work in International Relations at UFRGS, supervised by Professor Dr. Analúcia Danilevicz Pereira (Sardo 2021a). Correspondingly, the article is based on the eBook published by the South American Institute of Policy and Strategy (ISAPE) (Sardo 2021b).

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[...] we shall designate the beginning of every financial expansion, and therefore of every long century, the “*signal crisis*” [...]. This is crisis is the “*signal*” of a deeper underlying systemic crisis, which the switch to high finance none the less forestalls for the time being. [...] We call the event, or series of events, that lead to this final supersession the “*terminal crisis*” [...] of the dominant regime of accumulation, and we take it to mark the end of the long century that encompasses the rise, full expansion, and demise of that regime (Arrighi 2010, 220-221).

In his work *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power and the Origins of Our Time* (2010), in which the author discusses the succession of cycles, there is a concern with the development of the last cycle under analysis – the American one –, which had already experienced a signal crisis in 1973, but had not yet experienced its terminal crisis. In this sense, the author proposes to answer the following question: “What forces are in the process of precipitating the terminal crisis of the US regime of accumulation, and how soon should we expect this terminal crisis to occur and the long twentieth century to end?” (Arrighi 2010, 221).

In this perspective, this article seeks to discuss whether the terminal crisis of the US cycle has already occurred and whether, therefore, the World-System would experience a new SCA. As a hypothesis to the question, it is assumed that the 2008 crisis can be interpreted as the terminal crisis of the US cycle and that, after this event, a dichotomous SCA begins between the United States (US) and the People’s Republic of China (PRC), expanding the organic core of capitalism and the decision-making bodies of the world economy in the G20 (Silver; Arrighi 2011).

In a broader sense, the purpose of this article is to contribute to the debate, left open after the death of Giovanni Arrighi in 2009 (Harvey 2009), about the successions of SCAs, the signal and terminal crises and the hegemonies of the World-System. This work intends to review the main works of the author *The Long Twentieth Century: money, power and the origins of our time*, *Chaos and governance in the Modern World System* and *Adam Smith in Beijing*<sup>4</sup> and to analyze the context of the 2008 crisis, both its causes and consequences. for international relations.

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4 The publication of the first edition of each work, in the original language, took place, respectively, in 1994, 1999 and 2007.

## Systemic Cycles of Accumulation (SCA), Systemic Crises and Hegemonies

The SCAs, conceptualized by Arrighi, are the focal point of his analysis of international relations. In addition to geopolitical disputes, armed conflicts and legal issues between nations, “which mask the class struggle [...]” (Marx 2011, 59, own translation)<sup>5</sup>, international relations are guided by periodic cycles of capitalism that can be traced back to the 15th century to the present day. A SCA can be summarized as follows:

Marx’s general formula of capital (MCM’) can therefore be interpreted as depicting not just the logic of individual capitalist investments, but also a recurrent pattern of historical capitalism as world system. The central aspect of this pattern is the alternation of epochs of material expansion (MC phases of capital accumulation) with phases of financial rebirth and expansion (CM’ phases). In phases of material expansion money capital “sets in motion” an increasing mass of commodities (including commoditized labor-power and gifts of nature); and in phases of financial expansion an increasing mass of money capital “sets itself free” from its commodity form, and accumulation proceeds through financial deals (as in Marx’s abridged formula MM’). Together, the two epochs or phases constitute a full systemic cycle of accumulation (MCM’) (Arrighi 2010, 6).

It is important to note that each cycle is moved under the auspices of a capitalist class of a state, this being the dynamic center of a specific SCA. Although the author does not develop a well-defined concept of the state in the context of SCA successions, it can be summarized as a “bureaucratic-military governmental machine” (Marx 2011, 149, own translation)<sup>6</sup>, which serves the interests of the ruling class (Lenin 2017; Engels 2019). The state, therefore, is a transforming agent of the material base, as active as the revolutionary classes of the 15th century bourgeoisie (Huberman 1979).

Thus, for Arrighi (2010), the state, together with the ruling class, plays a decisive role in the transitions of SCAs, in the world economy, in the intercapitalist power struggle and, therefore, in international relations. This role of the state is evident in the institutions it builds to foster the full development of each SCA, such as a monetary authority that guarantees a competitive currency and encourages credit expansion; a stock exchange that captures foreign savings; the internalization of costs from predecessor cycles;

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5 In the original: “que mascara a luta de classes [...]” (Marx 2011, 59).

6 In the original: “máquina governamental burocrático-militar” (Marx 2011, 149).

the support of diplomatic systems and the construction of mechanisms of coercion – funding the armed forces – and consensus – funding an international financial system (IFS) (Arrighi 2010).

In the history of the Modern World System, Arrighi identifies four cycles: the Ibero-Genoese cycle (1453-1648), the Dutch cycle (1580-1784), the British cycle (1740-1929) and the US cycle (since 1870). Furthermore, from the previous excerpt, it can be seen that a cycle consists of two moments: a material expansion, in which the dominant state manages to concentrate and control global value chains and input-output cycles, guiding the process of accumulation of capital on a world scale; and a financial expansion, a moment in which the SCA is in decline, because the capitalist class of this state no longer has incentives to replace the working capital, since there is a strong pressure on profits, and starts to take advantage of the financial capital, which finances a material expansion into another space (Arrighi 2010).

Indeed, it is important to note that the cycles overlap one another, given that the financial expansion of a declining SCA finances, almost unintentionally, the material expansion of the next cycle. Marx, had already recognized this capacity for transitioning cycles that the international credit system has, “which often covered up one of the sources of primitive accumulation in this or that people” (Marx 2017, 825, own translation)<sup>7</sup> and was responsible for the beginning of material expansion, by example of:

[...] capitals of Netherlands, to which the decadent Venice lent large sums of money. The same happened between the Netherlands and England. [...] One of its main businesses, between 1701 and 1776, was the lending of enormous sums of capital, especially to its powerful competitor, England. Something similar occurs today between England and the United States (Marx 2017, 825-826, own translation)<sup>8</sup>.

Something worth noting in the analysis of SCAs is the composition of the hierarchy of international power. The state that leads and coordinates a cycle does so to increase its capacity to accumulate capital and survive in the international system. However, this leadership is not always accompanied

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<sup>7</sup> In the original: “que frequentemente encobria uma das fontes da acumulação primitiva neste ou naquele povo” (Marx 2017, 825).

<sup>8</sup> In the original: [...] capitais da Holanda, à qual a decadente Veneza emprestou grandes somas em dinheiro. O mesmo se deu entre a Holanda e a Inglaterra. [...] Um de seus negócios principais, entre 1701 e 1776, foi o empréstimo de enormes somas de capital, especialmente à sua poderosa concorrente, a Inglaterra. Algo semelhante ocorre hoje entre Inglaterra e Estados Unidos (Marx 2017, 825-826).

by international legitimacy and, sometimes, competing states question the order of a particular SCA. Therefore, the leadership of a state in the process of accumulation of international capital is not synonymous with hegemony in the World-System. To this end, Arrighi derives his concept of hegemony from the Gramscian concept, which unites coercion and consensus to the legitimacy of domination (Arrighi; Silver 1999). For Gramsci, at the national level, “[...] the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as ‘domination’ and as ‘intellectual and moral leadership’. A social group dominates antagonistic groups that it tends to ‘liquidate’ or subjugate, perhaps even by armed force; he leads kin or allied groups” (Gramsci 1971, 57-58).

It is valid to make this comparison between Gramsci at the national level and Arrighi at the international level. In the class struggle, whether between capitalists and proletarians, or between center and periphery, the dispute is never direct, but always masked and dampened by the political level of analysis and by the elements intermediate to this struggle: be it the petty bourgeoisie at the national level, or the semiperiphery in the international context. Thus, when Gramsci writes that hegemony “leads related or allied groups”, indirectly citing the petty bourgeoisie, Arrighi also characterizes hegemony as a leader for a similar development center.

[...] when we speak of leadership in an international context, the term is used to designate the fact that by virtue of its achievements, a dominant state becomes the “model” for other states to emulate and thereby draws them onto its own path of development (Arrighi; Silver 1999, 27).

Furthermore, when hegemony drags other states along their path of development, it constitutes an organic nucleus – a kind of global condominium of power. In this way, the organic core of capitalism:

[...] consists of all the states that over the last half-century or so have consistently occupied the top positions of the global value-added hierarchy and, in virtue of that position, have set (individually and collectively) the standards of wealth which all their governments have sought to maintain, and all other governments have sought to attain. Broadly speaking, the members of the organic core during the US cycle have been North America, Western Europe [European Union and United Kingdom], and Australia (Arrighi 2010, 343).

However, if on the one hand it is easy to identify a leading state’s faculty of coercion – through its military capabilities –, its faculties of consensus are

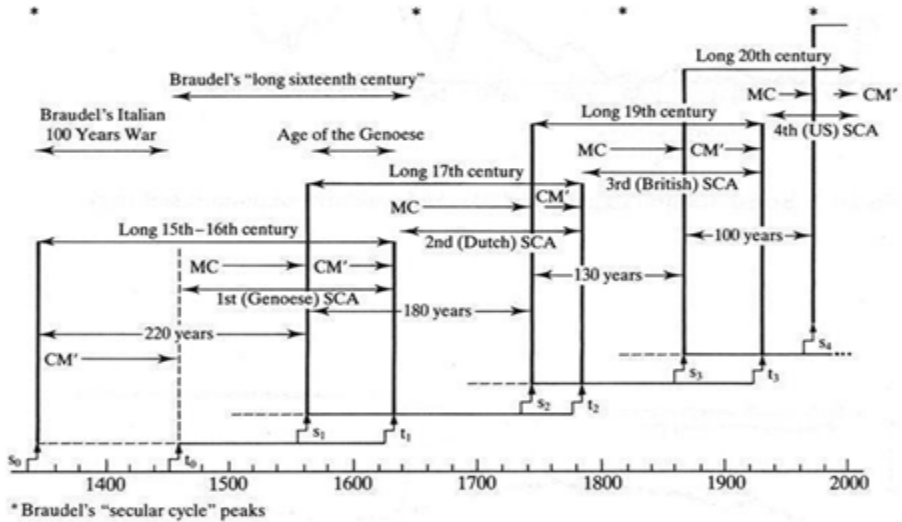
more unstable to sustain itself in a hegemony. The consensus of a hegemony is achieved through the provision of international public goods that can be enjoyed by all states in the process of capital accumulation. These are, for Arrighi, like:

[...] such “collective goods” as the protection of ocean commerce and the surveying and charting of the world’s oceans. Thanks to this perception, instead of inspiring challenges, British dominance secured a large measure of willing acceptance among Western states (Arrighi; Silver 1999, 60).

However, these collective goods are difficult to sustain as they represent a burden on hegemony. They are only useful when the gains from this burden exceed the costs of being an undisputed hegemony. Analyzing the succession of SCAs and hegemonies, the recurrently most demanded international public good is an orderly and regulated International Financial System (IFS), as it harmonizes the process of capital accumulation in global value chains and avoids financial instabilities (Eichengreen 2011).

Because it is costly to sustain such international public goods and, therefore, the consensus that a hegemony requires, hegemonic periods in the World-System are characterized by the exception and not the rule. In fact, transitions between SCAs, even if they are gradual, are uninterrupted, with no period without a clear SCA, as the process of capital accumulation is interminable. On the other hand, transitions of hegemonies are slower and there are, throughout the History of the Modern World System, non-hegemonic periods, in which, although there is a dominant state, it is not hegemonic. Thus, hegemony can be considered as a golden period of a SCA, in which there is a certain harmony between the States that make up the organic core of capitalism (Arrighi 2010; Arrighi; Silver 1999).

Figure 1: Long Centuries and Systemic Cycles of Accumulation



Source: Arrighi (2010, 220).

In the sense of SCA transitions, Image 1 shows each of the four cycles analyzed by Arrighi, their material and financial expansions, signal and terminal crises and transitions from one cycle to the other. In reading these transitions, Arrighi points out that there are:

[...] (1) a first period of financial expansion (stretching from  $S_{n-1}$  to  $T_{n-1}$ ), in the course of which the new regime of accumulation develops within the old, its development being an integral aspect of the full expansion and contradictions of the latter; (2) a period of consolidation and further development of the new regime of accumulation (stretching from  $T_{n-1}$  to  $S_n$ ), in the course of which its leading agencies promote, monitor, and profit from the material expansion of the entire world-economy; (3) a second period of financial expansion (from  $S_n$  to  $T_n$ ), in the course of which the contradictions of the fully developed regime of accumulation create the space for, and are deepened by, the emergence of competing and alternative regimes, one of which will eventually (that is, at time  $T_n$ ) become the new dominant regime (Arrighi 2010, 219-220).

## The Transitions of SCAs in the History of the Modern World System (1453-1973)

The first cycle, the Ibero-Genoese, took place in the context of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, a period named by Marx as primitive accumulation of capital, in which the bankruptcy of feudal relations and the rise of commercial and usurious capital occurred (Marx 2017). These two movements gave rise to the proletarianization of the working class, the formation of European nation-states and the improvement of long-distance trade networks, supported by the rising class of merchants and bankers. This initial SCA, being inserted in an embryonic phase of capitalism, had many peculiarities, the main one being the fact that it was dichotomous, because it was a cycle “[...] consisting of an (Iberian) aristocratic territorialist component – which specialized in the provision of protection and in the pursuit of power – and of a (Genoese) bourgeois capitalist component – which specialized in the buying and selling of commodities and in the pursuit of profit” (Arrighi 2010, 123).

From 1453 to 1557, this dichotomous cycle underwent its material expansion, which was interrupted by a signal crisis in 1557, caused by two main reasons: (i) the increase in Spanish military expenditures and (ii) the instability of international finances, when “[...] finance ceases to be healthy to become speculative” (Corazza 1994, 127, own translation)<sup>9</sup>. From 1557 to 1648, the financial expansion of the Ibero-Genoese cycle took place, through a commercial triangle, “[...] through which the Genoese pumped American silver from Seville to northern Italy, where they exchanged it for gold and bills of exchange, which they delivered to the Spanish government in Antwerp in exchange for the *asientos* which gave them control over American silver in Seville” (Arrighi 2010, 134). However, financial expansion again became unsustainable after a terminal crisis of this cycle in 1648, after Spain’s military defeat in the Thirty Years’ War and yet another crisis of default on Genoese accounts (Arrighi 2010).

This first cycle was unable to build hegemony, even though the symbiosis of Spain and Genoa was dominant in international finance from 1453 to 1648. The failure of this cycle to build hegemony is due to two main factors: (i) conflict of foreign policy and (ii) lack of consensus. By itself, it is impossible to have a shared hegemony between two states, given that the foreign policies of both states did not always coincide. Furthermore, the Ibero-Genoese SCA based its domination of the World-System solely on coercion,

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9 In the original: “[...] a finança deixa de ser sadia para se tornar especulativa” (Corazza 1994, 127).



without offering common goods that would guarantee a consensus among capitalist nations (Arrighi; Silver 1999).

Furthermore, this first SCA can be characterized by two aspects: (i) its accumulation regime and (ii) its political-diplomatic system. The Ibero-Genoese accumulation regime is of an extensive type, based on the anarchy of production and the hierarchy of circulation, since the productive model was composed of guilds, craft corporations and trade monopolies. Still in the productive aspect, although this cycle did not have a stock exchange, it was the first to have a monetary authority that stimulated credit expansion: the *Casa di San Giorgio*, founded in 1407. From the aspect of its political-diplomatic system, this cycle was responsible for overcoming the Papal System of International Relations in 1492, beginning the era of bilateral relations. But, in its place, the Spanish Empire did not offer any new diplomatic system, trying to control Europe based on coercion, establishing a new empire in place of the Church of Rome (Arrighi 2010; Kennedy 1988).

With regard to the transition from this first cycle, during the Ibero-Genoese financial expansion, a margin was opened for the beginning of the next cycle in the history of the World-System: the Dutch SCA. From 1581, the United Provinces held a “[...] kind of ‘inverted’ fiscal squeeze [to Spain] through piracy and privateering” (Arrighi 2010, 135), financing the beginning of its material expansion and thus concentrating Europe’s trade networks around Amsterdam. Unlike the predecessor cycle, the United Provinces internalized the costs of protection and conducted their rule based on the coercion of a powerful navy and the consensus of collective goods, such as international law, the balance of power and an efficient network of trade and international freight. Thus, from 1648 to 1713, the United Provinces were the first hegemony of the World-System (Arrighi; Silver 1999):

We speak of a Dutch hegemony within the European system of sovereign states primarily because the Dutch played a leading role in the protracted struggles that resulted in the formal founding of that system by the Treaties of Westphalia of 1648. The Treaties replaced the idea of a suprastatal imperial/papal authority with the notion that the European states formed a single political system based on international law and the balance of power [...] (Arrighi; Silver 1999, 39).

Dutch hegemony – a brief moment of capitalist harmony and unchallenged dominance – fades after the growth of rival navies, especially the British, thus weakening the coercive power of Dutch hegemony. After the Peace of Utrecht, in 1713, the Dutch capacity for coercion was no longer preponderant, ending its hegemony, but not its cycle, nor its material

expansion. The signal crisis of the Dutch SCA only occurred in 1748, after a commercial retraction suffered by the Dutch stock companies, which suffered from European mercantilism. Other causes of the crisis were the European military build-up during the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748) and the financial instability in the Amsterdam exchange houses (Arrighi; Silver 1999).

Thus, from 1748 to 1784, the Dutch capitalist class was no longer able to productively replace circulating capital and thus fled to interest-bearing capital, initiating its financial expansion. As in the previous cycle transition, the declining capital of the United Provinces financed the material expansion of an ascending SCA: the British cycle, which already started in 1740. Again, the terminal crisis of the Dutch SCA occurred in 1784 in crisis-like circumstances. previous systemic problems: (i) a military defeat during the fourth Anglo-Dutch war and (ii) another bad debt crisis for the big banks of the United Provinces (Arrighi; Silver 1999).

Once again, this SCA is characterized by two aspects: (i) its accumulation regime and (ii) its political-diplomatic system. The accumulation regime of the Dutch cycle was based on an intensive type, formed by equity capital companies, financed by the Amsterdam Stock Exchange, founded in 1602, and aided by the *Wisselbank*, the Dutch monetary authority, founded in 1609, which fostered expansions of credit. In its diplomatic political system, the United Provinces were responsible for initiating multilateral relations in the History of the World-System, with the Westphalian System (1648-1815), based on the balance of power and international law. Furthermore, unlike the predecessor cycle, the United Provinces internalized the costs of protection, not having to resort to a state symbiosis in search of a strong navy, given that the Dutch navy itself was the most powerful in the world (Arrighi 2010; Arrighi; Silver 1999).

Regarding the transition of cycles, in this second moment, the end of the “[...] Dutch hegemonic order did not in itself result in the establishment of the nineteenth-century British order. British world hegemony was only established as a result of a final round in the power struggle between Britain and France” (Arrighi; Silver 1999, 56). After the Seven Coalition Wars against France, Britain consolidated its hegemony, from 1815 to 1914, uniting elements of coercion – a powerful navy and expeditionary army – and consensus – the promotion of the first international financial system (IFS) that boosted world capitalist accumulation. This IFS was based on the triad of initiatives of (i) free mobility of international capital, (ii) fixed exchange rates and (iii) monetary policy rigidity (Eichengreen 2011). Since the British SCA, production costs had also been internalized – in addition to protection costs –, since Great Britain was not only a trading post, but also the largest industrial center in the

world (Arrighi; Silver 1999).

This internalization of production costs to the British SCA ended the period of primitive accumulation of capital and started a mature phase of capitalism, in which capital came to life and started to interfere directly in the signal and terminal crises of each cycle and, therefore, in their transitions. The material expansion of the British cycle was interrupted in 1873 with the beginning of the first generalized crisis of world capitalism, the Long Depression of 1873-1896 (Hobsbawm 2011), or, also called by Arrighi as the “[First] Long Downturn” (Arrighi 2007, 116). The beginning of this economic depression, in 1873, marked the signal crisis of the British SCA and the beginning of its financial expansion:

In the course of the depression, great-power rivalries intensified, military-industrial complexes too powerful for Britain to control through its traditional balance-of-power policy emerged, and a systemwide financial expansion centered on Britain took off. These tendencies came to a head with the outbreak of the First World War, which marks the beginning of the second phase of the transition (Arrighi; Silver 1999, 64).

This crisis, therefore, brought together the two main causes of predecessor systemic crises: (i) the resurgence of military rivalries and (ii) the instability of international finance. In addition to these common causes, there is a new trigger for this crisis: the crisis of capitalism itself. Unlike past systemic crises, which had circumstantial factors as the trigger for the crisis, after the internalization of production costs to the British SCA, the capital crisis began to act together with the multicausal factor of systemic crises. In this context, for Paul Sweezy (1983), there are two types of crises in capitalism: (i) crises of profit compression and (ii) crises of underconsumption.

In the case of the long depression of 1873-1896, there was a crisis of profit compression, in which capitalist production did not fall, but there was pressure on the rate of profit of the capitalist class. This type of crisis usually “[...] bring[s] about long periods of financial expansions which, to paraphrase Schumpeter, provide the means of payments necessary to force the economic system into new channels” (Arrighi 2007, 93), that is, by funding the material expansion of the next SCA. However, although the crisis had shaken British industry, its IFS still remained functional, ensuring the support of British hegemony, since its elements of coercion and consensus were still operational (Arrighi; Silver 1999).

However, British hegemony dissipated after the First World War, in 1918, when it no longer had its elements of coercion and consensus. On the one hand, defiant Germany was not defeated in the theater of war operations,

but because of a social revolution within its own borders; on the other hand, after the conflict, the restructuring of the British IFS was unsustainable, also shattering the capitalist consensus around London. Finally, in 1929, the terminal crisis of the British SCA occurred, bringing together again typical elements of a systemic crisis: (i) increase in international protectionism and intercapitalist competition, caused by the post-1918 power imbalance, and (ii) instabilities inherent to financialization., including the gradual and unbalanced return to the gold standard (Arrighi; Silver 1999). In addition to these recurrent characteristics of systemic crises, the 1929 crisis can be considered a crisis of underconsumption of capitalism, in which production is collapsed at once and there is a rapid spiral of unemployment, falling incomes and freezing of the credit system (Gazier 2019; Sweezy 1983).

Likewise, two elements that characterized this cycle can be identified: (i) the accumulation regime and (ii) the political-diplomatic system. The accumulation regime of the British cycle was based on an extensive type, composed of family businesses with little vertical integration, which were supported by the Bank of England, founded in 1694, a monetary authority that promoted credit expansion. In its diplomatic political system, Great Britain structured the Vienna System (1815-1914), based on the balance of powers, which, despite having military competition, was a period of peace in the European concert (Arrighi; Silver 1999).

The terminal crisis of the British SCA gave way to the last SCA analyzed by Arrighi: the ascending US cycle. The material expansion of this cycle began in the 1870s, after the US had calmed its class contradictions with the end of the Civil War (1860-1865) and the US system had prevailed over the free trade of the southern states (Arrighi; Silver 1999). After the terminal crisis of the British SCA, the US was the biggest economy in the world, and “[...] the two world wars had brought about an almost complete centralization of world liquidity in U.S. hands” (Arrighi; Silver 1999, 73).

Second World War, however, sealed the American hegemony, based on the coercion of uncontested military capabilities and on the consensus of a new ordered and regulated IFS. This new IFS – Bretton Woods – was based on the triad of initiatives of (i) restriction of international capital mobility, (ii) fixed exchange rate and (iii) monetary policy autonomy (Eichengreen 2011). According to Arrighi & Silver:

This confrontation [WW2] soon translated into the establishment of a new world order - an order now centered on and organized by the United States. By the time the Second World War was over, the main contours of the new order had taken shape: at Bretton Woods the foundations of a new monetary system had been established; at Hiroshima and Nagasaki new

means of violence had demonstrated the military underpinnings of the new order; and at San Francisco new norms and rules for the legitimization of statemaking and warmaking had been laid out in the charter of the United Nations [UN] (Arrighi; Silver 1999, 80-81).

Thus, from 1945 to 1973, the US SCA went through its last phase of material expansion, concomitantly with its hegemonic period, in which elements of coercion and consensus sustained this period of certain capitalist harmony. But, as seen earlier, material expansions in capitalism are unsustainable in the long run, since capital crises cause production to fall and discourage the replacement of circulating capital. Within each material expansion already lie the contradictions that will lead to its overcoming:

The result of this energizing and organizing was a new expansion of world trade and production – the so-called Golden Age of Capitalism of the 1950s and 1960s. Like the analogous expansions that had occurred under British and Dutch hegemony, this expansion too ended in a hegemonic crisis. When around 1970 it became clear that U.S. army was headed toward a humiliating defeat in Vietnam and the U.S.-controlled Bretton Woods monetary system was about to collapse, U.S. hegemony entered a prolonged crisis – a crisis, which in spite of the even greater troubles and eventual collapse of the USSR, has not yet been resolved (Arrighi; Silver 1999, 88).

Thus, the long boom of the post-1945 world economy ended in 1973 with a crisis of profit compression much like the Long Depression of 1873-1896, since the crisis of 1973 initiated a period of pressure on profits until 1996 and marked the signal crisis of the US SCA and, therefore, its financial expansion (Visentini 1992). Along with the end of US material expansion, 1973 also ended US hegemony, given that the post-1945 IFS proposed by Washington became unsustainable, purging the consensus element of US hegemony (Arrighi 2010; Arrighi; Silver 1999).

Furthermore, two elements can be inferred that characterized this cycle: (i) its accumulation regime and (ii) its political-diplomatic system. The accumulation regime of the US cycle was based on an intensive type, in which, in addition to the internalization of protection and production costs, there was also the internalization of transaction costs. Thus, the US accumulation regime was based on large vertically integrated multinational companies, which were aided by the US Treasury's credit expansions, since 1789. Finally, the US was responsible for the globalization of the balance of powers, through the System of Yalta (1945-1991), in which the world concert became, for the first time, bipolar (Arrighi 2010; Kennedy 1988).

However, it was possible to identify two common causes to all systemic crises, whether signal or terminal: (i) a military component of interstate dispute and (ii) a component of financial instability. Both components can be controlled and contained in the development of each SCA through balance of powers and regulated monetary systems, respectively, but dominant and/or hegemonic periods, as seen, are unsustainable in the long run. According to Arrighi (2007, 234):

[...] wars played a crucial role [in SCAs transitions]. In at least two instances (from Holland to Britain and from Britain to the United States), the reallocation of surplus capital from mature to emerging centers began long before the escalation of interstate conflicts (Arrighi 2007, 234).

However, the component of financial instability can also be understood as a cyclical agent:

Instability arises when debts cannot be paid, and finance changes from sound to speculative. This would be the subjective basis of instability. But there is also an objective foundation, namely the fact that credit money issued by banks cannot be validated by the return on investment that it financed. There are problems with investments, which do not allow debts to be paid (Corazza 1994, 127, own translation)<sup>10</sup>.

However, these two components alone are not enough for a systemic crisis since the internalization of production costs in the succession of SCAs, that is, since the British cycle. If, in the period of primitive accumulation of capital, the systemic crises of the Ibero-Genoese and Dutch cycles had a circumstantial trigger – such as a military defeat or a change in conjuncture –, in the period of mature capitalism, the systemic crises have one more cause: the crisis of capitalism itself (Arrighi 2010), this being one of profit compression or underconsumption (Sweezy 1983). It is important to note, in this context of crises of capitalism, that crises of profit compression initiate long periods of financial downturn and expansion and, therefore, can be characterized as signal crises *per se*; while underconsumption crises bring down production and employment and mark the transition from one cycle to the next and, therefore, can be characterized as terminal crises *per se* (Arrighi

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<sup>10</sup> In the original: A instabilidade surge quando as dívidas não podem ser pagas, e a finança deixa de ser sadia para se tornar especulativa. Esta seria a base subjetiva da instabilidade. Mas há também um fundamento objetivo, ou seja, o fato de que o dinheiro de crédito emitido pelos bancos não pode ser validado pelo retorno do investimento que ele financiou. Há problemas com os investimentos, que não permitem honrar as dívidas (Corazza 1994, 127).

2007; 2010).

## US Financial Expansion and East Asian Material Expansion

From 1973 to 1993, there was a period of economic stagnation in the most advanced capitalist markets – in the organic core of the World-System –, a period that Arrighi coined as the “[Second] Long Recession” similar to the first long retraction of 1873-1896, which also started with a crisis of profit compression that was also the signal crisis of the predecessor SCA (Arrighi 2010). These two decades of stagnation and downturn in the world economy can be characterized as a period of (i) a retraction in international trade due to the easing of exchange rates, (ii) a devaluation of the dollar after the end of the gold standard and (iii) of financial and exchange rate instability due to the return of free mobility of international capital (Arrighi 2007). Therefore, by the aspects listed, what prevailed in the post-1973 world economy is a non-international financial system, that is, an unregulated and highly unstable system (Eichengreen 2011).

From 1973 to 1981, there was a first moment of frank crisis, inflation and devaluation of the dollar. The rate of profit for US companies was declining and international competition with German and Japanese companies made it difficult for the US to recover. From the 1970s to the 1990s, this macroeconomic scenario can be summarized as follows:

US business began restructuring itself to compete more effectively with Japanese business in the exploitation of East Asia’s rich endowment of labor and entrepreneurial resources, not just through direct investment, but also and especially through all kinds of subcontracting arrangements in loosely integrated organizational structures. As noted in Chapter 10, this tendency led to the displacement of vertically integrated corporations, such as General Motors, by subcontracting corporations, such as Wal-Mart, as the leading US business organization (Arrighi 2007, 348).

From the above, another trend of any financial expansion is evident: the process of deindustrialization, since the capitalist class no longer has incentives to replace circulating capital and flees to interest-bearing capital. In fact, “[...] it was the failure of capitalist enterprises and governments to restore profitability to its previous level through the elimination of excess capacity that was primarily responsible for the persistence of comparative stagnation from 1973 to 1993” (Arrighi 2007, 105). Since it was impossible to restore the level of profitability with industrial capital activities, the logical response of the US capitalist class, as well as the US government itself, was to restore



profitability in finance capital, in international loans and foreign investments (Arrighi 2007).

According to Arrighi (2007, 148) “[...] the turnaround was primarily due, not to the comparatively slower growth of US real wages, but to the overall reorientation of the US economy to take full advantage of financialization, both at home and in the world at large”. In this context, from 1981 onwards, the US strategy was reoriented towards raising domestic interest rates and the overvaluation of the dollar, attracting foreign capital at the expense of domestic companies. In line with this movement, in 1985, the US, Germany and Japan signed the Plaza Agreement, in which the US coerced competing governments to appreciate their currencies against the dollar, in order to maintain the international competitiveness of US companies. This monetary maneuver clearly demonstrated the US coercive capacity, but the absence of consensus (Arrighi 2007).

Beginning in 1989, US financial expansion gained new momentum with a wave of deregulation of national markets in a myriad of states on the periphery and semi-periphery of the World-System. Labor relations were relaxed, protectionist barriers were overturned, state-owned companies privatized, currencies devalued, exchange rates liberalized, and foreign investments accepted. This liberalizing wave reached mainly Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Africa. For Arrighi, this period gave impetus to the financial expansion of the US SCA:

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the savage privatization carried out under the heading of “shock therapy,” as advised by the capitalist powers and the international financial institutions, was a major episode in the release at fire-sale prices of hitherto unavailable assets. Equally important, however, has been the release of devalued assets in other lower-income countries in the wake of the financial crises that have punctuated the liberalization of capital flows in the 1980s and 1990s (Arrighi 2007, 224-225).

However, while the organic core of the World-System was undergoing a financial expansion, on the fringes of the US radius of action, the material expansion of East Asia was ascending, which had started since at least the 1950s. This material expansion, unlike its predecessors, is geographically and politically spread out, having two main dynamic centers: the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and Japan, together with its cooperation zone – Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand. However, while Japan, and its periphery, kept its sovereignty tied to the US in the post-war period, the PRC was, and remains, a sovereign



state and, therefore, gradually became the main dynamic center of material expansion from East Asia (Arrighi 2007).

The PRC's reincorporation back into the international scene began in 1971, when it was admitted to the UN and supplanted Taiwan (Republic of China) in the Security Council. In 1979, a series of economic reforms began with the aim of modernizing the countryside and gradually opening the country to foreign capital (Damas 2014). Arrighi summarizes this moment as follows:

[...] the reincorporation of Mainland China into regional and global markets brought back into play a state whose demographic size, abundance of entrepreneurial and labour resources, and growth potential easily surpassed all other states operating in the region, the United States included (Arrighi; Silver 1999, 267).

From 1979 to 1989, the economic expansion of the PRC was based on three pillars: the liberation of the national market gradually, agrarian reform and investment in education. These three elements gave dynamism to the Chinese economy without dispossessing the peasant population or compromising the country's sovereignty. So, "[a]s the Chinese ascent gained momentum under its own steam in the 1990s, Japanese, US, and European capital flocked ever more massively to China" (Arrighi 2007, 352). However, it is important to note that the PRC is still a socialist country, although it has opened up to foreign capital, given that the economy is guided by five-year plans of execution (Damas 2014; Pettis 2013).

In this context, being a socialist oriented country, the PRC demands large sums of foreign savings to sustain its material expansion, and, like any other predecessor material expansion that used the financial expansion of a declining SCA, the material expansion of East Asia finances from the US financial expansion. However, this relationship, which in past transitions was characterized by a virtuous cycle, has become an interdependent symbiosis between the US and the PRC. This behavior can be summarized as follows:

This macroeconomic symbiosis that exists mainly between the United States and China, evident after the year 2002, when China started to show growing current account surpluses, and the excess consumption of American families was satisfied by the excess supply from from China, worked well until 2008 (Damas 2014, 106, own translation)<sup>11</sup>.

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11 In the original: "Essa simbiose macroeconômica existente principalmente entre os Estados Unidos e a China, evidente após o ano de 2002, quando a China passou a apresentar crescentes superávits em conta-corrente, e o excesso de consumo das famílias norte-americanas era

This interdependent symbiosis is due both to the need for economic growth on the part of the PRC and to the support of US financial expansion:

For the time being, by far the most important financiers of the US current-account deficits have been East Asian governments, who have engaged in massive purchases of US treasuries and in building up dollar-denominated foreign-exchange reserves—first and foremost the Japanese, but to an increasingly significant extent also the Chinese (Arrighi 2007, 193).

Starting in 1993, when the profitability of US companies rose again, along with the East Asian economic boom, the US Central Bank (Fed), in 1995, felt free to appreciate the dollar at pre-1971 levels, in a maneuver known as the Reverse Plaza Agreement. Two consequences follow from this: a new attraction of capital towards the US and a currency crisis in East Asia in 1997. Thus, “[t]his flood of US-bound foreign capital and the associated appreciation of the dollar were essential ingredients in the transformation of the pre-1995 boom in equity prices into the subsequent [2000s] bubble” (Arrighi 2007, 112). On the other hand, the trauma of the 1997 Asian crisis, caused by the Reverse Plaza Accord, made emerging Asian economies begin to accumulate “[...] a large amount of international reserves as protection against future capital reversions, or a phenomenon commonly known as sudden stops, altering their models of economic growth to become more export-oriented” (Damas 2014, 21, own translation<sup>12</sup>).

Thus, by joining the two ends of the process – the US financial expansion and the material expansion of East Asia –, the two causes that led to the scenario of superliquidity in the US economy in the 2000s are highlighted, a scenario that led to the 2008 crisis. Writing a year before the 2008 crisis, Arrighi had the “[...] overwhelming impression that the long downturn is far from over, and indeed, that the worst has yet to come” (Arrighi 2007, 115). In this way, the author already identified that the interdependent symbiosis between the US and the PRC had flawed components:

It follows that the US belle époque of the 1990s was based on a virtuous circle that could, at any time, turn vicious. This virtuous but-potentially-vicious circle rested on the synergy of two conditions: the US capacity to

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saciado pelo excesso de oferta proveniente da China, funcionou bem até 2008” (Damas 2014, 106).

<sup>12</sup> In the original: “[...] uma grande quantidade de reservas internacionais como proteção a futuras reversões de capitais, ou fenômeno comumente conhecido como sudden stops, alterando seus modelos de crescimento econômico para se tornarem mais voltadas para exportações” (Damas 2014, 21).

present itself as performing the global functions of market of last resort and indispensable political-military power; and the capacity and willingness of the rest of the world to provide the US with the capital it needed to continue to perform those two functions on an ever-expanding scale (Arrighi 2007, 194).

## 2008 Crisis and the Elements of a Transition

2008 crisis can be placed within the context of US financial expansion. Since the instability of international finance was reactivated after the dismantling of Bretton Woods in 1973, a myriad of developing economies had been affected by currency and financial crises<sup>13</sup> (Eichengreen 2011). As long as these crises did not reach the center of the world economy, the American way of conducting international finance seemed to work. As seen, from 1995 onwards, with the revaluation of the dollar, the US economy experienced a new growth boom, due to the “[...] inrush of capital unleashed by the “reverse Plaza Accord” and the Fed’s easy credit regime [...]” (Arrighi 2007, 113).

With an overheated economy, the US experienced two events that worried national monetary authorities: a small stock market bubble (internet bubble) and the 9/11 attacks. To avoid an economic downturn, the US Federal Reserve lowered domestic interest rates even further, flooding the market with cheap credit (Damas 2014). In short:

After the bursting of the internet bubble in 2000 and the attacks of September 11, 2001, the US government began to adopt an expansionary fiscal policy with heavy government spending, mainly on national defense, concomitantly with the implementation of stimulus taxes packages and tax cuts. The president of the Central Bank of the United States, Alan Greenspan, started to practice an expansionary monetary policy with reductions in interest rates (Damas 2014, 226, own translation)<sup>14</sup>.

Finally, one last event was crucial to the spiral of high liquidity that triggered the 2008 crisis: the US intervention in Iraq. Starting in 2003, the

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13 Debt Crisis in Latin America and Africa (1980s), currency crises in Mexico (1994), East Asia (1997), Russia (1998), Brazil (1999) and Argentina (2001) (Eichengreen 2011).

14 In the original: “Após o estouro da bolha da internet no ano 2000 e os atentados de 11 de setembro de 2001, o governo norte-americano passou a adotar uma política fiscal expansionista com pesados gastos governamentais, principalmente em defesa nacional, concomitantemente com a implementação de pacotes de estímulos fiscais e cortes de impostos. O presidente do Banco Central dos Estados Unidos, Alan Greenspan, passou a praticar uma política monetária expansionista com reduções nas taxas de juros” (Damas 2014, 226).

US intervened in Iraq with the aim of performing a surgical regime change maneuver, using a reduced expeditionary force and state-of-the-art military capability. The problem was how to finance the war. “Since taxes could not be raised, further borrowing from abroad had limits, and the war was not paying for itself, the exploitation of US seigniorage privileges became the main source of finance for Bush’s wars” (Arrighi 2007, 197). This means of financing through the issuance of government bonds “[raised] US foreign indebtedness and therefore [raised] US vulnerability to capital flight” (Arrighi 2007, 226), and, furthermore, the symbiotic interdependence of the US economy with the emerging economies of East Asia has intensified. Arrighi, in this context, classifies such symbiotic interdependence as a vicious cycle:

The more things went sour in Iraq, the more dependent did the Bush administration become on this addiction in order to prevent things from going sour also on the economic and social front at home. Hence the administration’s reluctance to press China too hard on the appreciation of the yuan, its praise for the CCP’s 2005 Five Year Plan, and more generally its greater restraint than Congress in complaining about Chinese goods flooding the US market and US jobs being lost to China (Arrighi 2007, 305).

The situation of superliquidity in the US economy was practically irreversible, as the macroeconomic symbiosis between the US and East Asia fed back into the low US interest rates and the high productivity of emerging economies, such as the PRC. This became evident in December 2001, when the PRC’s admission to the World Trade Organization (WTO) was approved, initiating a cycle of high demand for commodities to supply Chinese industrial production. From 2003 to 2008, the international production bubble called saving gluts was formed, that is, an underconsumption crisis. Damas (2014, 21)<sup>15</sup> summarizes it as follows:

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<sup>15</sup> In the original: “Algumas economias emergentes, principalmente na Ásia, acumularam uma grande quantidade de reservas internacionais como proteção a futuras reversões de capitais, ou fenômeno comumente conhecido como sudden stops, alterando seus modelos de crescimento econômico para se tornarem mais voltadas para exportações. Ao fazerem isso, os governos dessas nações canalizaram seus excedentes por meio do mercado de capitais internacional, investindo-os principalmente em títulos de longo prazo emitidos pelos Estados Unidos. Com maior demanda por esses títulos, as taxas de juros implícitas atreladas a eles caíram além do razoável, incentivando assim maior endividamento das famílias norte-americanas e inflando os preços dos ativos, principalmente do setor imobiliário. Maior endividamento das famílias norte-americanas e menor poupança doméstica privada seriam então uma resposta aos efeitos de uma maciça entrada de capitais nos Estados Unidos. [...]. Os comportamentos dos agentes econômicos norte-americanos e seus consumidores, segundo a teoria dos saving gluts, seriam

Some emerging economies, mainly in Asia, have accumulated a large amount of international reserves as protection against future capital reversions, or phenomenon commonly known as sudden stops, changing their models of economic growth to become more export-oriented. In doing so, the governments of these nations channeled their surpluses through the international capital market, investing them primarily in long-term bonds issued by the United States. With greater demand for these bonds, the implicit interest rates linked to them fell beyond reason, thus encouraging greater indebtedness by US households and inflating asset prices, especially in the real estate sector. Higher indebtedness by American households and lower private domestic savings would then be a response to the effects of a massive inflow of capital into the United States. [...]. The behavior of US economic agents and their consumers, according to the theory of saving gluts, would be affected by measures taken by other countries.

However, like any crisis of capitalism, demand cannot grow indefinitely, US credit cannot become inelastic, and eventually indebtedness emerges as a manifestation of the crisis because, as Arrighi (2007, 198) predicted “[...] [a]s it turns out, this ‘biggest default in history’ has yet to occur”. From 2003 to 2008, the super-liquidity in the US market manifested itself through a real estate bubble, in which household consumption was supported by affordable credit, investments in inflated real estate prices and, of course, in the purchase of cheap goods from the material expansion of East Asia. “The United States had a housing bubble. When the bubble burst and home prices dropped from the stratospheric levels they were at, an increasing number of homeowners felt ‘drowned’. They owed more in mortgages than their homes were worth” (Stiglitz 2010, 36, own translation)<sup>16</sup>.

The only possibility to maintain this state of constant unbridled growth would be if property prices continued to rise, encouraging more loans and investments, however, “[when] the supply of real estate assets exceeded demand, the price of real estate began to fall, increasing the default of underprivileged borrowers, the so-called subprime” (Damas 2014, 238, own translation)<sup>17</sup>. The trigger for the crisis took place on September 15, 2008, when the US government decided not to bail out one of the largest banks in

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afetados por medidas tomadas por outros países (Damas 2014, 21).

16 In the original: “Os Estados Unidos tinham uma bolha imobiliária. Quando a bolha estourou e os preços das casas caíram dos níveis estratosféricos em que estavam, um número cada vez maior de proprietários se sentiu ‘afogado’. Eles deviam mais em hipotecas do que o valor das suas casas” (Stiglitz 2010, 36).

17 In the original: “[q]uando a oferta de ativos imobiliários excedeu a demanda, o preço dos imóveis começou a cair, fazendo aumentar a inadimplência dos tomadores desprivilegiados, os chamados subprime” (Damas 2014, 238).

the country, Lehman Brothers (Stiglitz 2010). Soon, the housing bubble began a spiral of bankruptcies, unemployment, falling incomes and production. As Stiglitz (2010, 38, own translation)<sup>18</sup> puts it:

Demand has fallen as families have seen the value of their homes (and the stock they own) collapse and their own propensity to borrow. A negative inventory cycle occurred: credit markets froze, demand fell, and companies reduced their inventories as quickly as possible.

The crisis soon spread to the rest of the world not only because “[...] nearly a quarter of US mortgages had gone abroad” (Stiglitz 2010, 61, own translation)<sup>19</sup>, but also because the retraction in US demand contracted the East Asian industrial production (Damas 2014). The 2008 crisis, as in a single blow, brought down all world production, caused by the inability of capitalism to generate demand in line with supply, thus qualifying as an underconsumption crisis (Sweezy 1983).

Thus, it is possible to identify two causes of systemic crises, whether signal or terminal: (i) increased military spending by the dominant state and (ii) increased international financial instability. In addition to these two causes common to all SCAs, there is a third cause typical of the crises of mature capitalism SCAs: (iii) the crisis of capital itself. Looking more closely at the most recent crises (1873, 1929 and 1973), one can then see the pattern that crises of profit compression are signal crises, as they inaugurate periods of financial expansion, and underconsumption crises are terminal crises, because they disrupt the overall production of goods and ending a SCA (Arrighi 2010; Sweezy 1983).

Analyzing the 2008 crisis at the points studied in this work, we arrive at common elements that classify it as a systemic crisis: (i) the increase in military spending by the dominant state is equivalent to the US military enterprise in Iraq from 2003; (ii) the increase in international financial instability has been present since the dismantling of Bretton-Woods in 1973 and affected a myriad of developing states until reaching the US itself; (iii) finally, these two joint elements triggered the capital crisis itself in 2008.

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<sup>18</sup> In the original: “A demanda caiu, à medida que as famílias viram entrar em colapso o valor das suas casas (e também o das ações que possuíam) e sua própria propensão a contrair empréstimos. Ocorreu um ciclo negativo de estoques: os mercados de crédito congelaram, a demanda caiu e as empresas reduziram seus estoques o mais rapidamente possível” (Stiglitz 2010, 38).

<sup>19</sup> In the original: “[...] quase a quarta parte das hipotecas dos Estados Unidos havia ido para o exterior” (Stiglitz 2010, 61).

Therefore, the 2008 crisis, according to this work, is a systemic crisis and, moreover, it is the terminal crisis of the US SCA, once that it is a crisis of underconsumption, similar to the crisis of 1929.

Arrighi recognized that the events of the early 21st century were precipitating the terminal crisis of the American cycle, because “[...] just as US difficulties in Vietnam precipitated the signal crisis of US hegemony, in all likelihood US difficulties in Iraq will, in retrospect, be seen as having precipitated its terminal crisis” (Arrighi 2007, 185). In his last work, although he still did not recognize that this was the terminal crisis of the American SCA, Arrighi stated that George W. Bush’s foreign and macroeconomic policies could lead to the end of the fourth cycle of the Modern World System:

In sum: far from laying the foundations of a second American century, the occupation of Iraq has jeopardized the credibility of US military might, further undermined the centrality of the US and its currency in the global political economy and strengthened the tendency towards the emergence of China as an alternative to US leadership in East Asia and beyond. It would have been hard to imagine a more rapid and complete failure of the neo-conservative imperial project. But if the Bush administration’s bid for global supremacy is most likely to go down in history as one of the several “bubbles” to have punctuated the terminal crisis of US hegemony, the bursting of this bubble transformed but did not erase the world historical circumstances that generated the Project for a New American Century. Although no longer hegemonic in the sense in which we have used the term, the US remains the world’s preeminent military power and retains considerable leverage in the new “balance of terror” that links its economic policies to those of its foreign competitors and financiers. In order to identify the possible future uses of this residual power, we must now turn to the historical processes that underlie the relationship between capitalism and imperialism (Arrighi 2007, 209-210).

However, although the author has not discussed extensively whether 2008 can be considered the terminal crisis of the American SCA, he stated, in a posthumous article, that “[...] 2008 financial meltdown is one of the latest indicators that this is indeed the case (Silver; Arrighi 2011, 55), that is, “[p]ut differently, we are witnessing the end of the *long twentieth century* [...]” (Silver; Arrighi 2011, 55-56). So, if the 2008 crisis is the terminal crisis of the US SCA and, knowing that the transition between cycles is uninterrupted, which SCA rises to replace its predecessor? Arrighi gives us, in part, some alternatives:

[...] the renaissance [of East Asia] has been associated with a structural



differentiation of power in the region that has left the United States controlling most of the guns, Japan and the Overseas Chinese controlling most of the money, and the PRC controlling most of the labor. This structural differentiation - which has no precedent in previous hegemonic transitions - makes it extremely unlikely that any single state operating in the region, the United States included, will acquire the capabilities needed to become hegemonic regionally and globally. Only a plurality of states acting in concert with one another has any chance of developing a new world order. This plurality may well include the United States and, in any event, U.S. policies toward the region will remain important in determining whether, when, and how such a regionally based new world order would actually emerge (Arrighi; Silver 1999, 269-270).

In fact, as this article has shown so far, the material expansion of East Asia has already rivaled the US as a pole of power since 1950. However, the PRC, which is the main center of this material expansion, cannot lead a SCA transition since this state is a socialist and not a capitalist player. Although the PRC is part of the World-System, it still operates with a socialist market logic, with its financial institutions underdeveloped and with many restrictions. Nevertheless, the material expansion of East Asia is a geographically sparse expansion, not centered on a single state, even though all states orbit the economic weight of the PRC. In this way, how to reconcile, in this SCA transition, an interminable financial expansion and a contained material expansion? The solution seems to lie in the statement that “[...] Only a plurality of states acting in concert with one another has any chance of developing a new world order (Arrighi; Silver 1999, 269).

The analysis of the rise and development of material expansion in East Asia seems to confirm the symbiotic and dichotomous character of the current conjuncture of the world economy, “[...] a symbiotic relationship with the United States and the current dispute seems to contain elements of renegotiation of the economic ‘pact’ between the two” (Visentini 2019, 21, own translation)<sup>20</sup>, that is, the PRC and the US. In this sense, from 2008 onwards, a new SCA, a Sino-American cycle and, therefore, in an unprecedented way since 1648, a dichotomous cycle, emerges. Indeed, the historical example of the Ibero-Genoese cycle (1453-1648) provides comparisons with the new ascending Sino-American cycle. The main features to be highlighted are (i) a dichotomous and symbiotic cycle of accumulation, (ii) a non-hegemonic period of the World-System and (iii) the increase in multipolarity – but this time without increasing international military tensions.

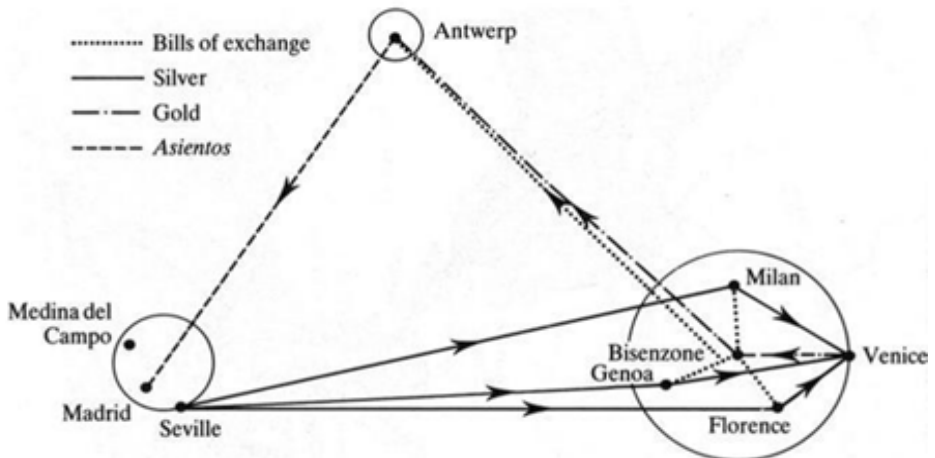
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20 In the original: “[...] uma relação simbiótica com os Estados Unidos e a disputa atual parece conter elementos de renegociação do ‘pacto’ econômico entre ambos” (Visentini 2019, 21).



Regarding the first item, it is interesting to note that the dichotomy between Genoa and Spain reached a more symbiotic level after the financial expansion of the first SCA (1557-1648), a period in which Genoese finances were affected by a series of crises, “[...] all of which had Spanish origins” (Arrighi 2010, 128), just as the 2008 crisis had its birth in the East Asian saving gluts movement (Damas 2014; Pettis 2013). In addition to this similarity in the origin of crises, the symbiotic macroeconomics of the Ibero-Genoese cycle is similar to the symbiotic macroeconomics of the Sino-American cycle.

**Figure 2: The Genoese Space-of-Flows, Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries**



Source: Boyer-Xambeau; Deplace; Gillard (1991, 328).

According to image 2, the Ibero-Genoese financial expansion (1557-1648) was based on the concession of *asientos* (trade monopolies) by Spain to Genoa, “[...] that gave the Genoese almost complete control over the supply of American silver in Seville in exchange for gold and other “good money” delivered in Antwerp [...] (Arrighi 2010, 134). Thus, the triangulation between northern Italy, Antwerp and Spain seems to be easily replicable in the Sino-American case: instead of gold and silver, dollars; instead of bills of exchange, US treasury bills; and, instead of *asientos*, foreign direct investments.

Regarding the second item of this new SCA, as analyzed in this work, hegemonies are rare events in the World-System. In fact, from 1453 to 2008, in 555 years of the history of the World-System, only 192<sup>21</sup> years

21 65 years of Dutch hegemony (1648-1713), 99 years of British hegemony (1815-1914) and 28

were of hegemonic periods, that is, only 34% of the History of the Modern World-System. Furthermore, as already pointed out, the Ibero-Genoese SCA was not incapable of developing a hegemony because, in addition to being dichotomous, it did not offer international public goods that would guarantee consensus with the other powers (Arrighi; Silver 1999). Similarly, the simple fact that the Sino-American cycle is a dichotomous cycle makes it impossible to achieve hegemony in the current international situation.

Furthermore, both states of this symbiosis – USA and PRC –, although they are military powers, are unwilling to offer the public good that the World-System demands most: a new ordered and hierarchical IFS. Since the breakup of Bretton-Woods in 1973, the US and other capitalist powers have reorganized international financial governance through old institutions, in a loose and non-cohesive way. Until 2008, financial governance was carried out by the IMF-G7-WTO triad, with the IMF (International Monetary Fund) responsible for monetary stability, the G7 (Germany, Canada, USA, France, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom) responsible for harmonization of macroeconomic policies and the WTO responsible for trade regulation (Visentini 2015).

However, the PRC does not seek to rival the US to build hegemony either. As Visentini (2013, 114, own translation)<sup>22</sup> points out:

But the “Chinese problem” is how to achieve development through the integration of 22% of the world’s population to the benefits of modernity, without the international system collapsing. For it to gradually transform itself, China seeks to avoid hegemonies, both that of the United States and its own, because in the latter case, it could have the same luck as Germany in the two world wars. This is not an easy task, as China moves amid post-Cold War diplomatic fluidity and the aging of contemporary capitalism in its historic centers.

In this way, the PRC seeks consent based on moral authority and not coercion based on hegemony. The Chinese state seems to understand that the 21st century needs anarchic elements of the International System and elements of hierarchy of a Hegemonic System (Visentini 2013).

Finally, the greatest legacy of the 2008 crisis for the new Sino-American

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years of American hegemony (1945-1973) (Arrighi; Silver 1999).

22 In the original: “Mas o ‘problema chinês’ é como alcançar o desenvolvimento através da integração de 22% da população mundial aos benefícios da modernidade, sem que o sistema internacional entre em colapso. Para que ele se transforme gradualmente, a China busca evitar hegemonias, tanto a dos Estados Unidos como a sua própria, pois nesse último caso, ela poderia ter a mesma sorte que a Alemanha nas duas guerras mundiais. Não se trata de uma tarefa fácil, pois a China se move em meio à fluidez diplomática do pós-Guerra Fria e ao envelhecimento do capitalismo contemporâneo em seus centros históricos” (Visentini 2013, 114).

SCA is the increase in multipolarity without increasing international military tensions. This is due to the concentration of military capabilities and the means of coercion in the US, a state, in economic terms, in decline, while the PRC, ascendant in economic terms, only seeks to assert its sovereignty without rivaling its military capabilities of the USA. Furthermore, the US, which at the time of the Cold War had a foreign and security policy of containment of the USSR, after 1991, this foreign policy became undirected. This is evidently reflected in the absence of a PRC-targeted strategy until 2016 “[...] illustrated by the radically contrasting positions of Robert Kaplan, Henry Kissinger, and James Pinkerton” (Arrighi 2007, 284).

As of 2016, although there is some friction, “[...] the current dispute seems to contain elements of renegotiation of the economic ‘pact’ between the two” (Visentini 2019, 21, own translation)<sup>23</sup>. The eventual rivalries that may occur in the US-PRC symbiosis would hardly escalate into a security dilemma, not only because of the economic interdependence between the two states, but also because of the increase in the organic core of the World-System, which thus causes an increase in multipolarity and an increase in the economic interdependence of new emerging actors. Therefore, the 2008 crisis changed the IMF-G7-WTO financial governance triad to IMF-G20-WTO, as the developed North realized that the harmonization of macroeconomic policies should be extended to other emerging economies. This growth in the importance of the G20 since 2008 has increased multipolarity and constrained unilateral attitudes in the World-System by including South Africa, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, PRC, South Korea, USA, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, United Kingdom, Russia and Turkey, plus the European Union, in the Organic Core (Silver; Arrighi 2011).

The last evidence that corroborates the increase of multipolarity in the World-System in the post-2008 conjuncture is the cleavages in the political and economic structure in the international system. For Visentini (2019), there are four levels, three of which are highlighted in the G20: the Anglo-Saxon military-rental axis, the developed industrial axis and the emerging heterodox industrial axis. The first group of contemporary international politics coalesces in the Anglo-Saxon military-rentist axis: United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and, tangentially, Israel, axis represented by the States of the North American SCA's financial expansion. The second is the developed industrial axis of the European Union, Japan and the Asian Tigers, an axis represented, in part, by the states of post-war material expansion, which maintain their sovereignty tied to the USA.

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23 In the original: “[...] a disputa atual parece conter elementos de renegociação do ‘pacto’ econômico entre ambos” (Visentini 2019, 21).

Finally, the third axis is made up of the great BRICS nations, especially China and Russia, as well as Turkey and Iran, where power structures and state participation in the economy are relevant, that is, the semi periphery states, above all, the PRC, the protagonist state of the material expansion of East Asia. This political-economic cleavage at the international level, again, demonstrates that multipolarity does not lead to military tensions, since the immediate objective of the emerging heterodox industrial axis is to avoid an armed conflict of global dimensions and maintain its economic development.

Figure 3: Evolutionary Pattern of World Capitalism

Leading Governmental Organization	Regime Type/Cycle		Costs Internalized			
	Extensive	Intensive	Protection	Production	Transaction	Reproduction
World-state		US	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
		British	Yes	Yes	No	No
Nation-state		Dutch	Yes	No	No	No
		Geno-ese	No	No	No	No
City-state						

Source: : Silver e Arrighi (2011, p. 61).

Finally, although it is not yet possible to characterize the elements of (i) the accumulation regime and (ii) the political-diplomatic system of the Sino-American SCA, it is possible to compare them with the evolutionary pattern of the World-System. According to image 3, the accumulation regime of each cycle has oscillated between extensive and intensive types and, similarly to the Ibero-Genoese cycle, the Sino-American cycle appears to be of an extensive type, based on a cosmopolitan empire of networks of geographically dispersed but subcontracted and vertically structured firms (Arrighi 2007; Silver; Arrighi 2011).

Still according to image 3, it is possible to see the costs that each cycle

was able to internalize, being the cost of reproduction, that is, accumulating capital without dispossessing the working class, something not internalized. In this sense, the PRC seems to be able to internalize this cost, by externalizing the costs of financialization to the US (Silver; Arrighi 2011). Regarding a new political-diplomatic system bequeathed by this new cycle, for now, nothing seems to indicate this fact. Like the Ibero-Genoese cycle, which did not build and promote a new political-diplomatic system, the Sino-American cycle is also not capable of building a new system, precisely because it is dichotomous (Arrighi 2010; Kennedy 1988). As image 3 indicates, even in the absence of a new political-diplomatic system, the new Sino-American SCA inaugurates a phase of large political units that, like a world state, need to carry out global governance, as has been happening in the sphere of G20 (Silver; Arrighi 2011). However, the fact is that “[...] the Chinese ascent [...] can be taken as the harbinger of that greater equality and mutual respect among peoples of European and non-European descent [...]” (Arrighi 2007, 379).

## Final Remarks

In this way, it is concluded that the hypothesis that the 2008 crisis could be considered the terminal crisis of the SCA is valid and can represent the end of the long 20th century. Thus, the characteristics listed confirm the elements of the new Sino-American SCA, summarized as dichotomous, non-hegemonic and multipolar. However, this seems to be further evidence that transitions in cycles, changes in polarity and hegemonies do not, as a rule, occur through military conflicts, but through changes in the political-economic conjuncture. Although war is present in the foreign policy of the great powers, war is not a *sine qua non* cause for SCA transitions. Suffice it to say that “[t]he United States, in contrast, had no need to challenge Britain militarily in order to consolidate its growing economic power” (Arrighi 2007, 312). The new Sino-American SCA, in this way, rises after the terminal crisis in the United States and is consolidated through old institutions, such as the IMF-G20-WTO triad, even because “[n]othing seems to achieve an update of the structure of the United Nations [...]” (Visentini 2019, 23, own translation)<sup>24</sup>.

Using an analytical-descriptive method, and using a bibliographic review, a review of the concepts of SCA, hegemony and systemic crises was carried out. Therefore, this brief study is justified in the sense of contributing to the debate and analysis of the World-System and to the theory of international

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24 In the original: “[n]ada parece lograr uma atualização da estrutura das Nações Unidas [...]” (Visentini 2019, 23).

relations itself. As Visentini (2019, 10)<sup>25</sup> highlighted:

[...] the explanatory paradigms and international reality became fluid with the end of the Cold War. Thus, what was already complicated in a phase of recognized leadership and hegemony, in the context of a transition phase can be even more complex and uncertain.

Arrighi (2007, 310) recognized the need to conform international relations theory with events concerning economic and political practices that transform the status quo:

[...] to be of any use, a theory of the relationship between incumbent and emergent great powers must fulfill at least two requirements: it must be grounded in the historical experiences that are most germane to the problem at hand; and it must leave open the possibility of breaks with underlying trends.

Finally, this work is not intangible to criticism, revisions, suggestions, contributions or even overcoming. In fact, it is expected that new fields of research and analysis will emerge to better understand the current scenario of economics and international politics as well as the strengthening of international relations theory from the perspective of the Third World.

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25 In the original: “[...] os paradigmas explicativos e a realidade internacionais se tornaram fluidos com o encerramento da Guerra Fria. Assim, o que já era complicado numa fase de liderança reconhecida e de hegemonia, no quadro de uma fase de transição pode ser ainda mais complexo e incerto” (Visentini 2019, 10).

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## ABSTRACT

This article discusses the theoretical-conceptual references in Giovanni Arrighi's work, especially systemic cycles of accumulation and their impact on international relations. It is hypothesized that the terminal crisis of the US accumulation regime was marked in the 2008 crisis. As the main objective of this work, it is intended to contribute to the debate on the succession of SCAs, terminal and signal crises and hegemonies of the World-System, through a descriptive-analytical method, reviewing the main works of Giovanni Arrighi on the subject. It is concluded, in the end, that, in fact, the 2008 crisis fits the concept of terminal crisis and that, therefore, a Sino-American SCA emerges after the financial crisis, uniting elements of symbiosis, non-hegemony and multipolarity. Finally, this study is justified as it deepens the debate on international economics, international relations theory and recent international politics.

## KEYWORDS

2008 Crisis; Systemic Accumulation Cycles; Signal and Terminal Crises; World-System Hegemonies.

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# US POWER AND THE MULTINATIONAL TECH COMPANIES OF THE DIGITAL ERA: AN ANALYSIS OF THE OBAMA AND TRUMP GOVERNMENTS OLIGOPOLIZATION (2009-2021)<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Science and technology are relevant issues in the studies of international political economy. Innovation, at the same time, favors economic growth and impacts the States and non-States players nexus. In the competitive arena of global markets, highly developed innovative organizations tend to provide cheaper and more effective products in a larger scale. In the “anarchic environment” of the international system, technological and scientific supremacy has always been determinant to achieve and maintain power. As power resources do not remain static, their fluidity leads to technological (Kondratieff 1935; Perez 2003) and hegemonic (Arrighi 1996) “long waves” that oscillate during history. After 1945, the United States (US) rose as the hegemonic power and technology, amongst its power resources, was, and remains one of its significant assets of power projection.

Considering the technological-scientific revolutions, the 20th century was one of the most relevant for human history and was characterized by several advances in various sectors. One of these sectors is Information

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and Communication Technologies (ICT) that also increased the power of new players, due to the transnationalization and centralization processes of major corporations after the 1970s (Gilpin 1975). This dual movement, of ICT and multinational corporations rise, were at the core of Susan Strange's (1998) analysis, responsible for presenting a new approach regarding power relations in the International Political Economy (IPE). Strange made a distinction between relational and structural power, introducing as variables elements such as the influx of "knowledge structure", that was already being revolutionized by the built of the information era.

The ICTs, more specifically the internet, have become main issues for economic and strategic policies of nations, mainly in the US. The American government had launched a series of initiatives that helped the rise of the "new economy" and the expansion of the global computer network in the 90s, increasing internet data flow and strengthening the power of the companies in this sector. In the second half of the 21st century, some analysts argue that the financial-industrial capitalism of the 20th century is facing a transition towards a digital capitalism based on the internet and the data in the new millennium, suggesting the start of a "fourth industrial revolution" (Schwab 2016).

In this new stage of world history, information and computers have become central elements in the power projection of the great powers and the holders of the global flow of data. Shoshana Zuboff (2021) coined the term "surveillance capitalism" to define new mechanisms of power concentration and accumulation, which occur through surveillance of the digital world and substantially diverge from the power relations of traditional market capitalism.

Yet, to grasp how this new digital capitalism operates and its interactions with the State, specifically with the US, is an issue not enough studied critically. Facing this reality, the goal of this article is to understand how, in the US, the relation of the State and the major technological multinational companies of the digital area (also known as the Big Techs) is developing in this era of oligopolization. The period of analysis comprises the democratic government of Barack Obama (2009-2017) and the republican one of Donald Trump (2017-2021). To do this, the field of IPE will serve as a unifying element of the theme worked, critically uniting the datafication theories of the digital age and the power relations addressed by International Political Economy.

Added to this Introduction and the Final Thoughts, the text is divided into three parts (each one with its own subdivisions): a conceptual discussion over digital capitalism and the date era in the 21st century, an appraisal of the role played by the Obama administration for the expansion of this sector and a mapping of the Trump administration regarding the so-called restraint

of the Big Techs actions. So, how relations between the US government and the Big Techs had developed during the expansion (Obama) and containment (Trump) periods? Which were the motivations and policies of each of these eras towards these major companies?

## Digital Capitalism and the “Data Era”

As the Cold War ended in 1989, the US rose as the sole hegemonic superpower, holding the most significant economic and military power. Without any balancing act to this leadership, financial globalization and the integration of markets was imposed to the world and became dominant. This new world history scenario was only made possible due to the previous Technological and Scientific Revolution of microelectronics that, in part, was financed by the American State and led to the integration of finances and production and the flow of capitals in real time.

By considering the relevance of the new information technologies for its economy and national security, the US advanced a series of initiatives that led to a “revolution within the revolution” in the telecomputing field. As Moraes (2004) stated, telecommunications were a relevant component of US global power, and acquiring the leadership of this sector, was essential to support the nation’s supremacy in the “new world order” that was being established. Amongst the main actions for modernization, Senator Al Gore presented to Congress in 1989 the National High Performance Computer Technology Bill, arguing that the “nation which most completely assimilates high-performance computing into its economy will very likely emerge as the dominant intellectual, economic, and technological force in the next century” (Carr 2016, 51). This project was a turning point in technological policy, and influenced the 90s internet development, based on the advances achieved since the ARPANET<sup>4</sup>, which reduced bureaucracy and paved the way of the private sector participation.

At the same, as the lowering of regulatory entry barriers allowed the access to digital markets to new players it led to a competition among them, that helped to popularize advanced technological products in a larger scale in the 90s. Several “dot com” companies were created to explore the “new economy” services on the internet. Its majority adopted an accelerated growth strategy making their final products available for free so, that in the future,

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<sup>4</sup> *The Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET)* was the pioneer computer network for the current internet and was financed by the US Department of Defense for transmitting secret data during the Cold War.

they could profit from the taxation of its services. Their initial expenses and potential losses were safeguarded by risk capital and the stock market exchange sell of stocks. However, most of the “dot com” were not able to secure a solid revenue and their market share value were out of touch with reality. This speculative environment and deregulation led to the burst of the “internet bubble” closer to the end of the millennium. In this context, several companies melted after they spent their risk capital and had no real base of value.

Despite the negative aspects, deregulation and competitiveness had reduced the costs of ICTs production and helped internet’s worldwide expansion during Post-Cold War globalization. The number of users connected to the computer’s world wide web grew considerably since the 90s. According to the International Telecommunication Union (2019, 08), in 2019, almost 93% of the world’s population was living in the reach of some sort of mobile broadband. However, slightly more than 53% of the global population was able to daily access the internet- a 300% growth rate when compared to 16,8% of 2005.

After the internet international boom of the 90s, most of human interactions were thorough the world wide web. The sending of messages and consultations, the buying and selling of products, accessing films and songs, phone calls, financial transactions and so many other relations through the internet were in people’s life in a day-to-day basis. Just in a few years, these virtual relations were able to comprise almost all aspects of the human life in online data, leading to the “datafication” of social action and the creation of a new emerging market.

## **Social Datafication and the Rise of the Big Data Era: The Emergent Market of Data**

In an article published in *Foreign Affairs*, Cukier and Mayer-Schoenberger (2013, 35) argue that social datafication should not be confounded with the concept of digitalization- namely, the transformation of analogical contents (such as books or photos) in digital information. It is a much more complex activity that takes all aspects of human life and turn them into quantifiable and predictable data, that comprehends both the process of information digitalization and the conversion of social interactions in manipulable data.

Even though the ideas of an “information revolution” and “digital era” were present since the 1960s, they only became a reality recently due to the process of social datafication and digitalization. In 2000, only “a fourth

of information in the world was digitally stored”, and the remainder was available through analogical means such as paper, cassette tapes and CDs. In 2013, the estimate was that less than 2% was stored in analogical means, a fact that contributed to the explosion of the production of digital data in the 21st century (Mayer-Schönberger e Cukier 2013, 12-13). When the authors published their 2013 book, they assumed that there was 1,2 Zettabytes (1.200 Exabytes) of data, from several sources, stores in the world. “If all was printed in books, they would cover the whole of US surface, with 52 layers. If it was stores in piled CD-ROMs, it would reach the moon in five separate piles” (Ibidem, 13).

The datafication process of social relations, alongside the internet’s global expansion, considerably increased the amount of data produced and the flow through communication networks. This growth led us to the era of Big Data, a time of production of massive information that in fact consolidated the break of the “Industrial” to the “Information” era, which had begun in the second half of the 20th century. Summing up, the concept of big data can be defined as an area that studies how to store, treat, process and extract information (value) from a set of data, which is too big for traditional systems to analyze. As higher is the volume, the speed of processing and the variety of data, the higher is the capacity to generate value (capital).

In the last few years, this disruptive segment expanded and had become one of the most powerful and valuable markets of the 21st century, as “data” is being considered as relevant nowadays, as oil was in the last century (The Economist 2017). Just as the oil cartels were built to explore natural resources and were able to project significant political and economic influence globally, this new market created its own oligopoly, which explores contemporary digital resources, and has the same relative power in the 21st century. In the next item, we explore the oligopoly that operates the big data and the impacts of this resource in the transformation of present capitalism.

## **Big Techs and the process of industrial oligopolization in the digital contemporary economy**

Until the midst of the century, the paths that would be taken by the development of this “new economy” were not clear. Huge “dot com” companies that had survived the 2000s bubble collapse- such as Google and Amazon- were able to build powerful economic superstructures. Oldest firms, as Microsoft and Apple, turned into true global empires after the 1990s. Since then, a new generation of businesses, that operate exclusively on the internet boomed, mostly after the 2008 subprime crisis. This crisis represented a

challenge to the contemporary capitalist economy and one of the worst global recessions since the 70s crisis. The burst of the real estate bubble ignited a chain reaction not only in the financial sector, but also led several banks, industries, and companies of several segments into bankruptcy, increasing unemployment rates and lowering economic growth worldwide.

In this context, several new models of digital business emerged, such as Airbnb (2008), Uber (2009), WhatsApp (2009), Instagram (2010) and Ifood (2011). This new generation of “dot coms” were renamed as startups and were seen as an outlet for the recession brought by the economic crisis. Several unemployed people were able to support themselves temporarily with these apps, either by Ifood deliveries or Uber rides. New entrepreneurs took advantage of recent social medias as the WhatsApp and similar companies created a few years ago- Facebook (2004) and Twitter (2006) –, to boost their own business and increase revenue in the middle of the crisis.

Despite the temporary help offered during the recession, the migration of formal to digital jobs led to the concept of work uberization, a logic in which informality and the precarization of labor relations prevailed (Antunes 2020). Similar criticism is presented by Morozov (2018) to the “technological solutionism” a concept that, according to the author, argues that the “digital revolution” is the medicine for all the problems that the State and institutions were unable to solve. Due to the changes in the labor market and the popularization of internet services, the term digital economy emerged as a counterpoint to the market economy to explain the new means to generate profit in modern capitalism, a concept that rose “as a beacon in a deeper stagnated context” (Srnicsek 2017, 10).

In the last years the Bureau of Economic Analysis (2021) elaborated a series of economic indicators that apply to the industry that operates in the US digital economy. According to this institution the sector is divided into three main branches: (a) infrastructure, responsible for 36% of the category that includes productive sectors of physical infrastructures, hardwares e softwares; (b) e-commerce, that considers electronic trade between firms and consumers, and that is responsible for 22% of the digital economy; and (c) paid digital service, that accounts for 42% of the sector revenue, including cloud services, telecommunication, internet and data services among others.

The digital economy industry was responsible for 9,6% of the America GDP in 2019, slightly below traditional sector such as the manufacturing (10,9%) one and, above others such as construction (4,2%), retail trade (5,4%) and finances and insurances (7,8%). Even though it accounted for almost US\$ 2,1 trillions of the GDP in 2019, the digital industry employed not more than 7 million people, almost 5% of the formal jobs in the country (BEA 2021).

To understand the impacts of this reality in global capitalism, Srnicek (2017) presented the concept of “platform capitalism” to define the contemporary capitalism means of expropriation, based on algorithms and digital data. Such “platforms” emerged as intermediates for buyers and sellers of services and products and act as truly global structures that contribute to the expansion of today’s capitalism. The core subject matter is that,

with a long decline in manufacturing profitability, capitalism has turned to data as one way to maintain economic growth and vitality in the face of a sluggish production sector. In the twenty-first century, on the basis of changes in digital technologies, data have become increasingly central to firms and their relations with workers, customers, and other capitalists. (Srnicek 2017, 10).

In a similar view, Zuboff (2021), developed a more clear-cut theory about the impacts of datafication, that become almost hegemonic in the area. Zuboff (2021) presents the concept of “surveillance capitalism” to explain the monetization process of data collected in the individuals’ private spheres, stating that it creates new mechanisms of power and accumulation, through digital surveillance. For the author, this new economic order and its market potential were uncovered by Google, which was responsible for developing a standard business model that was followed by several other enterprises such as Ford represented a pioneer in the 20th century capitalism.

Whereas industrial capitalism converted nature’s raw materials into merchandise, now, in the digital capitalism, companies are expropriating human behavior as raw materials for the 21st century market’s project. Couldry and Mejias (2019) call our attention to the “costs of connection” of the online world, showing how the historical appropriation of land and natural resources is mirrored by the era of digital capitalism and big data. The grasping of intimate moments of our lives by companies, that, later, extract information to be sold, shows, in the authors’ opinion a new source of “data colonialism”. In the same that great powers and their companies benefited from a privileged exploration of emerging markets in the era of imperial colonialism and, afterwards huge monopolistic cartels gathered in industrial and financial capitalism, new monopolies are now being built to explore digital era resources.

US and its corporations gained strategic advance due to two elements. First, the internet’s and most of ICTs origins dates to the geopolitical dispute of the Cold War. With high State’s investments in R&D, the country has become a leader in the imposition of the informational infrastructure standards yet in



the 20th century and defined it as a strategic priority. Second, data expropriation was Google's invention in the Silicon Valley, a logic that, in a short period of time, soon became a pattern of the whole US technological sector. At the same time, the sponsoring of a globalized and deregulated economy by neoliberal governments, helped the rise of an oligopoly of transnationals in the country that governs the informational infrastructure of the Western world nowadays.

The Big Tech concept, which embodies this digital oligopoly, was incorporated by the media and the academy stressing its monopolistic practices and influence power on all sector of the economy, politics and day-to-day life of the global population. Based on the political economy view Smyrniaios (2018), examines the oligopolization process of the biggest five US Big Techs (Amazon, Apple, Facebook, Google e Microsoft), highlighting the fact that they make use of their market influence to eliminate competitors and to control the "digital public sphere" even more.

After relative power gains, these companies started to swell competitors in a larger scale, creating a digital monopoly. The concentration of corporations that operate in the digital market is a novelty of the 21st century, a fact that leads to an advantage for further data collection and accumulation by this pre-established conglomerate. The result is a cycle of information and economic and political power concentration in these groups, since the much more data they own (D), greater is their capability to generate capital (C) and control the sector. Expanded economic power allows the engulfing of competitors in a larger scale and makes it possible to increase investments in new extraction technologies (T) and data analysis (D'), leading to a vicious circle of data accumulation, capital, and technologies of big data.

US largest big tech companies have become the most powerful companies of the planet. In 2020, the added value of their market capitalization reached almost US\$ 8 trillion (The Wall Street Journal 2021). This accounts for almost 40% of the US GDP, and 59% more of the Chinese, and is closer to Japan's and Germany's GDP added value. Due to this amount and concentration of economy power, in an interview to *Valor Econômico*, Lévy defined them as a new form of State, which he calls "State-platform". Lévy raises the alert that they "started to concentrate the monopoly of the world's memory, and that they are, charting a new type of economic power, which is clear, but mainly, political power. Several social and political roles that are traditional tasks of the nation State are being redirected to these companies" (Kaufman 2020, n.p.).

The big techs oligopolization process is a trend that can potentially alter State dynamics. To understand the political and economic conditions that furthered this concentration is essential to perceive the international

system directions in the 21st century. The majority of these corporations grew exponentially in the first two decades of the new millennium, as the result of the financial-economic globalization and of favorable US government strategic policies. Even though these strategies date back to the 1990s end, and that the US government-companies synergy had deepened with W. Bush intelligence community apparatus reform, the oligopolization process was clear only after the 2008 crisis. In the next item, the main political and economic conditions that favored the expansion of the big techs during Barack Obama two terms will be explored, in a context of modernization of the framework and policies of cyber defense.

## The Obama Government: Putting the “Big” in “Tech” (2009-2017)

Definitely, the beginning of the 21st century was marked by the digital revolution, paving the way for a new “public space” in which the State and private players were exploring emerging power resources. Since the millennium turn, to guarantee “information superiority” and to protect the cyberspace had become core elements in US National Security Strategies. Although the institutional framing and several strategies to secure the cyberspace were being developed between 1990 till 2005, these initiatives were not able to guarantee domestic security.

The end of the first decade of the new millennium was characterized by a series of major serious cyber incidents in the US, such as the 2006 NSA hacking, the 2007 Department of Defense (DOD) invasion and the DOD’s 2008 attack in 2008, and several other international events such as the Estonian, China, Georgia, and Israel attacks (Giordano e Bosso 2021, 22-23). Added to this, in 2010, the Stuxnet, one of the most sophisticated industrial espionage software ever identified was discovered. He was used to control and generate oscillations in nuclear centrifuges in Iran, representing a new level of threat to international cybersecurity.

The Stuxnet process altered societies’ notions of vulnerability that were more and more connected to the internet. Now, the issue is not only about vigilance, national data theft or industrial espionage, as operations in the virtual world had evolved into a real threat in the real world. A computer virus ability to remotely alter a nuclear power plant standards raised serious concerns over the security and vulnerability of critical US infrastructures and all over the world (Demchak and Dombrowski 2011, 33).

Due to these real emerging threats, Demchak and Dombrowski (2011,

35) presented the State's inclination to control the flow of data through their national frontiers in the 21st century. The main argument is that the Stuxnet officially branded the new "Westphalian cyber era", in which virtual borders and national cybercommands would rise to protect citizens and the economy of foreign risks. In particular in Western democracies, "states are establishing the bounds of their sovereign control in the virtual world in the name of security and economic sustainability" (Ibidem, 32).

In the US, the government of Barack Obama (2009-2017) dealt with a significant share of these rising challenges. Since the first day of his term, the agenda of the former President prioritized a review and modernization of a series of strategies and cyber and digital policies, added to the incorporation of "data science" in his administration. On one hand, the new military doctrines emphasized the impacts of virtual threats to national security. On the other, the recession brought by the 2008 crisis imposed the need to develop a modern digital infrastructure to increase competitiveness and overcome economic problems.

## **The Modernization of National Security Strategies and the Institutionalization of "Data Science"**

Already in the first months of his term, Obama made a speech in the White House, regarding his plans to ensure America's digital future<sup>5</sup> making it clear that the protection of the informational infrastructure and the promotion of the "digital economy" were priorities. Still in 2009, one of the main cybersecurity initiatives was the creation of the United States Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM), one of the world's first military command to focus on cyberwar. USCYBERCOM birth was at the National Security Agency (NSA) headquarter as a DOD sub unified unit. Its mission is to coordinate operations in cyberspace to safeguard it, as well as to promote US interests in collaboration with national and international partners.

The militarization of the "digital space" earmarked the strategic importance of this field, alongside the aerial, terrestrial, maritime, and space domains of classical geopolitics. Historically, the US had always placed military forces in key regions to project its global power. One can remember as examples, the creation of the US Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM/1947), of the Western European Command (USEUCOM/1952), the South American Command (USSOUTHCOM/1963) and the Central Command for the Middle Central Asia and North of Africa (USCENTCOM/1983). They were all

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<sup>5</sup> Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjfyj4eyQM>>. Access 27 mar. 2022.

relevant during the Cold War. In the 21st century, before the creation of the USCYBERCOM, the main structural changes were the creation of the North American Command (USNORTHCOM/2001), as an answer to 9/11, and the USAFRICOM in 2007 in Africa (Pecequillo 2013, 15).

As the influence of the “virtual” world into the “real” soared, “to occupy” and to protect the cyberspace, with a specific military command and other strategies, became one of the main agendas to safeguard national security. In grand strategy documents such as the National Security Strategy (NSS-2010) and the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR-2010), “the emergence of cyberwars as a reason of concern” (Pecequillo 2013, 27) was stressed. Even though these concerns could be found in previous documents, they were not playing a secondary role anymore, and had become the core in the strategy of defense. As the QDR-2010 states, “in the 21st century, modern armed forces simply cannot conduct high-tempo, effective operations without resilient, reliable information and communication networks and assured access to cyberspace” (United States 2010a, 37).

In the NSS-2010, similar questions were presented, and the digital infrastructure of the country was defined as a “national strategic asset” and its protection a national security priority. To safeguard this asset, the document proposed two initiatives: (a) investments in people and technology and (b) strengthening partnerships (United States 2010b, 27-28). On one hand, R&D investment, innovation technology stimulus, digital literacy, and public consciousness about the importance of cybersecurity would be relevant for the protection of American interests. On the other hand, searching for partnerships with the private sector, national and international, represented a continuity of Clinton and W. Bush’s governmental strategies.

Added to the deepening of public-private relations, the cooperation of civil and military branches of the government, through swaps of specialized knowledge, and the interchange of employees and interdepartmental technologies was central for the consolidation of these strategies. The former President created a specific White House bureau to coordinate answers to cyberthreats to the federal civilian network and ordered a comprehensive review to evaluate US policies and digital structures, leading to the Cyberspace Policy Review (2009). This document proposed a series of initiatives for developing a reliable digital infrastructure network, including the built of a “Digital Nation”, the suppression of “potential barriers that prevent the evolution of public-private partnership”, the establishment of efficient data sharing systems and incentives to digital technological innovation (United States 2009a, 13-35).

Several of the Cyberspace Policy Review proposals were aligned with

the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act edited in the same year, which encouraged the implementation of modern information infrastructure to increase competitiveness and solve urgent economic problems after the 2008 crisis. In 2012, the Digital Government: Building a 21st Century Platform to Better Serve the American People plan was released, and its goal was to increase electronic services offered to the US people. This plan continued digital modernization and searched, among other goals, to “ensure that as the government adjusts to this new digital world, we seize the opportunity to procure and manage devices, applications, and data in smart, secure and affordable ways”, and “unlock the power of government data to spur innovation across our Nation and improve the quality of services for the American people” (United States 2012, 02).

The modernization of digital infrastructure was one the pillars of defense and national security policies and for economic recovery. Although it proposed the breakdown of responsibilities between the DoD (.mil) and the federal civilian government (.gov), to secure safer and reliable networks in both spheres remained an inseparable goal to guarantee US interests in the cyber era.

The new emergent rising technologies of the 21st century such as mobile devices and cloud computing, imposed the need for a new specific strategy to materialize modernization. Since the popularization of smartphones, mostly after Apple launched the Iphone in 2007 and the Android system by Google in 2008, the digital world and the flow of internet data evolved in a surprising way. As an example of these changes, US 2012 digital strategy mentions the episode related to a 5.9 earthquake that hit Virginia in 2011, that was posted in Twitter and New York residents read about in Twitter 30s before they even experience the event (United States 2012, 01).

Obama had acknowledged these changes and the emergent mobile technologies potential in the State-Citizen relation. As his Digital Government Strategy mentions, “today’s amazing mix of cloud computing, ever-smarter mobile devices, and collaboration tools is changing the consumer landscape and bleeding into government as both an opportunity and a challenge” (United States 2012, p. 01). To reap the benefits at the federal government level, the document set out four overarching principles that would drive digital policy in the “data age”: an “information-centric”, a “shared platform”, “customer-centric” and a platform on “security and privacy” (Ibidem, 05).

The first “information centered” approach had become a cornerstone for the support of all this digital strategy. It considers the wealth of information kept by the Federal Government as a “a national asset with tremendous potential value to the public, entrepreneurs, and to our own government

programs” (United States 2012, 09). As it raised information to the status of a national strategic asset, the core idea was that the administration would collect and frame all and any kind of data to make them public, either structured data (data bank, census) or non-structured (documents, releases, videos etc). Added to making interoperability of information access amongst the public-private sector through “shared platforms” available, the metadata disclosure by the State, was seen as a fundamental issue to support new digital business and to advance economic prosperity.

One of the main assets of this strategy was based on the Open Data philosophy, which argues in favor that some types of data should be available without copyrights restrictions so that all can make use and edit them. This line of thought is part of the Open Government idea, and the democratic government was one of the forts to uphold it. The institutionalization of open data was fundamental for the consolidation of the Open Government in this digital strategy. However, one of the main problems that was identified in the process of its political concept was how to collect and organize huge set of complex data from several sources, since the process of social datafication in the 21st century generated an exponential growth of digital information on the internet making it difficult to collect and analyze data through traditional means. Another obstacle was that most of the available information was stored in private servers of huge corporations nationwide. Therefore, to materialize a digital policy and the open data it would be necessary a non-stop development of new knowledge extraction technologies and a long-term partnership with the companies that controlled the major datacenters in the country.

In 2011, to overcome these setbacks the government created the Big Data Senior Steering Group (SSG) to identify and create national initiatives for research and development of big data technologies, which became the main coordinating branch of R&D of data science in the country. Soon later, the group was renamed as the Big Data Interagency Working Group (BD IWG) and incorporated members of several governmental agencies as DARPA, DoD, DHS, NASA, and NSA staff. The BD IWG answers directly to the Subcommittee on Networking and Information Technology Research and Development (NITRD), a branch linked to the Committee on Science & Technology Enterprise do National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), that, for its turn, is linked to the White House’s Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).

Almost a year after the creation of the BD IWG, the White House announced the Big Data Research and Development Initiative (2012) which goal was to improve governmental capacity to extract knowledge of complex digital data. As a means of financing, the initiative handed over more than US\$

200 million to six federal departments and was led by the OSTP, responsible for the coordination of the NSF, DARPA, DoD, National Institutes of Health (NIH), Department of Energy (DoE) e da US Geological Survey commitments (OSTP, 2012). It is important to highlight that even before this initiative was created, big data research was already being developed in the federal level. The Big Data initiative was designed to accelerate the rate of the area development, to create apps for analyses and to train the next generation of data scientists to meet the market demand for specialists. Since then, several undergraduate and graduate courses on data science appeared in the country (Kalil, 2012).

Added to the incorporation of branches in the administration's framework, Obama ordered a full review on how "data" affected the American's way of life and work, resulting in the Big Data: Seizing Opportunities, Preserving Values report. Despite big data potential to promote social welfare this document raised some issues on how automatic decisions based on codification could promote and increase social discrimination already in place (United States 2014, 59). A few years later, the White House, through the BD IWG, launched the Federal Big Data Research And Development Strategic Plan (2016), one of the main documents since the foundation of the group in 2011 and the Big Data R&D Initiative (2012). The institutionalization of this development policies created a "national big data innovation ecosystem" in the US, composed of several key agencies such as the NSF, DARPA, DoD, NIH, DoE, and DHS. The priority of the Big Data R&D Strategic Plan was to guide towards a common plan for all of the administration and to "outline the key Big Data R&D strategies necessary to keep the Nation competitive in data science and innovation and to prepare for the data-intensive challenges of tomorrow" (United States 2016, 04).

## **Public-Private Vertical Integration and the Expansion of the Big Techs Economic and Political Power**

Obama's governmental strategies supported a revolution in digital technologies and platforms. The institutionalization of digital policy and "data science" was widely reported by the US media at that time and considered Obama "the big data president" (Scola, 2013) and the "first truly digital President of America" (Wortham, 2016). To fulfill its plans, the government needed to forge an intimate partnership with Silicon Valley companies that controlled the necessary know-how for this challenge.

Obama was always able to feed connections with US high-tech entrepreneurs, being know for the promotion of policies that pleased the



sector when he was a Senator. The former President fought for Silicon Valley shared philosophies, as open networks, civil liberties, and limited regulation and is one of the greatest sponsors of innovation. Still in 2007, Obama was invited by Google's President Eric Schmidt, to present his innovation agenda to the company's employees<sup>6</sup>. Even though John McCain, his major electoral contender was also invited, the multinational preference for the democratic candidate was clear. As the Federal Election Commission data compiled by OpenSecrets.org shows, the majority of campaign donations from the telecommunication and internet sector in the 2007-2008 cycle was directed to the democratic candidate, a trend that remained in the 2011-2012 cycle<sup>7</sup>.

This preference reflected Obama's own profile, since his two presidential campaigns were oriented towards "almost obsessive" practices based on evidence, centered on the analysis of digital data and social scientific research (Trish 2018, 30), another philosophy shared with high-tech companies. As Wortham (2016, n.p.) states, the 2007-2008 campaign "mostly relied on social media to take him [Obama] from the shadows". One of Facebook co-founders Chris Hughes even left the company to become the democrat online campaign leader. The 2012 was structured to focus even more on data science. At that time, "the data and technology departments accounted for almost 30-40% of the campaign staff" in the campaign strategy (Trish 2018, 31).

After being elected for his first term, Obama created a series of policies and executive posts in his administration that benefited the sector, maintaining his connections with the major technological entrepreneurs. Beyond the prosperity of "older generation" Silicon Valley companies, the conducive environment created by the government furthered a "second wave" of new digital businesses that operate on the internet as Airbnb (2008), Uber (2009), WhatsApp (2009), Instagram (2010) and Ifood (2011). Both, the modernization of national security strategies as well as the open data, big data and digital government policies were fundamental for the prosperity of this business models. Several of them had become suppliers of military technology and prospectors of the digital economy.

The administration acted as a catalyst for the sector through direct financing and subsidies. In 2009, the government released a stimulus package of almost US\$800 billion including US\$100 billion in "financing and subsidies for the discovery, development and implementation of several

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6 Fully available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4yVlPqeZwo>>. Access 01 mar. 2022.

7 Available a: <<https://www.opensecrets.org/industries/indus.php?ind=B&cycle=2008>>. Access: 01 mar. 2022.



technologies” (Rich 2017, n.p.). In 2012, as seen, the Big Data Research and Development Initiative conceded over than US\$100 million distributed over several federal agencies to boost the development of technologies for big data analysis (Kalil 2012).

Several Silicon Valley companies had somewhat become an extension of the corporate arms of the administration providing services, consultations, and interchange of specialists in State’s projects. The government shared a lot of its federal employees with these companies, in some sort of public-private integration. As an example: “in 2014, Uber hired David Plouffe, Obama’s senior advisor and his former campaign management to fight the regulation” of the sector (Rich 2017, n.p.) – as Microsoft did against the antitrust investigation against its monopoly on the PCs market, in the mid turn of the millennium. For its turn, Airbnb, as a product of the National Democratic Convention in 2008, in Denver, reached a market value of US\$1 billion shortly after this meeting (Ibidem, 2017). Obama took advantage with his ties with this company to bolster his diplomacy, bringing “Brian Chesky, Airbnb Executive President to Cuba as an economic endorsement to the revolutionary powers of beginners companies to change the world” (Wortham 2016, n.p.)

Google provided diplomatic assistance to Obama in Cuba through a joint initiative to promote internet expansion in the country (Mullins and Lee 2016) and is one of the companies that benefited the most by the logic of “vertical integration”. As exposed by Dayen (2016) to *The Intercept*, Google representatives were present at several White House meetings in the White House from 2008 till 2015. In a similar report *The Wall Street Journal* indicated that the amount of these visits increased whereas the company was targeted in an antitrust investigation in 2012-2013, that was closed without any accusations (Mullins 2015). Over 250 people passed through the Google-Government “revolving door”, and 55 individuals left the company to work in the Federal Government and 197 moved from the governmental service to Google (Dayen 2016).

Obama’s closeness to Silicon Valley reflected in his digital strategy for the solution of economic problems created by the 2008 crisis. To materialize it, someone needed to manage the “technological solutionism” project, a school of thought that argues that the digital revolution will heal all the problems that the State failed to solve. Major technological companies that controlled the needed know-how in emergent technologies were the most prepared for the mission, which served as justification for the association of these companies, the State and the aforementioned public policies. The dominant “data era” big techs gained economic power and rose as a relevant lobby force in US politics, producing as a result the country’s digital oligopoly with non-competitive

practices.

Historically, the formation of monopolies and lobbying practices were always seen as challenges for representative democracy and the idea of “free competition” mainly in key sectors such as railroads, oil, energy and telegraphy/telephony in the 19th and 20th centuries, but the same does not hold truth whereas considering today’s digital industry. Although some of the online market dominant companies were born in the 1970-1990s decade, the oligopolization trend only exacerbated due to Obama’s administration favorable strategies. All of the US five major multinational technological companies, leaders in market capital and market brand value, grew exponentially during the democratic government.

As Figure 1 shows, even though Microsoft opened its public capital offer in the stock market in 1986, its capitalization exponential growth was only stable after mid-2014, and its lobbying power and expenditures hold steady during the 90, reaching a peak in 2013, when almost US\$10.490.000,00 were invested by the company.

In Apple’s case, market capitalization grew exponentially only after mid-2009, with the introduction of new digital technologies and the Iphone launch. Lobbying expenses significantly grew in this period. The number of active lobbyists jumped from 16 in 2009 to 40 in 2017. Total spending allocated to this practice grew from US\$1.500.000,00 in 2009 to US\$7.150.000,00 in 2017.

Amazon followed the same trend. The company’s initial public offer was made in 1997, however it only grew exponentially in capitalization after mid-2013. The same applies to lobbying practices: from 12 active lobbyists in 2009, the number jumped to 94 in 2017, and if in 2009 US\$1.810.000,00 were spent, the expense was raised to US\$13.000.000,00 in 2017.

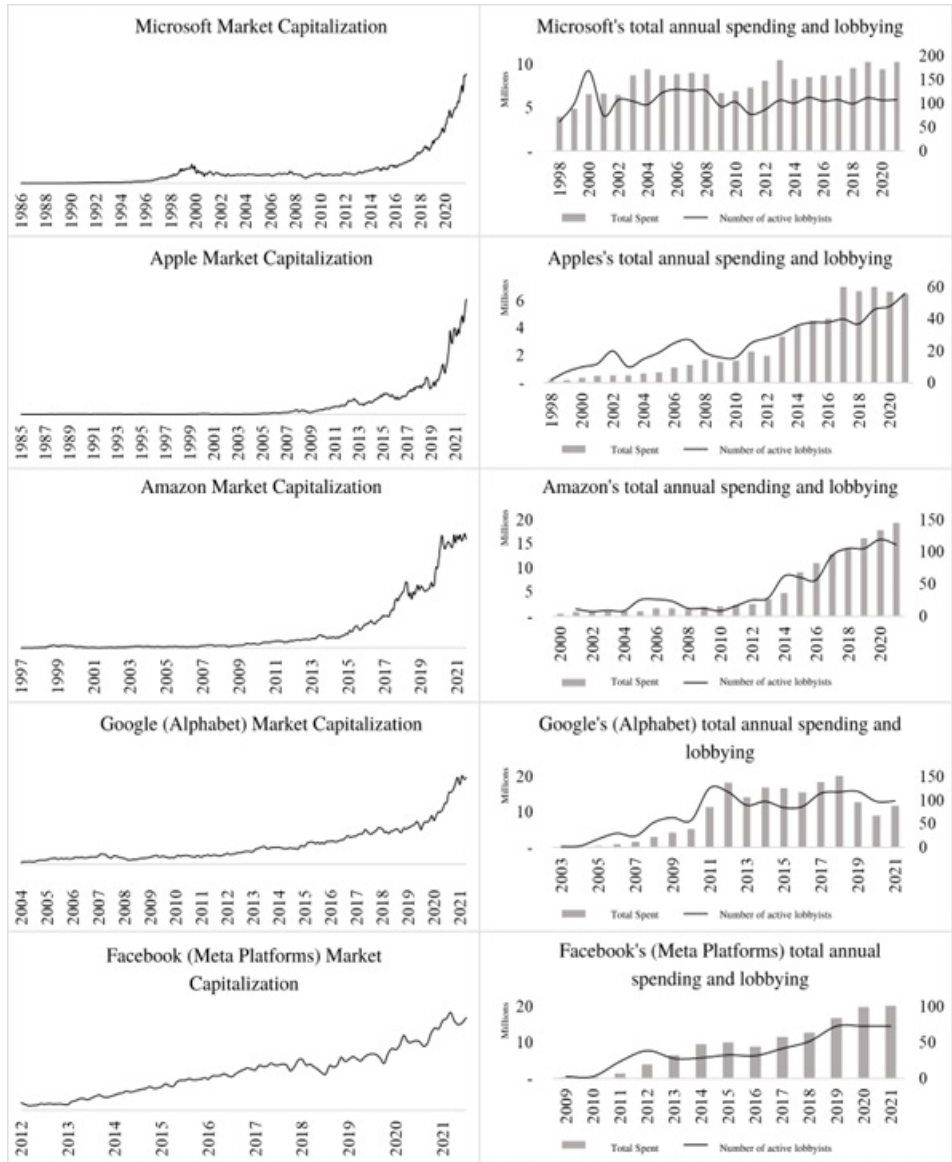
For its turn, Google, which had become closer to the Obama administration and played a significant role in digital, open, and big data strategies, launched its initial public offer in 2014. Since then, the company gained a relatively constant capitalization. Taking aside the 2020 period, in which all big techs benefited from the COVID-19 pandemics, the greatest growth gap happened from mid-2015 to 2018. The number of active lobbyists jumped from 2 in 2003 to 125 in 2011, a record high. The total amount spent increased from US\$80.000,00 in 2003 to US\$18.220.000,00 in 2012. After the restructuring conducted by the Alphabet holding, the total outlay reached another record high of US\$21.850.000,00 in 2018.

The Facebook conglomerate public offer, that now operates under the alias Meta Platforms, was released in 2013. Its market added value grew

exponentially, especially in mid-2014. The amount destined to lobby followed the trend of rising stock values: the number of active lobbyists raised from 2 in 2009 to a 72 peak in 2019. At the same time, amounts raised from US\$207.878,00 in 2009 to U\$16.710.000,00 in 2019.

By analyzing Facebook data, one can notice a considerable fall of its market capitalization in 2018 and 2019, and a rise in its lobbying activities from 2017 till 2020. These variations are a result of the Cambridge Analytica scandal during the 2016 American election. Facebook suffered a strong blow after the revelation that data from 50 million users of the network were leaked, without consent to Donald Trump's campaign. At that time this accusation was revealed by The New York Times and The Guardian and raised questions about privacy in the digital era and the impact of networks in democratic electoral processes. Ever since, the company is being targeted by the Legislative power, and, in a short period of time, these pressures hit all the big techs during the Trump Era, leading to the greatest ever antitrust investigation against the sector. After this period of expansion, the Trump era was characterized by the beginning of these companies' containment.

**Figure 1: Market Capitalization and Lobbying Annual Expenditures of the five major multinational technological companies of the US**



Source: Own Elaboration with Yahoo! Finance e Opensecrets.org (2022) data).

## The Trump Era: The Beginning of Containment? (2017-2021)

As argued, the Obama administration created a favorable environment to the consolidation and expansion of technological companies. This sector had grown significantly and acquired even more economic power. At the same time, corporations that were better positioned in the market started the incorporation of competing business in a larger scale, building a digital oligopoly that started to exercise a greater influence in today's internet as we know it. Therefore, the US big techs that are part of this oligopoly turned into the main players of this "digital capitalism".

Calvano and Polo (2021) argue that one of the main components that favored this monopolization was the "network effects", a similar concept to the dynamics of the "rich getting richer". As a platform gains more users, the more attractive and popular it gets, adding more users, that, for their turn, bring more data- a similar logic to the proposed cyclic formula (D-C-T-D'-C'). The "Big Data, collected through usage of services, allow digital platform to calibrate their algorithms and profile their clients. In an antitrust perspective Big Data has been considered a source of incumbency advantage and a barrier to entry for new, small competitors" (Calvano and Polo 2021, 17). Added to the entry barriers generated by the accumulation of "asymmetric information" in the monopoly, risk capitals prefer to invest in already consolidated companies, which makes competition even more difficult.

In the mid-2016, an open public debate regarding the big techs power begun, beyond its economic dimension. The 2016 electoral cycle was characterized by a series of scandals involving the digital platforms as the usage of cyber tools by Moscow, benefiting Trump, Facebook data manipulation by Cambridge Analytica and the disinformation mass campaign (fake news) that blurred the sense of reality, inducing the "post-truth era" (D'ancona 2018). Data exploitation was determinant in the elections results. This raised the question that data have the potential to create political capital and influence democracy and could be explored by State and non-State players to manipulate public opinion and engine (Pybus 2019).

Compared to Obama, Trump's term had continuities and breaks. On one hand, his exaggerated nationalism promoted a revival of isolationism, imposing free trade barriers and harming multilateralism. On the other hand, as Obama, Trump argued in favor of digital modernization as an alternative to governmental shortcomings, keeping cybernetic issues as priority. The economic and technological rise of "revisionist powers" – mainly China-redirected the focus of national security to interstate competition, and clashes over emerging technologies once more were at foreign policy's core, as in the

## Cold War.

However, Trump was not closer to the high-tech sector. His campaign was characterized by an exchange of accusations with the main Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, which did not support his nationalist, anti-migration, and anti-globalization narratives. Nevertheless, there were convergent issues such as the promises of deregulation and tax cuts. Yet, in the last years of the government tensions deepened, and Trump tried to cut down the power of these companies with Executive Orders, and, at the same time, the main platforms banned the President from their networks.

This process took place in a moment when in-depth issues were being discussed. The big techs' economic, political, and societal influence provoked a series of Legislative and Judiciary regulatory investigations, at the federal and state level in the US, and in other countries. Summing up, they created popular products that are part of most of the world's population daily life and the government's concern is that they had become too dominant, holding some type of structural power that no country ever had. So, both Congress Houses, the main moderator of monopolistic power, launched a comprehensive anti-trust investigation against the big techs in 2019.

## Continuities and Changes in Cybersecurity Policies and Impacts of China's Digital Rise

Donald Trump was not a conventional President, being considered an outsider, apart from the political life. His campaign was characterized by a nationalist narrative and anti-system conservative, exploiting his image of a businessman as an alternative to Washington's political establishment. The electoral cycle that had brought him into power was surrounded by a series of controversies, such as mass disinformation campaigns (fake news) that messed up with the sense of reality, due to the sell and manipulation of private data of digital platforms users- making use of determined political content to direct and induce voting- and suspicious towards foreign interference. During 2017-2018 these scandals gained ground in the media. Among them, accusations of Russia's interference in favor of Trump were confirmed in 2017 by the Director of National Intelligence in the study *Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections*, a result of CIA, FBI and NSA collaboration. In the document's declassified version, the intelligence community had identified the use of cyber tools by Moscow to influence public opinion and undermine people's faith in US democratic process through the internet.

The Cambridge Analytical scandal was uncovered in 2018 involving Facebook's data violation. The case was discovered by a joint press investigation conducted by The Observer, The Guardian, and The New York Times, that "published, together, at the same time the article entitled *How Trump Consultants Exploited the Facebook Data of Millions*" (Fornasier and Beck 2020, 185). This company, which focus was the mining and treating of social network data was hired by Trump and played a relevant role in his victory. At that time, it extracted private data from Facebook, without users' consent, to create and spread segmented political campaign in the networks. "Federal Election Commission (FEC) records from 2016 compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics (CRP) show disbursements of \$5.9 million from the Trump campaign to the data firm" (Trish 2018, 33).

As Pybus (2019, 227) argues, this data manipulation was determinant in the 2016 electoral results. The case showed that "the data that we generate, are not only producing economic value, but also gaining political influence [...]". Added to the logic of economic capital extraction of digital capitalism, the data that is being held by these big companies has a huge potential to create political capital in the 21st century.

It is important to highlight that data analysis application to electoral processes was neither new nor discovered by Trump in 2016. Obama also had made use of these techniques in his presidential campaigns. In the 2012 dispute when the new medias and smartphones were already popular and spread on society, as mentioned, a significant part of the campaign staff was focusing on it- as "Donald Trump dedicated 44% of his campaign budget for digital media" (Ayres Pinto and Moraes, 2020, 72).

Despite the similarities on big data exploration, when compared to his predecessor, 2016 elections brought up a new logic due to the applied methods. The issue was not only related to information analysis. The main issue was the violation of individuals' privacy, whose data was extracted from the platforms without consent by malicious agents. These agents gathered privileged information, manipulated them, and created mechanisms to spread propaganda and fake news against opponents. Several times, the contents of this misinformation campaigns are linked to people's emotions and spilled over quickly on the networks. This leads to the "internet's "opinion bubbles in the post-truth era, in which there is a closeness with similar thoughts profiles that distance themselves from what is different" (D'ancona, 2018).

The increase of the internet's and social media influence on political campaigns and democracy overlapped with the rise of the extreme right in the Western world, mostly in the United Kingdom, Brazil, and the United States. Radical groups were effective in taking part in the platforms, employing



methods of data extraction and misinformation campaigns to rise into power. This logic was present not only in Western democracies and was utilized by the Islamic State which make use of social networks to broadcast its terrorist ideology (Câmara, 2016). Therefore “we can notice that the internet- first seen as a tool for democratization that would increase popular participation and freedom of expression- is being manipulated by political groups against its own institutions and democratic values” (Ayres Pinto and Moraes 2020, 81).

Apart their ideological difference, both Trump and Obama argued that a stiff governmental bureaucracy was making citizens’ life and prosperity harder. This rigidity works against the flexibility demanded in a much more connected and interdependent world and can hinder economics. So, governments shared the same view in fighting for digital modernization as a means to surpass these governmental deficiencies, upholding cyber issues as a priority in their National Security Strategy (United States 2017) and later on the National Defense Strategy (United States 2018a). Added to these most well-known documents, Trump’s White House released the National Cyber Strategy (United States 2018b), reassuring cybersecurity strategic plans. In all these documents, the rise of rogue states in several areas, in the technological and economic ones were seen as a source of concern.

With the economic and technological rise of new players, mostly China, “inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in U.S. national security” (United States 2018a, 02). This national security paradigm was framed in a context of fast changes generated by technological disruption, as the control of emerging technologies by “revisionist powers” pushed the DoD towards the modernization of forces since globalization transferred most of the advanced technologies to commercial and civilian branches, inside and outside the US. DARPA, in its 60th-anniversary commemorative book, showed some concerns regarding the diffusion and popularization of dual use technologies, that this agency once developed as a leader, stating that this historical change demands more caution (Atta 2018).

The military’s adaptation to this new international environment (both technological and geopolitical) had become a cornerstone of the Trump’s era defense strategies, to improve US competitiveness. Amongst the technologies that changed the character of war and that lacked modernization, the National Defense Strategy highlights “advanced computing, “big data” analytics, artificial intelligence, autonomy, robotics, directed energy, hypersonics, and biotechnology” (United States 2018a, 03).

In addition, the White House, with the OSTP, sustained a series of policies to support key civil industries to strengthen innovation and the economy. Among them, one can mention the American Artificial



Intelligence Initiative, which goal was to ensure American leadership in Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies and the National Strategy to Secure 5G, that searched to assure US leadership of the next internet generation (United States 2020). Besides these incentive strategies, the publication of the Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act (FIRRMA/2018) by Trump as a relevant action to protect forthcoming industries from foreign players interference, mainly Chinese influence in the global economy and in the development of new technologies.

### **Trump and The Big Techs Convergences and Divergences: From an Attempt of Closeness to the Historical Ban of the Executive Chief**

To uphold his technological and digital policies, Trump depended on the partnership with the private sector, but his relations with the high-tech sector were not so friendly. His campaign was characterized by some squabbling with the main entrepreneurs of the Silicon Valley that sustained previous years trends, financing the democratic ticket. In a Fox News interview, Trump accused Jeff Bezos (Amazon) of buying the Washington Post to gain political power and to avoid paying taxes with the support of Legislative representatives. Google was blamed for “hiding” bad news about Hillary Clinton, his main opponent in the presidential run. When it comes to Apple, the former President pushed the company to stop making its iPhones in China, redirecting its production lines to the US to create jobs. Trump made non-stop criticism to Apple’s investments in foreign plants and the accumulation of billions of dollars in fiscal paradises, to avoid US tax system, as in the case of its Irish branches, as uncovered by a Senate investigation in 2013. At the same time, his chief strategist, Steve Bannon’s narrative was that “Asians detain a lot of power in Silicon Valley”, hinting that the sector was serving Chinese interests (Solon 2016, n.p.).

The chief executives of these companies were very critical of Trump’s electoral proposals. The former President was in favor of imposing barriers to immigrants’ entry, ending trade deals and making Chinese imports difficult. However, most of the Silicon Valley business are dependent on the import of technologies and gadgets from China, benefit from trade deals and hire highly qualified immigrants’ services- and the sector is in high demand for this kind of visa- deepening the conflicts with the Republican during the electoral race even more. Nevertheless, after his victory there was some sort of appeasement. On one hand, companies come to an understanding that the new President would soon have power to make decisions on critical issues

for them and their stockholders and in the establishment of governmental contracts and antitrust operations opening. On the other hand, Trump, in the same way as Obama, needed to feed his big tech connections to sustain the strategies of digital and military modernization as well as new policies due to these companies' know-how and the governments dependence on them.

Tensions rose once more at the end of 2018. The peak was reached in 2020, amid a new electoral cycle, which was characterized by a stronger big tech influence in the democratic process. In a different manner when compared to 2016, the main digital platforms tried to contain the spillover of fake news in their networks, either the ones related to the election itself or the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Among the measures upheld by social media, mainly Facebook, Google (Youtube) and Twitter, one can highlight the flagging of "fake either/or suspicious content" posts and the definitive exclusion of users and the blocking of profiles in the network.

Trump was one of the most affected by these companies' corporate policies. During all 2020, the former President posted a series of fake news about the electoral process, suspicious of groundless cheating practices and negationist comments related to the pandemics. Several of his posts were flagged with warning labels or definitely removed from the platforms. With the companies standing up to him, the ex-President increased the attacks against them, frequently threatening to regulate them. One of Trump's (2020) main initiatives towards were the release of the Executive Order on Preventing Online Censorship, had, as it goals to limit the companies' power "to censor opinions form which the disagree".

Even though the justification for these attacks was to cut down the power of these companies and to "protect democracy", the former President attitudes against institutions during the 2020 presidential race represented a greater threat. After his electoral defeat, Trump called upon his social media followers to gather in Washington on January 6th, 2021, a data in which both Legislative House were going to ratify his opponent win. At that time, he claimed that elections were fraudulent and summoned his supporters to press Congress to reject Joe Biden's victory, which led, as result, to the historical US Capitol invasion. Because of January events, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Twitch and Youtube definitely banned Donald Trump from social networks. For the first time in US history, an Executive Chief faced the silencing of his voice, making the big techs companies' huge power clear- a power that neither the Legislative nor the Judiciary can immediately access.

## The Legislative Antitrust Investigation: Breaking the Oligopoly to Protect the Market or the Power of the State?

All these facts had taken place when deeper issues were being discussed in US Congress. Besides Trump, the Congress and the Judiciary were already debating the range of big techs power since 2018, mostly after the 2016 elections Cambridge Analytica scandal. The companies influence on the day-to-day people's life led to a series of investigations in the US Legislative and Judiciary as mentioned (at federal and state level), and outside the country, mainly in the European Union. In the US, the US Department of Justice, together with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) – an agency responsible for upholding antitrust federal laws- launched a series of investigation against the monopoly of tech companies.

Legislators from both Congress chambers, put pressures on the big techs with their own antitrust initiatives. US Congress, who represents the Legislative, is composed by the Senate and the House, and, during most of the American history was the power that fought against monopolies the most. One of its core missions is to “provide common defense and the general welfare of the US”, sharing powers with the Executive (Pecequilo 2013, 10). Therefore, both chambers acted so that no group was able to control the US economy and democracy, historically facing off, powerful monopolies in past centuries.

One of the core investigations against the power of the technological oligopoly was led by the Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial and Administrative Law do House Judiciary Committee, the older second major permanent committee on Congress. In June 2009, the committee announced a comprehensive bipartisanship investigation with the purpose of investigating digital market competition in the 21st century. The scrutiny was justified to protect the market from transgressions, keep the principles of free competition and market afloat and alive and study if antitrust laws needed to be adapted to the “digital era”.

The targets were Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google, and were an answer to concerns raised about the platforms by several national and international agencies that had been denouncing its abusive practices and opening procedures in several instances. During the investigation, Congress was able to gather 1,3 million documents and collected depositions of executive leaders of each firm, to find elements of non-competitive practices that were affecting US economics and democracy. In October 2020, the committee released its final report under the title Investigation of competition in digital markets: majority staff report and recommendations, presenting

the results of the 16-month inquiry and indicating the main findings and recommendations.

Although each of these four companies focus differ, the Congressional document revealed common problems in their business practices. One of the issues pointed out was the fact that they make use of their strategic position to uphold market power. Since they control most of the digital infrastructure and the datacenters with global privileged information, they map rival potential rival companies so that, eventually, they could by, copy or eliminate competition threats to maintain its dominance (United States Congress 2020, 06). In fact, the rise of big data controlled by smaller groups generated concerns either related to antitrust questions or consumers. “All of the classical market failures – asymmetric information, negative externalities, market power, and bounded rationality – are potentially exacerbated or face new complications due to data” (Jin and Wagman 2021, 02).

These practices favor the monopolization of pre-established dominant groups, erode innovation and entrepreneurship due to the lack of competition and affect democracy and the privacy of citizens constantly violated by companies. To contain this influence in US Constitution core principles, the Congress committee presented some recommendations to be implemented in the short and long run. Among them can be mentioned the breaking of monopolies through “structural separations and prohibitions of certain dominant platforms from operating in adjacent lines of business”; “interoperability and data portability”, requiring platforms to make their services compatible with various networks to make content and information easily accessible and portable – thus aiming to break the monopoly of sectoral data and information; prohibition of future acquisitions, and finally, reform of antitrust laws for the digital age and strengthening of law enforcement agencies (United States Congress 2020, 19-21).

Although Congress investigation was justified to “protect the free market”, reading the document one can notice that the representatives’ real concerns were deeper. When addressing the CEOs depositions, already in the third paragraph, Jeff Bezos (Amazon), Tim Cook (Apple), Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook) and Sundar Pichai (Google), the document points that “their answers were often evasive and non-responsive, raising fresh questions about whether they believe they are beyond the reach of democratic oversight” (United States Congress 2020, 06).

Later, whereas dealing with the effects of market power, concerns are raised as the power of the platforms may harm not only economic freedoms but mainly political freedoms (Ibidem, 18). In addition, legislative authorities and the courts of justice had found out that platforms

repeatedly violating laws and court orders. This pattern of behavior raises questions about whether these firms view themselves as above the law, or whether they simply treat lawbreaking as a cost of business. Lastly, the growth in the platforms' market power has coincided with an increase in their influence over the policymaking process. Through a combination of direct lobbying and funding think tanks and academics, the dominant platforms have expanded their sphere of influence, further shaping how they are governed and regulated (United States Congress 2020, 19).

Therefore, theoretically, the pressures from Congress are not only directed to "protect the free market" but, as well, are initiatives that seek to remedy the lack of regulation. The main concern relates to the political power that these companies conquered in their actions inside the State and in US democracy. The capacity of the oligopoly to control the flow of global information and to define who can access them, the control of technical knowledge of rising military technologies and to provide the digital infrastructure that allows the integration of global world chains of production is some sort of novelty structural power.

Big techs economic power is only one of the matters of concern of several State institutions in the US and should not be taken for granted. As Knorr (1973) mentions, economic power is constitutive of a nation's military power and can be used as an efficient "weapon" against rivals and has the potential to cause more damage than a direct military attack. Therefore, economic power significantly broadens the ability to act in other dimensions of structural power.

The Trump era was characterized by an initial attempt to control the power of these companies. This containment was a consensus amongst all US political sectors and was desired by Donald Trump and Joe Biden's presidency nowadays, both Houses of Congress, and Democrat and Republican representatives as well. The ultra-conservative Senator Josh Hawley (2021), one of the main critics on the Republican side, even stated that these companies, formerly seen as symbols of American freedom and democracy, had become "tyrannies" that threatened the whole pillars of the American Way of Life.

This control attempt rises in a context of bipolarity revival with China, in a fight for international hegemony, a reality overshadowed since the Soviet Union fall. To sustain its technological leadership whereas confronted by China's rise, the US need to promote the competitiveness of its "innovation ecosystem", encourage the R&D of emergent technologies in the public and private sectors and safeguard itself from intellectual property theft and the transfer of critical information to this Asian country. The concentration of structural power in the digital oligopoly is an obstacle to these geopolitical

strategies, which justifies State's actions in search for a greater control in the "data era", similar to the defining role it exercised during Cold War's "information era" in the 20th century.

## Final Remarks

The goal of the article was to analyze the relationship between the big techs and US politics, in the Obama and Trump governments, dealing with the periods of expansion and containment of each presidency. The hypotheses were based on the idea that the attempts to contain the big techs in the Trump era were not only limited to fight for the "free market", but also as initiatives to repair the consequences of this very own free market, which led to the oligopolization and centralization of power in huge technological corporations.

The results of this research showed that the oligopolization of the big techs was, in fact, a consequence of a rampant free market, of deregulation and the dismissal of antitrust laws. This context favored economic concentration on smaller pre-established groups that, for their turn, gained influence in public decisions through lobby. Added to their economic and political power, another element to be considered was the concentration of privileged and sensitive information in the tech oligopoly. Besides being able to make the economy crumble due to "asymmetry of information" effect, this component affects other aspects that balance the functioning of international relations in the post-Second War.

The ability to control the flow of information in the "digital public sphere" (mostly by the Facebook group and Google), to hold the technical knowledge for the development of military and security emergent technologies (in particular Microsoft, Apple e Amazon) and to provide security systems that allow the integration of global value chains of production and finance (all five companies), represents a concentration of structural power in a few private players that no State was ever able to retain. Recently, these companies' investments in cryptocurrencies show their desire to enlarge their influence even in the flow of money, trying to evade the control of central monetary authorities.

It is possible to ascertain that the oligopoly built expanded its actions to other known dimensions of structural power and despite some particularities and divergencies, the largest five big techs act as one and indivisible unity in the pursue of its similar and shared interests. As Susan Strange (1988) defined, structural power is the power to change the structures in which States,

companies and institutions operate, going beyond known international rules and norms. These companies are framing the global environment in each they act even more, taking stances on issues that the States failed to oversee. They have influences on technologies and services that will drive the next industrial revolution and determine how powers project power in the 21st century.

Therefore, the attempts to contain the big techs that had begun in the Trump era are not measures to “protect the free market”. They are, in fact, initiatives to repair the neoliberal consequences that led to the oligopolization and centralization of structural power in huge technological corporations. This containment attempt searches to rebalance the unequal balance of power, since the concentration on the technological sector led to an imbalance in the global political economic structures. One can pinpoint that US government pressures had come in a moment of revival of bipolarity with China in a hegemonic clash.

To sustain its technological leadership in the ongoing fourth industrial revolution, the US needs to assure permanent innovation, R&D investments and to protect itself from privileged information transfers to its rivals. The formation of monopolies is a reality that disturbs these strategic and geopolitical goals and justifies the current State’s actions to regain control in the “data era”, as it was in the 20th century “information era”. If Trump and Congress representatives really wished for a free market, they would certainly not banish Chinese technological companies in the US, or apply sanctions, but would rather leave the invisible hands of the market self-regulate the economy.

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## ABSTRACT

The 21st century is characterized by the transition of industrial to digital capitalism. In the last few years, an oligopoly was built in the US to explore these emerging digital resources, gaining ground during the Obama government. After this economic expansion the Trump era was faced by problems regarding the political power of the huge corporations of this sector. It was the beginning of an attempt, by the Executive and the Legislative, to contain them and protect the free market and individual freedoms. But are these containment attempts really an initiative to only protect the “free market”? To answer this question, the goal of the article is to analyze the relations of the big techs with US policies during the Obama (enlargement period) and the Trump governments (containment attempts).

## KEYWORDS

Big Techs; Digital Capitalism; United States.

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# CHINA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE STABILIZATION OF 'DEMOCRATIC' AFGHANISTAN

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## Introduction:

The People's Republic of China and Afghanistan established diplomatic relations in 1955. In the following decades of the Cold War, however, relations between the countries were limited, which was due to the main directions of the foreign policies of both countries. Afghanistan focused on balancing the influence of the USSR and the US on its territory. China, in turn, adopted a rotational stance towards superpowers, and in the region, it strengthened political, economic and military cooperation with Pakistan (Zaborowski 2012, 142). In the 1970s, China supported the pro-communist Shu'lai Javid (Eternal Flame) party operating in Afghanistan. Members of Parcham, the pro-Moscow wing of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), contemptuously described its members as Maoists (Levi-Sanchez 2017, 46). During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, Beijing allowed Xinjiang Uyghur Muslim fighters to pass through the Wakhan Corridor into Afghanistan to support the mujahideen insurgency there. At that time, political relations between states were maintained only at the consular level.

By February 1989, the Soviets withdrew their troops from Afghanistan, and in September 1992 the last communist president - Mohammad Najibullah (09.1987-09.1992) was overthrown. However, this did not end the civil war, as individual mujahideen groups fought for influence in the country. The war destabilized not only Afghanistan, but also the border areas of neighboring countries, including the Western border of the PRC. In 1992, the President of Afghanistan - Burhanuddin Rabbani (06.1992-09.1996) tried to normalize relations with Beijing, but due to increasing military operations in 1993 China

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withdrew its diplomatic representation from Kabul. When the Taliban took power in Afghanistan in 1996, the country fell into international isolation in which China participated. During the Taliban regime, Afghanistan hosted al-Qaeda, which trained around 1,000 Uyghur fighters in the camps there. In Beijing, this caused serious concern and encouraged the Chinese authorities to intensify security cooperation with Pakistan. According to leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), most of the security problems in the Muslim-dominated Xinjiang province were to be caused by neighboring Afghanistan. For example, the 1997 incidents in the province, known as the Yining riots, were considered to be Taliban-inspired (Cheema 2002, 308).

## China Towards the International Anti-Terrorist Coalition in Afghanistan

After the al-Qaeda attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, the United States declared a global war on terror that began with military intervention in Afghanistan. Despite some reservations, the PRC did not oppose the US invasion of its neighbor. It offered the US intelligence cooperation in terms of sharing information on jihadist groups operating in the region (Ali 2015, 116, 121). It was in Beijing's interest, as these groups collaborated with Uyghur fighters. China also encouraged the President of Pakistan - Pervez Musharraf (06.2001-08.2008) to cooperate with Washington on Afghanistan. It is debatable whether China really wanted to facilitate the operation of the anti-terrorist coalition in Afghanistan or whether it was a ruse to deepen the rapidly growing anti-American attitudes among Pakistanis. Beijing decided not to give more serious support to the US during Operation Enduring Freedom. It prevented the use of its airports and airspace for combat operations and even providing humanitarian aid to Afghans (Roberts 2015, 101, 149).

The PRC remained largely restrained in helping the Americans during the war in Afghanistan, even though it was also conducted in its interest (Ruttig 2014, 182). The purpose of the war was to break up al-Qaeda and overthrow the Taliban, who were the main external support for Xinjiang separatists. During the war, the Americans captured and detained 22 Uyghur fighters in a camp in Guantánamo (Zhao 2012, 3). NATO's military actions in Afghanistan and elsewhere have led to a significant weakening of al-Qaeda and the temporary removal of the Taliban from power. However, these groupings were not finally defeated, among others thanks to safe harbors in Pakistan, including the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). For this reason, the border of

China with Afghanistan and Pakistan has been secured by relatively strong-armed troops, but it is not impenetrable. Support for Uyghur separatists from the Taliban and al-Qaeda has been limited, but they still receive weapons and explosives from extremists and jihadists operating in the region (Kam 2017, 193-194). The regaining of Taliban power in Afghanistan in August 2021 potentially increases the possibility of this support.

The United States has lost a decade in armed conflicts on the two main fronts of the global war on terror - Afghanistan and Iraq. They incurred a huge cost, both in terms of financial and equipment, as well as human and image. It can be argued that the Americans have suffered a double defeat in the global war on terror. Firstly, their efforts did not bring the expected results, i.e. stabilizing the occupied countries and consolidating their influence in them. Secondly, they neglected areas of even more geopolitical importance, namely East Asia and Southeast Asia (Denmark 2015, 16). Currently, Washington is trying to reorient its strategy to these regions, and more broadly to the entire Indo-Pacific, to maintain its dominant position there. China, in turn, used the time of the global war on terror for impressive economic growth (GDP jumped from \$1.3 trillion in 2001 to \$14.7 trillion in 2020), and technological and military development. It also strengthened its influence in various parts of the world, mainly in Asia and Africa. Beijing is aware that Washington's pivot to the Indo-Pacific is aimed primarily against China, which is rapidly growing in strength. So far, however, the PRC has avoided an open confrontation with the US, which could hinder the achievement of its main strategic goal, i.e., building a stable internal and external environment, enabling the continuation of economic expansion (Yuan 2015, 30). On the other hand, it shows an increasingly assertive attitude in the South China Sea and East China Sea, defending its strategic interests there (Medcalf 2015, 167).

The PRC was much less determined than the US in terms of strengthening its influence in Afghanistan. Beijing was comfortable with the Washington-led anti-terrorist coalition playing a major role in Afghanistan in terms of security. Despite the great threat posed by the neighborhood of Afghanistan, China was not interested in incurring such substantial costs to stabilize the country as the Americans or many of their NATO allies did (Tai 2015, 161-162). In the years 2001-2021, the US allocated \$825 billion directly for this purpose, and China did not actually contribute. During this period, 2,442 US soldiers and no Chinese soldier were killed in Afghanistan (Duzor 2021). Beijing has capitalized on the dedication of the US and other NATO allies and partner countries. Without making an appropriate military and financial contribution, it focused on pursuing its own economic interests in the country. The attitude of Beijing aroused justified irritation and criticism

from active members of the anti-terrorist coalition. They tried to force China to send a military contingent to Afghanistan and make a much larger financial contribution to the process of post-war reconstruction of the country, but it did not bring the expected results.

China has even distanced itself from the concept of the so-called Northern Distribution Network (NDN). The aim of the venture was to supply the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from the north, as supplies from the south via Pakistan were constantly threatened by attacks by the local Taliban. The NDN route ran from the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, through Russia and the countries of Central Asia, reaching Afghanistan mainly from Uzbekistan and partly from Tajikistan. It should be noted that this route supplied ISAF only with non-combat supplies. China's participation in the project was extremely modest and was about the construction of a few sections of the route. It can be assumed that China's involvement in these works was not motivated by the facilitation of ISAF's operation. A much more likely motive was the interest of the PRC aimed at the integration of Central and South Asian markets through the development of communication networks (Opacin 2015, 55). Beijing has not decided to open for ISAF a route on the Wakhan Corridor connecting Afghanistan with China. It is worth noting that for NATO it was supposed to be primarily symbolic, showing the solidarity of the great powers in the fight against the Taliban. Due to the difficult geographic and climatic conditions in the area and the lack of adequate transport infrastructure, the corridor on the Sino-Afghan border would certainly not become the main non-combat supply route for ISAF. China's unequivocal refusal was based on two basic premises. First, the PRC has avoided becoming involved in the US war campaign in Afghanistan. Second, it wanted to keep Americans away from Xinjiang Province and Tibet (Zhao 2012, 8). The reason is Washington's pressure on Beijing for decades to respect the human rights and cultural diversity of the inhabitants of these Chinese regions (Ali 2008, 156).

## Strategic Objectives and Priorities for China's Engagement in 'Democratic' Afghanistan

According to the theory of capitalist peace, sustainable development, and the tightening of economic relations between partners reduce the risk of an armed conflict. The resource-intensive PRC was engaged in increasing the security of the resource-rich Afghanistan, and it did so by making use of economic methods. The common goals of both countries were security and development, which encouraged them to cooperate. In practice, this was to



lead not only to securing Sino-Afghan relations, but also to stabilizing the entire region (Opacin 2015, 56-57). However, the authorities and societies of these countries did not share the common values of democracy and human rights, which would additionally increase the chances of peace (Dunne 2008, 230-231). Moreover, the economies of both countries were far from free market. Nevertheless, market integration, economic development and the community of economic interests are important stabilizing factors (Gartzke 2007, 174-175). Tightening economic relations and increasing interdependence, bringing benefits to all participants of economic processes, may contribute to a significant reduction in the risk of a war between them, as well as internal instability in individual countries.

In the first two decades of the 21st century, two values - peace and development - remained the unchanging leitmotifs of China's domestic and foreign policy. The basic strategic goals of the Middle Kingdom were also inviolable. In the internal dimension, it was the maintenance of stability as well as economic and social development. In the external dimension, it was maintaining peace and enhancing friendly international cooperation with all countries to achieve mutual benefits. Subsequent PRC defense white papers included many other persistent goals that were increasingly emphasized. China's approach to Afghanistan's security was most significantly conditioned by the following objectives (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2019):

- building a multipolar security system in opposition to the hegemonic position of the United States,
- limiting the influence of the United States in the neighborhood of China,
- counteracting the phenomena of terrorism, extremism and separatism,
- counteracting organized crime, including drug-related crime,
- upholding the state sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of states,
- respecting the diversity of political and socio-economic systems;
- promoting economic cooperation, trade and market integration;
- strengthening the United Nations;
- promoting dialogue and diplomatic cooperation between states and developing of mutual trust;
- peaceful international conflict and disputes resolution;
- developing of the armed forces to ensure own security, defending own interests and supporting international peace;

- ensuring access to natural resources, including energy resources;
- eliminating development gap between countries.

According to James Dobbins, the order of China's priorities towards Afghanistan was as follows (Dobbins 2014, 164):

- eliminating the military presence of Western countries, mainly the United States, from Afghanistan and Central Asia;
- stopping the development of extremism and terrorism in the region, and above all cutting off these organizations from supporting the Uyghurs in the Xinjiang province;
- supporting China-friendly Pakistan and isolating it from the instability of Afghanistan;
- limiting the influence of Russia and India in Central Asia;
- ensuring access to Afghanistan's natural resources, including natural gas and metals;
- strengthening the role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in the region.

The above-mentioned goals and priorities require some clarification. First of all, the elimination of the military presence of NATO countries from Afghanistan concerned a longer time perspective. NATO, mainly the United States, was the only external entity that could strengthen Afghanistan's security and stability. This was due to the US's much greater readiness than other countries to use in Afghanistan its own (enormous) political, military, and economic potential. The problem, however, was the limited effectiveness of the strategy implemented by Washington in that country. As previously mentioned, the activities of the US-led coalition were focused on combating extremism and terrorism in Afghanistan. Its efforts led to the temporary, relative stabilization of some regions of the country and allowed China to start investing. Beijing, however, was aware that its "free riding" in Afghanistan could not continue indefinitely. It also did not believe in the US's ability to bring lasting peace to that country. Moreover, in the context of intensifying global strategic rivalry, China was reluctant to the permanent political, economic and, above all, military presence of its main competitor in Afghanistan.

International terrorism is one of the main threats to China, alongside the hegemonic policy of the United States. Beijing consciously links it to the phenomenon of separatism threatening Xinjiang Province, as well as to the issue of unbalanced economic growth. Unlike the US, China prefers

multilateral preventive actions with the use of regional political, economic, and military organizations. These organizations take up, among others, the problem of the so-called economic terrorism aimed at restricting international trade (Lanteigne 2016, 116). In terms of organized crime, China has also increasingly felt the negative effects of the development of the Afghan drug industry. Afghanistan has become the second largest supplier of drugs to the Chinese people after Southeast Asia. The main route for smuggling Afghan drugs to China is the Karakoram Highway from Pakistani Gilgit to Chinese Kashgar and further to Urumqi - the capital of Xinjiang Province, and from there to the east coast of the country. Alternative routes pass through the territories of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. It mainly affects the sensitive province of Xinjiang. In the example of 2006, 14 perpetrators were arrested, and 65 tons of heroin were seized, and a year later 29 perpetrators and 147 tons of heroin were seized (Głogowski 2013, 267).

The PRC is actively developing political, economic and, to some extent, military cooperation with the countries of the region. The economy is the priority, and the dominant economic position is the main goal. China achieves it thanks to investment opportunities, a system of incentives, as well as readiness to cooperate with any state partner, regardless of its political system. As indicated, China wants to maintain international peace and stability so that it can sustain the development of its own export-oriented economy. For this reason, Beijing supports peace processes in the region with soft methods. It treats diplomatic solutions and economic activities as priorities. Reaching for the military factor occurs only as a last resort and in accordance with the principles of the United Nations like non-interference in the internal affairs. This *modus operandi* was also used in the PRC's approach to Afghanistan. China conducted lively political consultations with Afghanistan, as well as implemented multibillion-dollar investments in the mining sector. This was to enable China to diversify supplies of individual raw materials, and for Afghanistan to be an important development impulse. The accelerated economic development was to translate into the stabilization processes of the state. Among China's largest investments in Afghanistan were the Mes Aynak copper mine in Logar Province and the oil and natural gas fields in the Amu Darya Basin in Sar-e Pol and Faryab provinces. China has competitors in the region whose influence it is trying to limit. Apart from the aforementioned United States, this is mainly India, but also Russia, which is seemingly friendly to China.

Acting in line with the previously indicated goals and priorities, the PRC promoted a policy of national reconciliation in Afghanistan, which was key to the peace process. Beijing's motivation in this regard resulted from two

basic complexes. First, the CCP leaders believed that the Taliban could not be defeated by arms. Second, they knew that the movement could sustain itself on the Afghan political and military scene for a long time. A balanced approach to the Taliban was to protect China if they regained power. For this reason, Beijing did not try to interfere in Afghanistan's internal affairs, especially to impose systemic solutions. China's strength as an intermediary was that the parties to the conflict saw it as a relatively neutral partner. There is no historical burden on relations between China and Afghanistan. Additionally, China has a significant influence on the government of Pakistan, which is the home of the Taliban (Gajda 2015, 5). In the initial phase of the negotiations, Beijing enjoyed greater trust of the parties than the US or Russia (Gacek 2013, 101). The PRC's special envoy to Afghanistan, Sun Yuxi, met several times with Taliban representatives in Peshawar, Pakistan. Also, the Taliban delegation from Doha (Qatar), led by Qari Din Mohammad, visited China. They talked about the so-called Istanbul Process (Szcudlik-Tatar, 2014, 5), which will be discussed later. In May 2015, Chinese authorities also organized confidential talks between Afghan officials and Taliban leaders in Urumqi, Xinjiang (Curtis 2016). Even if such peace initiatives were only partially successful, they could still have an important stabilizing effect on the security of Afghanistan (Gudalov 2016, 160).

In June 2021 China introduced its inclusive 8-point Afghan Plan for national reconciliation. On July 28, 2021, in Tianjin Minister of Foreign Affairs - Wang Yi met with the Taliban delegation led by head of the Afghan Taliban political committee - Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. The Taliban assured their partner that they would not allow any actions harmful to China. After the Taliban seizure of Kabul, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying said: "We are ready to continue to develop good-neighborliness and friendly cooperation with Afghanistan and play a constructive role in Afghanistan's peace and reconstruction." She also expressed her satisfaction at the Taliban's openness to cooperation with China and the hope for building a broad political representation, counteracting terrorism, and protecting civilians (Foreign Ministry Spokesperson 2021).

## Bilateral Cooperation Between China and Afghanistan for Security

Shortly after the swearing-in of the Transitional Government of Afghanistan in January 2002, President Hamid Karzai (12.2001-09.2014) paid a visit to Beijing. A month later, China reopened its embassy in Kabul. On

December 22, 2002, China, along with other states bordering Afghanistan, signed the Kabul Declaration on Good Neighborly Relations. The signatories pledged to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of Afghanistan, support the peace process in that country, take steps to stabilize the region, fight terrorism, extremism and drug smuggling, and assist in the reconstruction of Afghanistan (Kabul Declaration 2002).

In the following years, Hamid Karzai, who was both president and head of government, visited China several times, but no return visit has taken place at such a high political level. During the meeting in Beijing on June 19, 2006, President Karzai and President Hu Jintao (03.2003-03.2013) signed the Treaty of China-Afghanistan Friendship, Cooperation and Good-neighborly Relations. Among the many aspects of the common concern, security and economic cooperation were treated as a priority. In the area of security, the parties declared cooperation to combat terrorism, separatism, organized crime, and drug smuggling (Joint Statement 2006).

On March 24, 2010, the President of Afghanistan began another three-day visit to Beijing. During it, three important agreements were signed regulating Afghan-Chinese relations, namely the Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation, the Letter of Exchange on Training Program and the Letter of Exchange on Granting Special Preferential Tariff Treatment to Certain Goods Originated in Afghanistan and Exported to China (China--Afghanistan Relations 2011).

During the meeting in Beijing on June 8, 2012, the presidents of states decided to raise the importance of bilateral relations signing the Joint Declaration on Establishing Strategic and Cooperative Partnership. President Hu made a pledge of long-term friendly cooperation with Afghanistan, contribution to the development of bilateral ties and assistance. According to him, cooperation and aid for Afghanistan were to result from common fundamental interests and translate into the strengthening of regional and world peace, stability, and development. The enhanced cooperation declared by leaders was primarily to consist in (Xinhua 2012):

- deepening political trust and maintaining close contacts at high political levels in order to develop strategic communication on key issues;
- developing of economic, trade and investment cooperation, cooperating in the implementation of joint projects, developing of the mining, energy, infrastructure and agriculture sectors;
- strengthening cooperation in the fields of education, culture, media and personnel training;
- strengthening cooperation in the field of security, mainly combating

terrorism, separatism and extremism, as well as transnational crime, including drug-related crime;

- developing of multilateral coordination and cooperation within the SCO;
- providing aid for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

During the discussed meeting of presidents in Beijing in 2012, Hamid Karzai recognized the sovereignty of the PRC over Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang Province (Sadr 2016, 65). It was both an expression of support for China's unity and Beijing's fight against all forms of separatism. President Karzai has repeatedly expressed his gratitude for China's commitment to provide stability, support, and development to Afghanistan (Karzai 2012). It is significant that shortly after the presidents' meeting, diplomatic tensions arose between the states. The reason was the reduction by China of the weekly quota of visas for Afghans to just 50, with the introduction of a requirement for an invitation from Chinese 'sponsors'. As a consequence, direct flights from Kabul to Urumqi were temporarily suspended.

On September 23, 2012, Zhou Yongkang, the Minister of Public Security and the Secretary of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, flew to Kabul for four hours, becoming the most senior Chinese leader to visit the country since 1966, when Kabul was visited by President Liao Shaoqi (04.1959-10.1968) (van der Kley 2014). During the short stay, several agreements on security and economic cooperation were signed. The Chinese minister described them as being in the mutual interest of the states to build a strategic partnership leading to peace, stability, and development in the region. He made a promise to boost support for the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), because by the end of 2011 the Chinese had trained only about 200 of its officers and donated just \$ 4 million worth of technical equipment and supplies (Zaborowski 2012, 146). Courses for the Afghan National Police (ANP) officers were carried out in the People's Armed Police (PAP) training centers and covered basic police skills, such as crowd control and riot control, conducting criminal investigations and other duties related to maintaining internal security. Instructors of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) conducted basic and advanced training for Afghan National Army (ANA) officers at the University of Nanjing (Cordesman, Hess 2014, 248).

During the visit in Beijing on September 25-28, 2013, President Karzai signed with President Xi Jinping (03.2013-...) China-Afghanistan Joint Statement on Deepening Strategic and Cooperative Partnership (2013). In July 2014 China appointed veteran diplomat Sun Yuxi as a special envoy to Afghanistan. Between October 28-31, 2014, President Ashraf Ghani (09.2014-08.2021) visited Beijing to meet President Xi. It is worth noting that this

was the first foreign visit of the newly sworn in president of Afghanistan. During the meeting, the heads of states issued the China-Afghanistan Joint Statement on Deepening Strategic and Cooperative Partnership. It confirmed the commitments made in 2012, as well as assured about activities for the development of political, economic, cultural and security cooperation. In the area of security, the parties agreed on cooperation in combating East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), a separatist organization operating in the province of Xinjiang bordering Afghanistan, cooperating with al-Qaeda and the Taliban. During the meeting, President Xi repeatedly assured China's commitment to stabilizing Afghanistan and supporting the process of national reconciliation (Gajda 2015, 3). Similar statement was signed on May 18, 2016, in Beijing by the prime ministers of both countries - Abdullah Abdullah (09.2014-03.2020) and Li Keqiang (03.2013-...) (Joint Statement 2016). In March 2020, PRC leaders congratulated on the re-election of President Ashraf Ghani and called on all parties to accelerate the reconstruction and peace process in the war-torn country.

In total, between 2002 and 2009, China provided the Afghan government with \$ 180 million in aid, and between 2010-2014 another \$ 75 million (Cordesman, Hess 2014, 247). The amount of support was low, especially considering the huge economic potential of the PRC. For comparison, in 2002-2014, the United States granted Afghanistan development aid in the amount of over \$ 107 billion (Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction 2015, 77), and China's main rival in the region - India - about \$ 2 billion (Zafar, Upadhyay 2016, 241). For several years, China was in the third ten in the rankings of Afghanistan's donors. There were several major reasons for such limited development aid of the PRC to Afghanistan during the transition period. Firstly, China was reluctant to explicitly support the actions of the American-led anti-terrorist coalition so as not to expose itself to fundamentalist forces. Secondly, the Chinese authorities first wanted to find out which groups would play a key role on the Afghan political scene after the withdrawal of NATO troops from the country (Downs 2012, 70). Thirdly, they focused on large economic investments intended to bring mutual benefits to states. In 2014, China promised additional support to the Afghan government in the amount of \$ 327 million over a four-year period, ie in 2015-2018, and in 2016 another \$ 100 million (Chia, Kalachelvam, Haiqi 2021). After the Taliban regained power in 2021, China offered \$ 31 million in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan and called on international financial institutions to continue to support the country's reconstruction (Tian 2021).

China has implemented several infrastructure and training projects in Afghanistan. The flagships included the construction of the Kabul State



Hospital, the renovation of existing hospitals in Kabul and Kandahar, the implementation of irrigation projects in the Parwan province, the construction of a multifunctional conference hall in Kabul's presidential palace and the expansion of the University of Kabul. In addition, a small group of Afghan officials and technical staff were trained in China, next to the aforementioned officers (Zhao 2012, 6).

## **China's Cooperation with External Actors for the Security of Afghanistan**

To achieve the strategic goal of building a stable and predictable security environment in its neighborhood, China is undertaking several initiatives of multilateral and bilateral cooperation (Kizekova 2016, 142). The best solution for the PRC could be the identification, together with other global and regional powers, of areas of common threats and possible spaces for cooperation. The cooperation of the great powers in Afghanistan was to consist in the use of various tools and advantages to counteract security problems (Hoyt 2016, 119). However, it was very difficult for these powers to negotiate a consensus on this matter, due to the diversified interests and increasing rivalry, both in the economic, political, and military areas (Qassem 2009, 157).

As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, the PRC considers this entity to be key in deciding on the approach of the international community to the issue of Afghanistan's security. For this reason, China is actively involved in the work on the subject resolutions of this institution. Moreover, on the forum of other UN bodies, Beijing stands for a sovereign, independent Afghanistan that decides on its own future, is stable and free from terrorism.

For the PRC, the issue of Afghanistan's security is important in the context of regional cooperation structures and consultation channels. In 1996, when the Taliban took power in Afghanistan the so-called The Shanghai Five, including China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan was created. One of the most important reasons for its appointment was the threat posed by the Islamist regime of Afghanistan. In the following years, these countries expressed in joint statements their deep concern about the situation in Afghanistan, including in particular Taliban support for al-Qaeda. On June 15, 2001, at the summit in Shanghai, the cooperation of the countries was institutionalized through the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The organization was also joined by the neighboring countries of Afghanistan - Uzbekistan (2001), Pakistan (2017), and India



(2017).

Several security conventions have been developed within the SCO. At the inaugural summit in 2001, member states signed the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism (Shanghai Convention 2001), which formally entered into force on March 29, 2003. In the following year, on June 17, 2004, a permanent SCO body called Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) was established in Tashkent. It focuses on combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism. Mainly it acts as a platform for the exchange of information between SCO members on organizations and persons involved in terrorism. Even turning the SCO into a military alliance was considered. However, it became much less likely when conflicted India and Pakistan gained full membership. It is worth noting that these countries, apart from the PRC, have the greatest influence on the situation in Afghanistan among Asian countries.

The SCO pursued a policy towards Afghanistan different from NATO. It did not engage militarily, but concentrated on diplomatic, economic, and humanitarian activities, which were to boost the peace process. Moreover, it underlined the leading role of the United Nations in Afghanistan in each area of action. SCO members are in favor of a terrorist-free, neutral Afghanistan, the people of which can choose their own regime, and which maintains proper relations with its neighbors. In 2006, the SCO established a special contact group which consulted with Afghanistan's authorities' security and development issues. In March 2009 the SCO Special Conference on Afghanistan was held in Moscow, where issued the SCO-Afghanistan Action Plan which called for joint operations in combating terrorism and organized crime, including drug trafficking (Jurełczyk, Nicharapova 2020, 168). At the SCO summit in Beijing on June 6, 2012, Afghanistan was granted the observer status in the organization. Full membership in the SCO was to be possible after the stabilization of the country. The progressive destabilization of Afghanistan meant that the SCO countries took more and more active measures to strengthen Afghan security forces and counteract terrorism and drug smuggling from that country (Zhao 2012, 11). Officially, the members of SCO distanced themselves from the possibility of sending military contingents to Afghanistan, but unofficially they had to be ready for such a scenario as well. SCO aspires to become a key security organization in the region due to its political, economic, and military potential (Arduino 2017, 133). One of the manifestations of cooperation between SCO members in the field of security is the organization of increasingly larger joint military exercises, preparing partners to conduct joint peacekeeping missions. This does not change the fact that for China, tightening economic cooperation in the region is of key

importance within the SCO.

In October 2007, in Dushanbe, the SCO signed an agreement with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) established on the initiative of Russia<sup>2</sup>. It concerned cooperation in the field of security, combating terrorism, crime, and illegal drug trafficking. Within these areas of cooperation, Afghanistan is of particular interest as it is the main exporter of instability in the region. The main axis of cooperation within the SCO and between SCO and CSTO is, in turn, the relations of the great powers - China and Russia. The security vacuum that emerged after ISAF's withdrawal from Afghanistan forced its neighbors to intensify regional cooperation to ensure the security of state borders and protection against international terrorism. Nevertheless, neither the SCO nor the CSTO were able to fill this vacuum (Arduino 2017, 219).

The PRC is also involved in other forms of multilateral cooperation for the security of Afghanistan. On November 2, 2011, a regional forum for the security of Afghanistan called the Heart of Asia was established. Due to the place of the founding meeting, it is commonly known as the Istanbul Process. Formally, the Heart of Asia is an intergovernmental organization at the ministerial level, which includes 14 states of the continent<sup>3</sup>. It is based on three pillars, namely political consultation, confidence-building measures and cooperation with regional organizations (Heart of Asia). This organization primarily tries to achieve national reconciliation between the Afghans. However, the issues discussed during the meetings are very diverse and include, among others, extremism and terrorism, drug smuggling, migration, poverty, development cooperation and others. The ministers of the member states of the Istanbul Process hold talks at annual meetings, the fourth of which took place on October 21, 2014, in Beijing.

The PRC also participates in the Quadrilateral Coordination Group, which includes representatives of the United States, China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. The group met for the first time in June 2015. Talks in this configuration faced numerous barriers. The main factor was the reluctance of the Taliban to engage in talks. Moreover, there were serious animosities between the representatives of Kabul and Islamabad. Relations between the states are burdened by, among other things, many years of territorial dispute and the Pakistani Pashtun's efforts to gain independence. There were also

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<sup>2</sup> Apart from Russia, CSTO members are Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

<sup>3</sup> The participants in the Istanbul Process are Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and the United Arab Emirates.

additional problems, including accusations by Pakistan against Afghanistan of not acting to contain Taliban attacks from its territory (Wong, Jolly 2016). There is also mutual distrust between China and the United States due to multiple conflicting regional and global interests. It is worth emphasizing, however, that as part of the initiative, Beijing has formally decided for the first time to cooperate with Washington for the security of Afghanistan. Previously, the PRC avoided any cooperation with the US in this regard, so as not to antagonize Islamic extremist groups. China and Pakistan present much closer positions, but there are also various misunderstandings between them (Putz 2017).

The CCP leadership realizes that Pakistan is the key to a more important role for the PRC in South Asia. Its leaders also know that the country and the organizations located on its territory have a particular impact on the situation in Afghanistan. For this reason, the tripartite China-Afghanistan-Pakistan dialogue initiative has been operating since 2012. Islamabad put pressure on Kabul to rely more on Beijing during the US withdrawal from Afghanistan (Crane, Greenfield 2014, 308). However, the authorities in Kabul were indignant that Islamabad, with Beijing's backing, was trying to interfere excessively in its internal affairs (Wong, Jolly 2016). In 2011, the Pakistani authorities asked the PRC to take over the role of the US in Afghanistan and to provide significant support also for themselves, so that they could become independent of American aid (Cordesman, Hess 2014, 253). However, relations between China and Pakistan are complicated. Along with the rise in economic involvement in Afghanistan, China tried to use Pakistan to stabilize the country (Lanteigne 2016, 205). Beijing hoped for Islamabad to implement its guidelines on Afghanistan, but there were a number of obstacles in the way. One of them is the lack of control by the Pakistani authorities over domestic extremist groups (Gartenstein-Ross, Trombly, Barr, 2014, 15). This is particularly problematic for China, as Uyghur fighters are trained in Pakistan and enter China both via Pakistan and via Afghanistan. China has tried to convince Afghanistan and Pakistan to seek common security interests, particularly in defense against the threat of illegal fighters (Ali 2015, 18).

The PRC also initiated bilateral cooperation on Afghanistan with India - its main competitor from South Asia. Beijing was unfavorable towards the tightening strategic cooperation between Afghanistan and India. This was due to both the serious tensions in political relations between China and India, and the economic rivalry in Afghanistan. China and India entered the dialogue on Afghanistan for the first time in April 2013. The parties involved in the talks diplomatically described it as constructive and fruitful

(Zafar, Upadhyay 2016, 241). Kabul saw China as a more important partner than India (Gajda 2015, 2). Nevertheless, large investments, relatively high development aid, and supplies of military equipment from India were of great importance for Afghanistan (Miglani 2016). Indo-Afghan cooperation raised even more serious anxiety in Pakistan, a friend of China. Islamabad feared that the country's growing ties could weaken its position in the conflict with India over Kashmir. Indo-Afghan relations exacerbated tensions in Afghan-Pakistani relations. First of all, Afghanistan accused Pakistan of blocking the transit of goods imported and exported to India through its territory (Wong, Jolly 2016). For these reasons, China finds itself in a delicate position when talking to India about the security of Afghanistan.

The PRC also participates in other configurations of cooperation with Asian countries, in which it undertakes talks for the stabilization of Afghanistan and, more broadly, South Asia and Central Asia. Among such initiatives, it is worth mentioning the cooperation in the China-India-Russia triangle. In January 2014, a meeting of representatives of these countries was held in Beijing. China also participates in consultations in a tripartite format with Russia and Pakistan. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to build the New Silk Road from China to Europe, presented by President Xi in September 2013, was also aimed at stabilizing these parts of Asia. One of the important consequences of this initiative is to strengthen the economic cooperation of Asian countries by developing a communication network. China's generous capital offer (the total cost of the project may reach up to \$ 100 billion) is to contribute to increasing the stability of the countries in the region, including by intensifying their efforts to combat extremism and terrorism to ensure the security of the project. This, in turn, could translate into greater pressure from these countries on Afghanistan.

The above configurations show that the PRC is ready for consultations and cooperation with all countries that have an impact on the situation in Afghanistan. This also applies to countries with which it has different or even conflicting interests (Szcudlik-Tatar 2014, 5-6). However, this does not automatically mean that China is an unequivocally constructive actor in the region. It should be emphasized that it undertakes these initiatives primarily in order to protect its own interests. One of the motives behind Beijing's building such diverse cooperation platforms is to try to prevent regional integration that would disregard or be directed against its interests. An example of such cooperation, which is unfavorable for China, is the tightening strategic triangle on the US-India-East Asia line. Beijing is aware that Washington's initiative is aimed at balancing the growth of China's power in Asia (Ali 2015, 122).

## Final Remarks

As China's power grows, so does the scope of its interests. Afghanistan is located at the crossroads of Central Asia and South Asia strategically important to China. Due to its geographic proximity, the destabilization of these regions may have far more serious consequences for China than for the remote United States. Unlike the US and NATO, however, China has not decided to send its armed forces to Afghanistan. It promotes security in Afghanistan using soft methods, and its main motive is its own security and development. Beijing assumed that the acceleration of development and economic cooperation with Afghanistan was to be translated into the stabilization of its security. Afghanistan has significant deposits of natural resources that potentially give the PRC an opportunity to diversify its supplies. For this reason, China made investments aimed at the extraction of Afghan raw materials, with minimal efforts to maintain security of the country. The PRC has been developing economic cooperation with Afghanistan, based on a model previously tested in Africa and Latin America. It assumes gaining political influence through economic cooperation, including investment, while abstaining from interfering in internal affairs. Within the model, internal stability and economic prosperity are much more important than civil liberties. Apart from significant capital investment in the mining sector in Afghanistan, however, China's contribution to its development has been limited. This shows a relatively low level of aid funds provided, as well as implemented infrastructure projects.

Beijing hoped for the success of the so-called The Kabul Process, i.e., the effective takeover from NATO by the Afghan government of full responsibility for administering and maintaining security in the country. The hopes of the international community for China to take over a more serious part of the political and military responsibility for the security of Afghanistan were, however, an illusion. Beijing did not want to be identified with the NATO mission in Afghanistan and to save the West from Afghan fire. The Kabul Process has proved ineffective for a number of reasons. Partly because the ANSF were not adequately prepared to protect citizens. Therefore, the PRC also joined the process of their training, albeit to a limited extent.

Beijing had been conducting an intensified, mainly multilateral, political dialogue for the security of Afghanistan, but without visible successes. The regaining of power by the Taliban completely changed the circumstances of China's cooperation with Afghanistan. The possibility of implementing investments in the mining sector and commercial cooperation are questioned. More importantly, the implementation of the flagship BRI project has been

put at risk, as it is to pass in the vicinity of Afghanistan, including through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), in which China have invested about \$ 60 billion and through the countries of Central Asia. China is equally concerned about the possible increase in the power of extremist and terrorist groups in the region.

After the Taliban regained power in Afghanistan, China needs to play a more active role in the region to protect its economic interests. It cannot be ruled out that in the distant future, powers such as China and India, and perhaps even Russia, will play a key international role in the security, stability, and development of Afghanistan. However, it can be assumed that China will continue to avoid military involvement, including in the form of anti-terrorist operations against Uyghur separatists hiding in that country. However, Beijing will act decisively to prevent terrorists from al-Qaeda, ISIS, ETIM, and other organizations from entering Chinese territory from Afghanistan.

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the paper is to present and evaluate the involvement of the People's Republic of China in stabilizing the security of Afghanistan during the democratic transition. China's efforts to secure Afghanistan were very limited as it did not want to support the US position in the country and antagonize extremist groupings. Its relations with Afghanistan were focused on economic issues, which resulted from its own goals and interests. China hoped that the intensified investments and trade, and thus economic growth, would positively translate into the stability and security of Afghanistan.

## KEYWORDS

Afghanistan; People's Republic of China; Security; Stability.

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# THE SULTANATE OF OMAN'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THE YEMENI CRISIS: PILLARS AND LIMITATIONS

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## Introduction

Since the outbreak of the Yemeni war in 2015, the Sultanate of Oman has been keen to adhere to a policy of neutrality and has refrained from the option of engaging in any military action, convinced of the futility of this option and its inability to resolve and change the reality on the ground. Instead, the Omani conviction was directed towards the option of dialogue and activating channels of negotiation and diplomatic communication, which is what the Sultanate has devoted its policy in Yemen towards, and it has tended to play the role of mediator between the conflicting parties.

With the escalation of the war in Yemen, the Sultanate of Oman adhered to its neutral position with its quest for positive neutrality by activating and exercising the role of mediation, a role that came in line with the premises and principles of its foreign policy, and for which it had several qualifications. However, other factors, such as the nature of the crisis and conflict in Yemen, and the continued hardening of positions, remained an obstacle to the development of mediation and reaching the stage of a comprehensive settlement.

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## Research Questions

1. What is the role of the Sultanate of Oman in the Yemeni crisis?;
2. What are the most important factors that help the Sultanate play the role it plays in the Yemeni crisis?;
3. What are the main obstacles and limitations that prevent the Sultanate from completing the role it plays in the Yemeni crisis?

## Research Problem

The problem of the research lies in the difference between the foreign policy of the Sultanate of Oman towards the crisis in Yemen and the policies of other regional countries, especially the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, and in the fact that the Sultanate had a policy and an important role in the Yemeni crisis, despite not being involved in the crisis by supporting one of its local parties.

## Research Objectives

This research aims to:

1. Defining the role played by the Sultanate of Oman in the Yemeni crisis;
2. Identify the most important factors that help the Sultanate to play the role it plays in the Yemeni crisis;
3. Reaching the most prominent obstacles and limitations that prevent the Sultanate from completing the role it plays in the Yemeni crisis.

## Hypothesis

The study started from the hypothesis that there is an effective and important role played by the Sultanate of Oman in the Yemeni crisis, which is exercised through the positions and foreign policy decisions that it has committed towards the crisis in its neighbor Yemen, specifically since the

outbreak of the war in 2015.

## Research Importance

The importance of the study stems from the fact that it deals with a unique model of foreign policy behavior in the Arab region and the Middle East, which is to refrain from getting involved in conflicts and to play the role of mediation instead, in a region raging with conflicts. It is an important model for studying the background and process of external political decision-making and the response to contemporary crises, especially in the Middle East, so this research can provide an analytical model that enhances the possibility of developing and disseminating such a response in the region, to serve the goals of achieving stability in the region.

## Time and Place

- Time: From the outbreak of war in Yemen in March of 2015, until the date of preparing this study in June of 2021.
- Place: Republic of Yemen, and the Sultanate of Oman.

## Methodology

This research relied on two approaches:

- Decision-Making Approach  
The approach is based on considering that there is a category of the ruling class in the state, which is granted the customary and legal authorization to exercise the role of making foreign policy decisions, as this category takes decisions according to what it deems to achieve the interests and goals of the state, on behalf of the rest of the people (Al-Fadl 2013, 17).
- Descriptive-Analytical Approach  
The approach is based on the description of the studied phenomena and observations from the start, so this description is objective and far from impressions. And then the transition to the stage

of analysis, which includes the steps of deconstruction, synthesis, classification, and evaluation, up to the conclusion of the results and generalizations based on the total induction (Saltaniya and Al-Jilani 2012, 132).

## The Sultanate's Priorities in Yemen

The Sultanate of Oman is directly affected by the developments of the situation in Yemen due to the geographical contact with Yemen, as the two countries share borders extending for a length of 288 km, which means for the Sultanate that the crisis in Yemen is related to its security. The possibility of the spread of extremist organizations poses a danger and a direct threat to the Sultanate, which consequently reinforces the Sultanate's efforts and stresses the need to reach a solution and a final settlement that restores stability to Yemen (Al-Barhawi 2018, 137).

The Sultanate's security concerns have increased with the increase in the activity of "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula" in southern Yemen since its founding in 2009. Especially after the organization managed in January 2016 to control the city of Mukalla, the capital of Hadhramaut Governorate, when the Sultanate quickly closed its border crossings with Yemen (Mazoz 2018, 4).

The Sultanate is interested in reaching a peaceful settlement of the crisis in Yemen due to economic motives as well, as the volume of trade exchange between it and Yemen reached in 2010 (38) billion and (124) million Yemeni riyals, and the balance was likely for the Sultanate, as the value of imports amounted to Yemen, including: (34) billion and (796) million Yemeni riyals (Saudi News Agency 2020).

After the outbreak of the war in Yemen, the trade exchange between the two countries was interrupted, and limited commercial operations remained at the level of Al-Mahra Governorate in eastern Yemen with the Sultanate, and therefore the Sultanate is firmly convinced of the need to return stability to Yemen in order to enhance the levels of trade exchange again, especially that the Sultanate is strengthening from its economic plans to diversify its sources of income.

In addition, the Sultanate of Oman is affected by the location of Yemen, which overlooks important waterways, from the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden to the Bab al-Mandab Strait, which are important corridors for the movement of oil and global trade, which means that the continuation of tensions in Yemen leads to more threats to navigation through these



corridors, and thus the potential for direct impacts on the Omani economy. As the Omani economy's largest dependence is still on oil, according to the data, oil exports constitute 50% of the Omani GDP (Al-Amri 2021, 17).

## **The Evolution of the Omani Position on the Yemeni Nrrisis**

### **Impartiality**

On March 25, 2015, military operations led by Saudi Arabia began in Yemen, with the participation of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, with the exception of the Sultanate of Oman. The Sultanate chose not to participate in the operations from the beginning, given what it saw in the war as a costly armed conflict at all levels, and with an appreciation of its futility and its inability to decisively change the course on the ground (Hizam 2017, 65).

The Sultanate of Oman had several motives in the decision to remain neutral and not get involved in the armed conflict, the most important of which is the relations and interests it maintains with its eastern neighbor, Iran, which was considered one of the influential parties and presence in the crisis, through its support for its allies Ansar Allah group (Houthis). The Sultanate maintains relations and balances with Iran, which is due to several factors, the most important of which are related to considerations of neighborhood, supervision and joint management of the two countries for the strategic Strait of Hormuz (Jargon 2016, 150).

In addition, the constants and principles of Omani foreign policy for nearly four decades emphasize adherence to the principles of non-armed intervention and the preference for dialogue and peaceful solutions, through diplomatic channels and methods. In addition, the Sultanate did not find sufficient justifications for entering into the military alliance. From the Omani perspective, none of the Gulf states was directly threatened - at that time - that required the establishment of this alliance. It did not find in the Yemeni war a similar model, for example, to what Kuwait was subjected to from the Iraqi invasion in 1990, while the Sultanate's assessments of the crisis came as a civil conflict governed by regional conflicts, in which the Sultanate prefers to distance itself from involvement.

### **Mediator Role**

As the war raged in Yemen, the Sultanate of Oman began taking

steps to calm the raging conflict, including activating a humanitarian role in granting Yemenis transit visas through its lands, opening its doors to hundreds of injured and wounded, and helping Yemenis reach other countries through its lands and airspace. Because of this, the Sultanate began to gain credit and acceptance among increasing segments of Yemenis, regardless of their orientations and positions, which enabled it to have more elements to play a mediating role to end the war in Yemen. This was reinforced by considering that Oman does not have ambitions in Yemen or interests and positions that favor one party at the expense of the other, but rather seeks first to maintain stability in Yemen (Day and Brehony 2020, 175).

In May 2015, while the United Nations envoy to Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, was holding talks between the parties to the conflict in Yemen to pave the way for the Geneva talks, negotiations had begun in the Omani capital, Muscat, between the Houthis and the US side, at the beginning of international efforts to implement the Security Council Resolution No. (2216), issued on April 14, 2015, which stipulated the withdrawal of the Houthis from Sana'a and the cities they seized in 2014 (Atef 2019, 2).

After the Houthi delegation returned from the Geneva conference, it headed directly to the Omani capital, Muscat, to resume the talks, and there it met the former Omani Foreign Minister, Yousef bin Alawi, and discussed the reasons for the failure of the Geneva negotiations, and ways to stop the armed conflict. Since then, the role of Omani mediation has begun to emerge, as it seeks to bring the Yemeni parties closer in order to reach a final political solution to the crisis and spare the country the cost of continuing the fighting (Atef 2019, 3).

With the realization that the military campaign launched by the Arab coalition in Yemen has stalled, and its inability to achieve tangible results on the ground, as well as impeding efforts to progress on the path of a political solution, the Saudi position began to change, with the emergence of Saudi keenness to maintain a channel of communication with the Houthis. The Saudi side found an opportunity in the relations established by the Sultanate of Oman with the Houthis, and this new trend was quickly embodied by Muscat hosting secret negotiations between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis in March of 2016. Thus, the Omani role in mediation began to gain more importance, and talks began to be repeated. hosted by Muscat (Albasoos and Maashani 2020, 159).

In November 2016, Muscat hosted for the second time meetings between US and Houthi officials. The US delegation was led by former US Secretary of State, John Kerry. In February 2018, Muscat hosted a meeting that brought together representatives of the Houthis and US officials, which is the

third meeting between the two parties in Muscat, thus turning the Omani capital into a major center for meetings between the parties to the Yemeni conflict on the one hand and international envoys on the other (Albasoos and Maashani 2020, 160).

After the signing of the Stockholm Agreement in December 2018, which stipulated a halt to the fighting in the city of Al-Hodeidah, in addition to the entry of humanitarian aid through its port, and a call for the lifting of the Houthi siege on the city of Taiz. Then, with the outcome of the agreement not being implemented, in March 2019 Muscat hosted a meeting between the British Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, with prominent Houthi leaders, to discuss the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement, in a British effort to support the efforts of the British international envoy, Martin Griffiths, to advance peace efforts in Yemen (Day and Brehony 2020, 176).

During the year 2020, the UN envoy, Martin Griffiths, intensified his visits and contacts with Omani officials. On October 25, 2020, Griffiths met with Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi, with the aim of discussing the ongoing negotiations on the joint declaration to support the political process in Yemen. This coincided with the Sultanate playing an active role, in mid-October 2020, represented in the success in obtaining the release of two American citizens who were held by the Houthis, and returning the body of an American citizen to the United States after his death in captivity, in return for the return of about two hundred wounded Houthis who were stranded in Oman (Al Sunaidi 2021, 67).

In 2021, with the arrival of a new US administration led by Democratic US President Joe Biden, and his statements about the necessity of stopping the war in Yemen and preventing arms sales to the Arab coalition countries. In March 2021, Saudi Arabia presented a proposal for a ceasefire, coinciding with the holding of a direct meeting between US envoys and a Houthi delegation in the Omani capital, Muscat, which gave a new impetus to the efforts of the talks sponsored and hosted by the Sultanate, despite the continued stumble of talks in reaching a final settlement formula. Because of the unwillingness of each party to concede to the other, the Houthis continued to insist on the need to lift the naval and air blockade of Yemen, while the Saudi side feared that such a step would lead to strengthening the Houthis' position and supporting them with more weapons and equipment from the Iranians (France 24, 2021).

On March 30, 2021, the Sultanate announced that it was working, in partnership with Saudi Arabia, to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Yemeni crisis, as Saudi Arabia had begun to show greater flexibility in the settlement path, which came as a result of its unwillingness to bet much on the steadfastness of the legitimate forces on the Marib front, especially after

the escalation of Houthi attacks targeting the city, with the realization that the defeat in Marib is a breaking of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. This is in addition to the impact of the Houthi strikes on the Saudi depth, and Saudi Arabia's inability to offer Aramco shares for sale due to the Houthi bombing of its facilities.

With these shifts in the level of positions, Muscat has turned into a hub for intense visits by the US and Saudi officials with the Houthis, including a visit by Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan to Oman on May 2, 2021, as well as the visit of the US envoy to Yemen, Timothy Lenderking, and UN envoy Martin Griffiths (Emirates Policy Center 2021, 3).

The talks attempted to separate the humanitarian track from the political one. They focused on ensuring regular and unhindered humanitarian access to all parts of Yemen, including the opening of Sana'a airport and the port of Hodeidah, in addition to supporting a permanent ceasefire, preparing for the parties' transition to political negotiations, and providing guarantees regarding compensation, and reconstruction (Emirates Policy Center 2021, 4).

While the Houthi side focused on the necessity of a comprehensive ceasefire and the unconditional reopening of Sanaa's airport and Hodeidah's port, on the other hand, the Yemeni government and the Saudi-led coalition reject the Houthi condition, considering that lifting the ban on Sanaa airport and Hodeidah's port will allow the flow of weapons from Iran to the Houthis, with Saudi Arabia intensifying its demand that the Houthis first commit to stopping the attack on Marib. As a result of this hardening on both sides, in June 2021, the talks were again declared a failure.

Thus, we find that since the outbreak of the war, the Sultanate of Oman has played a key facilitating role to support dialogue efforts and activate channels of communication by committing to playing the mediator role and providing support for confidence-building measures, and bringing different viewpoints together, in order to serve the purpose of reaching a comprehensive agreement that achieves peace and stability in Yemen.

The Sultanate has enabled it to play this role by maintaining relations with the various parties to the crisis, including the Houthis, in addition to its good relations with Iran, which enabled it to maintain a middle position that allowed it to embrace the political process to contribute to settling the crisis.

Because of the blockade imposed on Sanaa's airport, flights through Oman became the only outlet for the Houthis, and Muscat became the only destination for negotiators from various parties to meet with representatives of the Houthi side. The Sultanate of Oman has succeeded in reaching

agreements that contributed to mitigating the crisis, as well as in releasing many detainees held by the Houthis, in addition to the humanitarian role of treating the wounded, in addition to supporting the United Nations efforts to a ceasefire in Hodeidah (Stockholm Agreement), by hosting parallel dialogue sessions.

## **Pillars and Limitations of the Omani Role in Yemen**

### **The Trust in the Omani Role**

The retreat of the option of military settlement by the Saudi-UAE alliance was a major factor behind the rise of the Omani mediation and the increased reliance on its role in reaching a final settlement of the Yemeni crisis, a role that came at the request of the United States and Saudi Arabia, and the welcome and confidence of the Houthis, who maintained confidence in the Omani mediator. This enabled the Sultanate to gain Yemeni, regional and international consensus to play this role, especially with the continued failure of the international negotiations and the faltering of its efforts to reach a settlement.

Given that Oman has maintained normal relations with the Houthis since the start of the war, and does not mind the Houthis becoming a legitimate political party in Yemen's post-war future, the Houthis are the main proponents of expanding the Omani role in the Yemeni crisis. The Houthis' confidence in Oman is reflected in the insistence of senior Houthi officials on the use of Omani aircraft for diplomatic purposes (Al-Maslami 2017, 2).

Oman is also seen as an effective mediator by prominent figures in the government of President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi, due to its persistent record of negotiations with the Houthis. This confidence is enhanced because the Sultanate has always considered that the Houthi takeover of Sanaa was an illegitimate act, and it must be withdrawn from it in accordance with UN Resolution 2216, in addition to the Sultanate's rejection of the plans to divide Yemen.

### **Limitations of the Omani Role**

In contrast to the Houthi support and the support of members of the government of Yemeni President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi for the mediation efforts by the Sultanate of Oman, the UAE-backed Southern Transitional

Council has been looking at the Omani role with less enthusiasm, especially in light of the Omani position supporting Yemen's unity, contrary to the demands separatist council.

The Sultanate does not show any acceptance of the independence of southern Yemen, because it fears that this will cause the establishment of a state allied with the UAE on its borders. On the nineteenth of February 2019, the former Omani Foreign Minister, Yusuf bin Alawi, admitted that the Sultanate of Oman does not agree with the UAE policy towards Yemen, because Muscat, as he put it, "does not like to fuel wars and conflicts." However, any tendency by the Sultanate to accept a form of autonomy in southern Yemen as the last solution to the crisis and the guarantor of stability may contribute to changing the position of the Council (Albasoos and Maashani 2020, 163).

Saudi Arabia and the UAE also share the Transitional Council's reservations about the mediation efforts practiced by the Sultanate of Oman, and part of the reason for their skepticism about the Omani role is due to the Sultanate's close relationship with Iran, which appeared in the allegations circulated by Saudi and Emirati media about arms transfers to the Houthis through the territories of the Sultanate of Oman.

Tensions between Oman and the Saudi-Emirati alliance limit the effectiveness of the Omani mediation role in Yemen. Given that many of the main parties in Yemen, led by the "Hadi government" and the "Southern Transitional Council", receive various forms of support from both Saudi Arabia and the UAE, while their relationship with the Sultanate remains at a much lower level, and therefore any positions adopted by Saudi Arabia or the UAE from the Sultanate limit the ability of these parties to advance in the peace negotiations mediated by the Sultanate of Oman.

## Final Remarks

The Sultanate of Oman saw the raging conflict in Yemen as an internal crisis in the first place, in which external regional parties intervened. Therefore, it preferred to maintain its middle position in the region's politics and preferred to distance itself from engaging in regional polarization and conflicts, especially with its realization that military intervention would not lead to a settlement of the conflict on the ground. It will exacerbate it and generate bad consequences on the humanitarian level, which was proven by the course of events more than six years after the start of military operations in March 2015.

The Sultanate's policy towards the crisis in Yemen was committed

to the principles and directions of Omani foreign policy that adhere to the principles of dialogue, the role of mediation, and the peaceful resolution of disputes. The Sultanate was able to play a mediating role thanks to the trust it gained from the parties in the crisis, especially from the Houthi side, which is facing a near-state of estrangement and international isolation. However, the Sultanate has limited influence on the parties of the crisis due to its lack of involvement in the conflict as a party. It doesn't support one of the parties to the local conflict in Yemen, and does not have expansionist ambitions in Yemen. Therefore, its role has been limited to embracing dialogue and managing and maintaining channels of communication, and has not reached the point of decisive intervention in the settlement process and what leads to its completion and achievement in the shortest possible time.

In light of answering the study questions, the study concluded several conclusions:

1. The Sultanate of Oman has invested its political neutrality and moderation diplomacy in order to activate channels of dialogue and diplomacy in order to end the fighting that has been going on in Yemen for more than six years, and its efforts included working to bridge the gap between the parties to the crisis. In addition, the Sultanate played a humanitarian role for the benefit of the Yemeni people, by receiving the wounded and supporting efforts to open humanitarian corridors;
2. The role of the Sultanate of Oman in the Yemeni case has emerged remarkably since 2016, after it was during 2015 just a transfer station for the Houthi party before it had a role in putting forward initiatives to end the war in Yemen, which emerged specifically with the secret negotiations hosted by Muscat between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis in March. March of the year 2016, coincided with the coalition's beginning to realize the failure to bet on the military option alone in order to settle the crisis;
3. Despite the difficulty of the Yemeni case, the Sultanate of Oman remains more qualified than others to play the role of a neutral mediator, and this is reinforced by the fact that the Sultanate is not a party to the conflict in Yemen, as is the case with other regional and international parties;
4. The Sultanate has maintained a good relationship with the parties of the conflict in Yemen, especially with the Houthis. Hence, this is for the people of the Sultanate to return to it by the Americans, the United Nations, and Saudi Arabia to ask it to play a mediating role with the Houthis;

5. The decline in the bet on the military option was a major factor in the emergence of the Omani mediation, which came with the acceptance and approval of the international and regional powers and parties, led by the United Nations, the United States of America, and Saudi Arabia, as well as the welcome of the Houthis, who maintained their confidence in the Omani mediator;
6. Despite the efforts made to mediate and push the wheel of dialogue, talk about a solution to the crisis in Yemen is still far away, which is mainly due to the lack of consensus of local and regional parties and their unwillingness to make the necessary concessions, especially in light of the transformation of the Yemeni case into a pressure card to be employed in the power struggle between regional powers;
7. Completing the factors for the success of the Omani mediation is mainly related to the parties involved in the crisis showing more flexibility, with each of them fulfilling its obligations in accordance with the understandings and agreements.

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## ABSTRACT

The study started with the question: What is the role played by the Sultanate of Oman in the Yemeni crisis? What are the most important auxiliary factors and the most prominent obstacles to performing this role? The problem of the study was the difference between the foreign policy of the Sultanate of Oman towards the crisis in Yemen and the policies of other regional countries, especially the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. The study adopted the hypothesis that the Sultanate of Oman plays an effective and important role in the Yemeni crisis, which it plays through the positions and foreign policy decisions it has committed to towards the crisis in its neighbor Yemen. The study adopted both the decision-making approach and the descriptive analytical approach. The study analyzed the priorities of the Sultanate of Oman in Yemen, the developments of the Omani position on the Yemeni crisis, and the components and determinants of the Omani role in Yemen. The study concluded a number of results, the most important of which is that the Sultanate of Oman has invested its political neutrality and moderation diplomacy in order to activate channels of dialogue and diplomacy in order to end the ongoing fighting in Yemen and that despite the difficulty of the Yemeni case, the Sultanate of Oman remains more qualified than others to play the role of a neutral mediator. This is reinforced by the fact that the Sultanate is not a party to the conflict in Yemen, as is the case with other regional and international parties.

## KEYWORDS

Yemen; Sultanate of Oman; The Yemeni Crisis; The Omani Foreign Policy.

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# MARITIME SECURITY IN THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION: A VIEW FROM THE GEOSTRATEGIC POSITION OF THE MALACCA STRAIT

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## Introduction

Maritime security has been in recent times emerged as a burning issue in the fields of international relations in general and in the Indo-Pacific region in particular. With topographical tectonics, this area includes numerous “choke points” on maritime routes that are strategically important to world trade, playing an important role in the transportation of oil, gas and cargo products from the Middle East to Australia and East Asia. Therefore, maritime security issues for the lifeline of the world economy are a matter of concern for the countries in the Indo-Pacific region, in which the important role of the sea route through the Straits of Malacca is increasingly emphasized. With a geostrategic position connecting the Andaman Sea (Indian Ocean) and the South China Sea (Pacific Ocean), the Straits of Malacca is the shortest route between the Middle East and Asia in general and Pacific Rim countries in particular. This is the location that accounts for a quarter of the world’s marine traffic annually. Energy security and trade economy of major powerful countries in the Indo-Pacific region depend heavily on the maritime security of the Straits of Malacca route. Through an analysis of the Malacca Strait’s geostrategic location, this paper elucidates the Indo-Pacific region’s importance in maritime security field in the first two decades of the twenty-

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first century.

## An Overview of the Maritime Security Situation in the Indo-Pacific Region

The twenty-first century is considered by major countries in the Asia-Pacific region as “the century of sea and ocean” and is accompanied by a fierce competition among the nations to achieve their interests in the sea regions. Nowadays, countries around the world had increased their competition for economic interests and marine resources, and previously competition was viewed as only based on military objectives, geostrategic bases, and traffic channels through the straits. The development of military power and of competitive activities for resources at sea, clearly increasingly shows the tendency to use the sea to contain the continent. Strong maritime nations then derived their strategic thinking from the sea power concept by Alfred T. Mahan which explained as following: “Control of the sea, by maritime commerce and naval supremacy, means predominant influence in the world; because, however great the wealth product of the land, nothing facilitates the necessary exchanges as does the sea” (Mahan 1897, 124).

The concept of maritime security was described by Geoffrey Till (British maritime thinker) as the “good order at the sea” (Till, Geoffrey 2009, 160), where seaborne trade which contributes to many states logistic needs have to be protected from any kind of risks and threats. To Christian Bueger, maritime security extends beyond traditional dimension (Bueger, Christian 2015, 160). Maritime security connects several issues through existing concepts of security, and is adapted to emerging temporary issues. Bueger still considers the concept of seapower, especially the naval forces as a tool for achieving national security. Seapower in maritime security also takes into account how national states operate their navies outside their territorial waters. The naval power projection of states for warfare means to secure sea lines of communication (abbreviated as SLOC), and to increase the awareness of a states’ presence in international waters as the core purpose of traditional maritime security. Protecting the SLOCs also includes search and rescue, preventing oil spills in ocean, regulation of maritime installations, and counter operations against piracy and terrorism.

To establish such cooperative security, nation states must first engage in security cooperation activities that will give them the opportunity to create inclusive relations, which eventually become the foundation for multilateral security frameworks. In terms of maritime security, security cooperation

serves as a bridge that connects maritime security understanding of one state to the others. The inclusiveness of security cooperation would enable national states to become more involved to cooperate in common areas of maritime security despite the geopolitical restraints. Chris Rahman explained that maritime security cooperation has a comprehensive approach to address the growing contemporary maritime security issues (Rahman 2009). In Indo-Pacific, for example, where maritime security issues continue to grow due to domestic political differences, maritime security cooperation offers a platform for regional states to communicate based on their commonalities to protect the regional SLOCs. However, to establish effective maritime security cooperation, it is necessary to set up the spectrum of maritime security activities which are deemed as inclusive.

The Indo-Pacific currently has an undefined scope. In the narrowest sense, it is an area that ranges from the western shore of India to the US' western shore. In a broader sense, it might be considered to spread through the Indian Ocean and the Asia-Pacific. Despite its unclear boundaries, the Indo-Pacific is considered an economic centre and a driving force for the world's economy. In this region, there are important sea lanes such as the maritime trade routes via the northern Indian Ocean and the Malacca Strait. In the Indo-Pacific, there are 9 out of the 10 busiest seaports in the world. About 60% of the world's maritime trade go through the region, of which one-third pass through the South China Sea. The Indo-Pacific is also the world's most biodiverse area. The region has about one-third of the world's shallow marine fish, about 3,000 species in comparison to no more than 1,200 in any other region (Helfman 2009, 331). The Indo-Malay-Philippines Archipelago is believed to host the maxima of the world's marine biodiversity. In the Indo-Pacific, marine-related industries, including fishery and tourism, are maintaining a large population of people.

Although the Indo-Pacific generally enjoys peace and security, it faces a number of challenges in maritime security. Firstly, it has about 40 sea-related disputes among regional countries, either disputes on sovereignty over territories at sea or sovereign rights over maritime areas. Among those disputes, some, such as those in the South China Sea or the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, are considered potential causes of a Sino-US war or even a Third World War. Secondly, piracy and armed robbery often causes the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean to be placed at the top of the list of the world's most dangerous waters. In 2018, the number of piracy and armed robbery incidents in those areas was 57 and 25 respectively, ranking only after West Africa with a total of 81 cases. Thirdly, maritime terrorism was spread through the region by Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups like Abu Sayyaf and

Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia. The SuperFerry 14 case, the bombing of a ferry in the Philippines in 2004 which killed 116 people, is considered the world's deadliest terrorist attack at sea even today (Echle, Gaens, Sarmah, and Rueppel 2020, 127). Lastly, the Indo-Pacific is also witnessing a number of new maritime security threats that are relevant for coastal communities, including sea-level rise, an increase in the frequency and severity of natural disasters, a mounting volume of marine debris, and losses of biodiversity.

The seas and oceans of the Indo-Pacific region present a number of maritime security challenges including piracy, terrorism, territorial claims, jurisdictional disputes, illegal fishing, criminal trafficking, and arguments over the Law of the Sea Convention. The differences among coastal and maritime user nations involving navigation and military operations represent some of the pressing issues affecting the region. The most urgent transnational maritime security issue in the Indian and Pacific Oceans remains the Somali pirate threat, which affects the sea from the Gulf of Aden, the waters of Somalia, the Arabian Sea, and the western part of the Indian Ocean (Weir 2010, 210).

In recent years, various countries, including the US, China, Russia, Japan, Australia, India, and the European Union (EU), have proposed their own connectivity strategies for the Indo-Pacific region and considered the maritime domain as a component of their connectivity strategies. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) places the highest priority on the maritime domain when it proposed the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, which links seaports together, as one of its two main connections between China and Europe (Kuo, L. and Kommenda, N., 2018). Besides, China is developing a "two ocean" strategy in order to expand its naval operations to reach the Indian Ocean (The State Council of the People's Republic of China 2017). Thus, the maritime strategy has increased Chinese naval presence in Indo-Pacific, especially in the Indian Ocean, in order to take a larger role in the next years.

The presence of the U.S. Navy in the region, according to the 2019 Indo-Pacific Strategy Report, "secures the vital sea lanes of the Indo-Pacific that underpin global commerce and prosperity" (The US Department of Defense 2019). The U.S., therefore, tries to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific through promoting linkages in economics, governance, and security. Through the United States Pacific Command (PACOM) stationed in Hawaii and military bases in Australia, Japan, ROK, Guam, and Diego Garcia in Indian Ocean, the U.S. has maintained its presence in the region (USPACOM 2016). The U.S. alliance agreement with Japan, Australia, ROK, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines remain as the foundation of strategic actions in Indo-Pacific. Engagement with India as an emerging power has also

strengthened US presence, especially in observing the Indian Ocean (Mishra, V. 2016, 165). The holistic regional approach is deemed as pre-condition for preserving American dominance in the Indo-Pacific.

Japan also has its own “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” initiative, which stresses the importance of linking the Indian Ocean with the Pacific Ocean. This initiative aims to promote a rules-based order; freedom of navigation; free trade; economic prosperity; and commitment to peace and stability (Government of Japan 2019).

As a continental power and occupying a central strategic position in the Indian Ocean, India has become a prominent actor in Indo-Pacific region. India’s ‘Look East’ policy which was introduced in 1990s has expanded India’s strategic engagement to the Southeast and East Asian countries. Over the years, India’s engagement in the region transcended from economic relations to security. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s “Act East” policy has strengthened India’s approach in Indo-Pacific, in which the “Act East” will increase India’s involvement through strategic partnerships. The “Act East” policy also reassures India’s commitment to protect the SLOCs of Indian Ocean for every littoral state to use. Moreover, India has its own vision of the Indo-Pacific, in which it wants to promote peace and stability through equal access to the sea and air, freedom of navigation, combating maritime crimes, protecting the marine environment and developing the blue economy (Government of India - Ministry of External Affairs 2018).

Australia also places high priority on maritime security, especially in the Indo-Pacific region. Australia pledges to invest in maritime security capacity-building, regional maritime domain awareness, protection of the marine environment and international law, and freedom of navigation and overflight. Russia focuses on inland connectivity in its Greater Eurasia initiative. However, Russia also understands that its initiative is actually aiming “Toward the Great Ocean” to use it to link Russia with the Greater Eurasia, a vast area of land from Europe to East Asia (The Valdai Club 2017). The European Union also proposes to use its “Connecting Europe and Asia” strategy to link Europe with Asia via transport, energy, digital connections, and human-dimension networks. Maritime connections are important because 70% of the trade value between Europe and Asia goes by sea (European Commission 2018, 3).

About the issue of maritime disputes, there are several maritime areas which have been contested, mostly across the Indo-Pacific, namely the East China Sea, South China Sea, and the Indian Ocean. Although there have never been any direct military conflict in those areas, they are sources of rising security risks in the region. The contestation of those areas is caused

mainly by the different security needs of regional countries. Moreover, those areas hold significant geostrategic importance, thus the disputes have been a complex matter in Indo-Pacific maritime security.

About the issue of non-traditional maritime threats, the most common threat is piracy. Piracy used to be a major threat in the Strait of Malacca, however multilateral engagement has been successful in eliminating the danger. Then starting in 2005, Somali pirates began roaming the Indian Ocean with modern equipment which enable them to operate in the range of 1,500 nautical miles from Somali coastline. Moreover, the Somali pirates are also linked to terrorist organization such as Al-Qaeda and Al Shabab. Maritime terrorism began to be taken as serious threats after the “26/11 Mumbai attacks” which killed 160 people. Maritime terrorists had evolved from using the ship lines as supply chains to conduct terror attacks towards ships and vessels to send political messages. Philippines-based terror group, Abu Sayyaf which pledged allegiance to ISIS, has been conducting strikes to cargo ships in the Sulu Sea and abducting hostages. Although piracy and maritime terrorism aim different targets - the former is economic-driven, while the latter is more political - they have a common interest, which is to ensure weak states remain corrupt and vulnerable. Human smuggling and drug trafficking are also common transnational crimes found in the Indo-Pacific. Drugs produced in Afghanistan, India, and Indonesia are distributed by sea to other countries through illegal markets. Moreover hundreds of percent profit margins are often used to fund other illegal activities such as terrorism and piracy. A stronger link between the transnational crimes, piracy, and terrorism has advanced the complexity of non-traditional maritime threats in the Indo-Pacific. Plus, drug trafficking and human smuggling are not dealt efficiently due to the lack of countermeasures by the coast guard or port security facility. Seaborne economic activities, such as oil transfer and offshore drillings, fishing, and cruise ship movements have the potential to damage the surrounding marine environment. Major oil spills to the sea had affected the sea ecology and eventually had killed many marine species. Illegal fishing that often use explosives and cruise ships are prone to endanger the coral reefs that harbor marine biodiversity. While the damage is threatening to marine ecology, such sea accidents may also disturb SLOCs, and thus should be considered as common maritime threats, especially in the busy waterway of the Indo-Pacific.

As maritime security in the Indo-Pacific had evolved in complexity in the early decades of the twenty-first century, the role of “choke points” in this region had become even more important, such as the Strait of Malacca, which connects the Indian with the Pacific Ocean.



## The Geostrategic Position of the Malacca Strait in Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific Region

World trade, including especially a big part of the world's energy resources, has to pass certain "choke points" between areas of production and their final destination. One of these "choke points" is the Straits of Malacca. Currently, for maritime security in the Indo-Pacific, the position of the Strait of Malacca holds utmost geostrategic importance. From the 12th and 13th centuries, the regional and international trading activities were expanding. The global world trade model in this period included three interlocking systems: a European subsystem with Genoa and Venice as commercial centres; a Middle Eastern network incorporating routes in and out of Mongol Asia using the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea; and the Indian Ocean - East Asia system, incorporating Southeast Asia and the China - India networks. Venice and Genoa owed their wealth to their roles as intermediaries between Asian goods and European markets. The sea route for any of the cargoes from Eastern Indonesia, Java and from China, Indochina and Borneo, lay through Malacca Strait of the Malay Peninsula (Hooker 2003, 59-60). Historically, the Strait of Malacca has become the new center of the Southeast Asian maritime network as well as it had played an important role in the formation of mighty maritime empires such as Srivijaya and the Islamic kingdom of Malacca. During its heyday, Malacca dominated the entire Malacca Strait and the Malaya peninsula, "at least from Kedah in the north (west coast) to Ligor (east coast), former territories of Srivijaya" (Ginsburg and Roberts 1985, 26).

Since the 7th century, the Strait of Malacca has achieved an important position on the South China Sea trading system, linking the regional economy with the world. The Strait of Malacca was once under the control of the Arab states, the Netherlands, Portugal and the UK. In the mid-19th century, it was a haven for pirates whose aim was to target British and Dutch merchant ships. Until now, the narrow straits, shallow reefs, thousands of small islands and the dense passage of hundreds of commercial ships every day made this sea more than just a pirate's dream but also of a terrorist. It can be said that Malacca has actually held an important role in the regional trading system in particular and the international trading system in general. The Malacca Strait has advantages because it is convenient in traffic, located close to the spices area, and the precious goods that international traders need, and also it is the main, multi-route, easy road to connect India, West Asia with China and Southeast Asia. Around the strait are located rich islands and archipelagos with rich food and fresh water. The strait serves as an interchange station for long-distance trade and does not have a shallow area that causes large ships to

run aground. Those bright spots brought a prosperous Malacca and the most brilliant development in the history of East-West trade.

In terms of its geographical position, the Strait of Malacca is located between Sumatra (Indonesia) and the Malay Peninsula (West Malaysia), connecting the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Geopolitically, the Strait of Malacca falls under a number of different territorial and maritime jurisdictions. The International Hydrographic Organization has defined the Strait of Malacca as the following:

- On the west: From the northernmost point of Sumatra (Pedropunt) and Lem Voalan on the southern extremity of Phuket Island, Thailand;
- On the east: From TanjongPiai on the Malaysian Peninsula and Klein Karimoen, Indonesia;
- On the north: The southwestern coast of the Malay Peninsula;
- On the south: The northwestern coast of Sumatra to the eastward city of Tanjung Kedabu to Klein Karimoen, Indonesia.

With a length of 800km, Malacca curves unevenly, the widest place is 38km and the narrowest is only about 1.5 nautical miles (2.8 km) wide, which is the Phillips Channel in the Singapore Strait. It is one of the world's most significant traffic bottleneck. This place is part of the busiest stretches of water in the world and is significant for the international maritime trade system. The Strait of Malacca has a very favorable geographic position since it is situated in an extremely important traffic route, transporting goods by waterway from Europe, Africa, South Asia, Middle East to East Asia (Tran and Nguyen 2020, 48). Along with the Sunda Strait, Malacca is known as an important "traffic hub" connecting the Indian and the Pacific Oceans. This strait played a very important role for the wide-ranging and sophisticated network of maritime trade in Asia. "This network linked ports in the western Indian Ocean to those in the Bay of Bengal and, via the Malacca Strait, to those in the South China Sea. The Middle East, East Africa, India, Southeast Asia, China and Japan thus together constituted a major trading zone" (Chaudhury and Morineau 2007, 175). The straits are not only rich in marine resources but are one of the oldest and busiest shipping lanes in the world. They serve as a primary conduit for the movement of cargo and human traffics between the Indo-European region and the rest of Asia and Australia.

Connecting the Indian Ocean with the Pacific, the Strait of Malacca is the shortest route between the Middle East and Asia in general and the

Pacific Rim countries in particular. They are the shortest East-West sea route compared to the Indonesia's Macassar and Lombok Straits. Every year billions of Euro worth of goods and services pass through the region formed by the Straits of Malacca and other associated shipping routes (Evers and Gerke 2006, 3). Located between Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, the Strait of Malacca as the bottleneck is a familiar shipping route for both international oil traders and shipping. Each year over 60,000 vessels pass through the strait, carrying about one-fourth of the world's traded goods; about a quarter of all oil carried by sea passes through the Strait, mainly from Persian Gulf suppliers to Asian markets. According to the data of the US Energy Information Administration, over 30% of maritime crude oil trade price passes through the South China Sea. Over 90% of the crude oil arriving in that sea pass through the Strait of Malacca, thus making it one of the main geographical hubs of black gold in the world (Valori, Giancarlo 2020). Currently, Malacca is an inseparable strait from the South China Sea, forming a strategic shipping route that is vital to the economies of China, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. Especially in the context of globalization and economic development of Southeast Asian countries, the position of the Malacca - South China Sea maritime route is even more important. Even for Australia, India, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and the US, this international shipping route can be called the "lifeline". Energy security and trade between economies in East Asia and Southeast Asia depend heavily on the maritime security of the Malacca and the South China Sea route.

In terms of economic and strategic value, the importance of the sea route through Malacca is comparable to that of the Suez Canal or the Panama Canal. Of these three straits, the Malacca Strait is by far the most frequented sea lane, roughly one-third of the world trade passes it annually which is, by comparison, twice the amount of annual passage through the Suez Canal and many times the amount of the Panama Canal (Pradt 2016, 40). This strait forms the main shipping corridor between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, connecting the three most populous countries in the world, India, Indonesia and China, and is therefore considered the most important traffic regulation point in Asia. In addition, the Strait of Malacca is famous for major ports such as Belawan in Indonesia, Melaka and Penang in Malaysia. Singapore is the southern end of the strait. The narrowest point of the shipping route through the Strait of Malacca is at the Phillips Canal section of the Singapore Strait. This is also one of the most important bottlenecks in the world, where there is a potential for collision, stranding or spill, piracy, and terrorism. At the Strait of Malacca, half the world's oil, and two-thirds of its natural gas trade pass through its waters (Institute for the Analysis of Global Security 2004).

The Malacca Strait witnessed approximately 50,000 vessels passing annually, carrying one-third of the world's sea trade. The most important commodity transported is oil. Half of all oil shipments carried by sea come through the Straits. In 2003 a total of 19,154 tankers passed the Straits eastbound (Persian Gulf Countries - East Asia), carrying more than 10 million barrels per day (Evers and Gerke 2006, 5). A trade that is expected to expand as oil consumption rises especially in China. China's current biggest concern in the Indian Ocean is energy security. The Chinese Global Times stated that the Malacca Strait is decisive for China's economy, so Beijing must be involved in its direct management to enhance security. China's thriving economy today is heavily dependent on oil, gas and other natural resources imported mainly by sea, of which 80% of its trade, including its energy supplies from the Middle East, passes through the Straits of Malacca (Tan 2011, 100). The Beijing government is facing a "dilemma" in Malacca because of its over-reliance on the strait and the impact of US movements to control it. In fact, whichever country controls the Strait of Malacca will also control China's energy shipping route. Therefore, the issue of trade and energy security has prompted China to adopt a more aggressive "seaward" policy, especially with the coastal states of the Indian Ocean. China is well aware of US great power position and India's strategic advantage in the region and is pursuing a harmonious approach, avoiding any offensive involvement with these powers. This gives China the advantage of gaining a larger strategic space through cooperation with the coastal states of the Indian Ocean. China is also aware of the fact that India may use the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to block the western entrance of the Strait of Malacca on which China is dependent (Kaplan 2009, 20). As tensions may rise in the South China Sea, the more important the Strait of Malacca becomes, and its strategic position is the focus of attention for countries whose economy depends heavily on this shipping route. At present, oil flows through the Straits are three times higher than through the Suez Canal, and fifteen times greater than through the Panama Canal (Tan 2011, 93).

In addition to fuel, the ASEAN countries, China, Japan and South Korea daily export textiles, clothing, electronics, cars and food through the Strait of Malacca. High-value products transported by large cargo ships across the strait are increasingly at risk of piracy and terrorism. Piracy in the Straits of Malacca has historically been an unresolved threat to ship owners and mariners who ply the 900km-long (550 miles) sea lane (Zulkifli, Ibrahim, Rahman and Yasid 2020, 15). Piracy endangers the security of energy transport on two aspects: the disruption of energy supply and the increase in the cost of energy transportation. The serious pirate's attacks, such as

the earlier mentioned phantom ship, not only hijack ships, but also steal cargoes. Bulk carriers and oil tankers, which are heavily loaded with energy products, are vulnerable to piracy attacks when passing through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore. These ships are on the top of the victim ships list, amounting to over half of the total number from 2003 to 2007 (Lai 2009, 187). Furthermore, one dangerous scenario is that pirates may kill or hijack all the crew on board during the attack, and abandon the ship in the Straits of Malacca. The unmanned ship might collide with other ships in the congested channels of the Straits, thus cutting off traffic passing through the Straits. If the Straits were closed, ships have to use the alternative route via Sunda and Lombok-Makassar Straits, the transit time and distance for the passing fleet would increase by two-three days, and freight rate will increase nearly 20-30% than that while using the Straits of Malacca (Richardson 2004, 38). The Strait of Malacca accounts for one third of all piracy cases in the world. The number of robberies has tripled over the past three decades. The Straits of Malacca are the third most affected piracy hotspot in the world in early years of the 21st century, rising from around 25 attacks in 1994 to a record 112 in 2000 (Evers and Gerke 2006, 7).

In early March 2020, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore raised their terrorist alarm when it was reported that terrorists were planning to attack ships passing through Malacca. This threat had no stopped millions of barrels of oil from being carried by ships and boats every day. As one of the busiest sea routes in the world, the intermittent traffic in this area will seriously affect the regional and world economy. According to 2006-2007 data from the US Department of Energy, nearly a third of the oil is transported by ship across the strait, making it one of the two most important waterways in the world. The terrorist threat focuses on the possibility that a large vessel could be robbed and sunk in a shallow point of water (the shallowest part of the Strait of Malacca is 25 m), causing congestion on the entire route, and then, full trade demand will be seriously affected.

To limit the risk of piracy, three countries Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia have jointly patrolled to protect this area. Coordinated naval patrols by Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore (Operation MALSINDO) were implemented in July 2004 (Bateman, Raymond and Ho 2006, 33). This has been complemented by the “Eye in the Sky” combined maritime air patrol that was inaugurated in September 2005, with the first flight carried out from Subang in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Strait of Malacca is mainly controlled by Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore and all three countries above do not agree to let other countries directly participate in the management of maritime security here. Only in 2005, Thailand was invited to participate in the air

patrol “Eye in the Sky”. Under the initiative, the three countries as well as Thailand will each conduct up to two air patrols per week along the Malacca and Singapore Straits, with each flight carrying a combined mission patrol team consisting of personnel from the participating states (The Maritime Executive 2005).

While piracy has been and is under control, there is still a risk that terrorists can paralyze many economies in the region by attacking oil tankers. After the “9/11 attacks” in the U.S., Singapore announced that it could agree to let the US carry out anti-terrorism activities in the strait. However, up to now, non-coastal countries can only participate in the indirect management of the Strait of Malacca through financial support, technology and means of transport. In addition, five countries, including Singapore, Malaysia, the U.K., New Zealand and Australia, regularly coordinate with their naval forces to exercise counterterrorism here. In the Malay archipelago, another security concern that was raised soon after the “9/11 attacks” was the security of the vital and strategic sea-lanes of the region, particularly of the Straits of Malacca. This was an understandable concern, given the fear that terrorists fleeing worldwide security action after the “9/11 attacks” could easily find refuge in the Malay archipelago, which has the world’s largest population of Muslims. In turn, these terrorists could look for new, vulnerable targets in the region, in collaboration with local radical elements, Muslim insurgents, or people in existing organised crime networks, such as those involved in numerous piracy attacks in the region. Moreover, this concern has also been seen as being closely linked to the emerging threat from radical terrorism within the region, especially in the wake of the Bali bombing in 2002 (Tan 2011, 91).

The situation of piracy and terrorism taking place in the Strait of Malacca has prompted the countries concerned to establish a multilateral cooperation mechanism. The Cooperative Mechanism for the Enhancement of Safety, Security and Environmental Protection of the Straits of Malacca consists of three components. The first is the Forum for Cooperation, comprising senior officials and technical experts from the maritime authorities of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. The second component is the Project Coordination Committee. This committee was primarily formed to oversee a package of projects proposed by the littoral states. To ensure the progress of these projects, funding and participation from the user states and interested parties have been sought. The third component is the Aids to Navigation Fund, in which interested stakeholders can volunteer to finance the maintenance of the critical aids to navigation (Ho and Bateman 2012, 134).

Today, with its geostrategic position the Straits of Malacca provide the main artery through which a huge proportion of global trade and energy

flow. Tankers and bulk carriers move vast quantities of oil, coal, iron ore and minerals to the manufacturing centers of Southeast and Northeast Asia, whilst millions of containers flow in the opposite direction to feed consumer markets all over the world. As the connection of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, the Strait of Malacca held an important position for maritime security in the Indo-Pacific in the early decades of the 21st century.

## Final Remarks

In the early years of the 21st century, as the Indo-Pacific becomes the center of global economic activities, geopolitics, and security dynamics, the region needs a comprehensive maritime security cooperation. The regional maritime security cooperation is needed to preserve the increasing seaborne activity and to maintain SLOCs stability. In addition, this region also takes place fierce competition between major powers in the world. China's expanding maritime influence, the emergence of India as regional power, US Indo-Pacific approach, and the regional non-traditional maritime issues have become core discussions regarding Indo-Pacific maritime security. The South China Sea disputes also have raised the risks in the region. The Indian Ocean SLOCs stability also needs to be managed, as the waterway has become the busiest sea lines in the world. The US "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" strategy implied by the quadrilateral dialogue Australia, India, Japan, and the US should be treated carefully. The quad countries seem to agree on the common strategic problem of the Indo-Pacific, which is China's maritime expansion. China on the other hand, has become an important partner for the region in terms of maritime trade and investment; however its naval presence is still not quite welcomed by some regional countries. The power competition between the above major powers will then shape the future pattern of interactions in Indo-Pacific.

With its geostrategic position in Southeast Asia as well as in the world, the Strait of Malacca increasingly plays an important role in maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region, as a "life-line" trade route connecting these two oceans. In recent years, the security situation in the Strait of Malacca has attracted the attention of many major powers in the region as well as in the world. The international community's attention to the security issues within the Strait of Malacca demonstrates the importance of these waters to the global community and regional international organizations, as well as non-governmental and commercial organizations, have responded to the threats of terrorism and piracy with various initiatives. Besides, terrorism



and piracy are not the only issues that are threatening the safety of this area. Despite, all efforts to manage the situation in the Strait of Malacca, the issue of the delimitation of disputed maritime boundaries remain. This situation has led to blurred territorial divisions in the Strait thus complicating law enforcement which is the main thrust in ensuring the safety of this strait. Unresolved maritime boundaries in the strait are also kinked to the most sensitive issue in this region which is sovereignty. Littoral states of the Strait of Malacca consider the sovereignty issue to be the paramount consideration in all its decisions on the strait. However, to have a conclusively safe and secured Strait of Malacca, littoral states need to put aside their differences and to be more flexible in their interpretation of sovereignty. Currently, many regional and world powers with great interests in this strait are actively participating in maritime security cooperation in the region. The construction of an international cooperation mechanism to preserve the security in general of this strait is a solution that is mutually beneficial.

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## ABSTRACT

Maritime security has been in recent times emerged as a burning issue in the fields of international relations in general and in the Indo-Pacific region in particular. With topographical tectonics, this area includes numerous “choke points” on maritime routes that are strategically important to world trade, playing an important role in the transportation of oil, gas and cargo products from the Middle East to Australia and East Asia. Therefore, maritime security issues for the lifeline of the world economy are a matter of concern for the countries in the Indo-Pacific region, in which the important role of the sea route through the Straits of Malacca is increasingly emphasized. With a geostrategic position connecting the Andaman Sea (Indian Ocean) and the South China Sea (Pacific Ocean), the Straits of Malacca is the shortest route between the Middle East and Asia in general and Pacific Rim countries in particular. This is the location that accounts for a quarter of the world’s marine traffic annually. Energy security and trade economy of major powerful countries in the Indo-Pacific region depend heavily on the maritime security of the Straits of Malacca route. Through an analysis of the Malacca Strait’s geostrategic location, this paper elucidates the Indo-Pacific region’s importance in maritime security field in the first two decades of the twenty-first century.

## KEYWORDS

Maritime; security; Indo-Pacific; Malacca; Cco-coperation.

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# THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY'S CONTRADICTIONARY EXTERNAL BEHAVIOUR: THE PROMOTION OF INTEGRATION IN LATIN AMERICA IN THE LATE 1980S

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## Introduction:

The European Union (EU) and its predecessor, the European Community (EC), is not only well known as the most important regional organization; it is a model for regional integration, which promotes regionalism (Börzel and Risse, 2013) as a distinct European idea (Bicchi 2006). Moreover, the literature has stressed European support for regional integration, which became an objective of its external policy, as shown in the publications of the Directorate Generals (Farrell 2009). Furthermore, some authors underline that Europe has had an influence on regionalism in other parts of the world. For example, Lenz argues that Europe has an ideational influence on regionalism, which consists of an indirect process through socialization and emulation (Lenz 2013).

With that in mind, the EU has facilitated regional efforts by supplying aid and by acknowledging other regional groups. Nevertheless, it is essential to ask: Does the EU always act accordingly? As noted above, most of the literature about European influence focuses on how the EU supports regional integration, understanding it in a broader manner “as a multidimensional process which may take the form of coordination, cooperation, convergence and deep integration initiatives and whose scope extends not only to economic and trade issues but to political, social, cultural and environmental ones as well.” (Rosales, Herreros, and Durán 2014, 9) and especially regionalism, defined by Hurrell as constituted by societal integration, regional awareness,

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interstate cooperation, regional integration, and cohesion (Hurrell 1995, 41-44).

Nevertheless, it is necessary to consider that external actors, like the EU/EC, can also undermine regional integration, specifically interstate cooperation, a fundamental element of regionalism. For example, by offering extra-regional options which offer benefits for bilateral cooperation, like in Southern Africa (Muntschick 2013, 4). Other examples can be found in EU bilateral agreements signed because of failed interregional negotiations (Dongo 2011). Although there is some literature about the European influence on regional integration, whether positive or negative, there is still a knowledge void about the European influence on this matter. Is it possible that the EU/EC can support and, at the same time, undermine integration efforts?

Taking this into account, this article analyses two parallel EC decisions, which had contradictory outcomes for the Latin American integration in the late eighties (1986-1990). This time frame was selected after the research of European - Latin American relations in the last 70 years, which showed some contradictions in the European decisions on Latin America. Moreover, this period is interesting due to the evolution of the interregional relations, which began with the San José Dialogue in 1984 with Central America, continued with the agreements with regional organizations and the formalization of the Dialogue with the Rio Group<sup>2</sup> in 1990 (Gardini and Ayuso, 2015). During these years, the European Community (EC, called the EU since 1993) started to discuss more subjects related to this region, particularly after the Iberian integration and the development of the EC external policy with the Single European Act (SEA) and the consolidation of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) in 1986. The main debate during these years was the necessity to strengthen the relations with the Latin American region and to take into account the political dimension in these relations (Dongo 2018). As a consequence, two of the main EC discourses were related to the integration process in Latin America. On one hand, one discourse promoted a regional interlocutor for Latin America and led to the decision to begin informal meetings with the Rio Group in 1987, which were formalized in 1990. On the other hand, a discourse within the EU organs impeded the opening of an interregional dialogue process on the debt crisis. As a result, the EC did not acknowledge the endeavour of three Latin American requests to coordinate a regional solution on the subject. As noticed, the decisions were preceded by discourses on the matter in the European debates. For that reason, the

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<sup>2</sup> The Rio Group was a permanent mechanism for consultation and political cooperation of Latin America and the Caribbean states. It was established in 1986 between Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, México, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

research focuses not only on the decisions but on the discourses which led to them. These would allow the researcher to comprehend how these decisions took place.

Summing up, one of the discourses strengthened the Rio Group as a regional actor, and on the other hand, the other discourse did not support the attempt of the Latin Americans to coordinate an economical matter. In this manner, the EC discourses had an impact on the integration process in this region. All integration processes in the Global South, in this case in Latin America, are not only under control by the regional actors, but they are also influenced by intra-regional and extra-regional actors. The impact of these asymmetric patterns of interdependence (which includes interregional relations) needs further attention. As mentioned before, there is still a research gap regarding the third actors' impact on regional integration, particularly in asymmetric relations as the European-Latin American. In this regard, it also must be studied why an external actor decides to promote or discourage a regional endeavour, particularly if the external actor is the EU.

In this framework, some questions in this article are: Were these two discourses contradictory? Had these two discourses brought contradictory outcomes for Latin America? Considering all of this mind, what role did the EC play in promoting regional integration in the case analysed? The proposal is that these two discourses had contradictory outcomes for the interstate cooperation between Latin American countries. One promoted the strengthening of the political relations and a dialogue with a Latin American interlocutor; and, therefore, improved the integration of this region due to the recognition of this regional group: it legitimated a space for Latin Americans to discuss and coordinate their policies towards the EC. The Rio Group existed from 1986 until 2011, giving birth afterwards to the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). The other discourse led to the decision not to open a dialogue at the interregional level addressing the debt crisis, the main subject for the Latin Americans during those years, and which could have reinforced the attempt of its leaders to have a common voice on the matter; and consequently, have a positive input in the integration process.

The reasons for the EC's behaviour would have been linked to its priorities in the dialogue with the region, which were mainly political. Furthermore, important Member States did not agree to engage themselves to negotiate the debt at this level, because they were already committed in the multilateral arena, which would have given them a better basis to discuss this subject. To understand these EC decisions, this text addresses both discourses, links them to the decisions regarding Latin America, and evaluates their

effects in the integration projects. In this way, this case helps to comprehend why the EU made a decision that impedes a cooperation project in Latin America while promoting regionalism in the region. In addition, it helps to draw some conclusions about how the decisions made by an external actor can affect the performance of regionalism.

As the objective of the article is to analyse the EC discourses, it is relevant to mention that this regional organization, understood as a formal institution composed of states which are considered as part of a region (Hurrell 1995, 39), is more than an integration process, it is as well a political system, and as such is a functioning polity (Awesti 2007, 1). As a consequence, the EC has developed external policies toward other international actors, a part of these policies was made for the interregional level, a hierarchy in international relations above the bilateral and below the multilateral level (Molano 2007, 20). Furthermore, as a polity, the EC/EU has organizational actors, sets of actors with a common goal (Farrell 2003, 581). In this respect, the main organizational actors implied in the discourses analysed were the Commission, the European Parliament (EP) and the Council of the European Communities (currently the Council of the European Union).

The article is structured as follows. The first section addresses the theoretical tools used and the archives analysed. The second part is named “The institutional context”, where the regional and the institutional factors are mentioned. The third section is divided into two parts, one addressing the EC discourse about the strengthening of the relations, the necessity of an interlocutor and the Rio Group dialogue; and another part focusing on the EC discourse about the debt and the discourse coalitions which appeared during the debate. The fourth section deals with the links between both discourses and decisions, and their consequences in the Latin American attempts to integrate. Finally, there is a Conclusion.

## Theoretical Tools and Archives

The theoretical approach chosen for this article is Discursive Institutionalism (DI), which is the fourth New Institutionalism<sup>3</sup> and is a consequence of the turn to discourse and ideas::

[...] the term used to define this approach, discursive institutionalism, is itself of very recent vintage (see Schmidt 2002a, 2006a, b). Moreover,

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<sup>3</sup> There were traditionally three New Institutionalism: Rational Choice Institutionalism (RI), Historical Institutionalism (HI) and Sociological Institutionalism (SI) (Hall and Taylor 1996).

although others have used the very same term (see Campbell and Pedersen 2001) or similar ones, such as ideational institutionalism (Hay 2001), constructivist institutionalism (Hay 2006), or strategic constructivism (Jabko 2006), they have tended to focus much more on the ideas that are the substantive content of discourse than on the interactive processes involved in discourse. (...) large numbers of 'new institutionalists,' whether rational choice, historical, or sociological institutionalists, have sought to use ideas to counter the static and overly deterministic nature of institutions in their explanations (Schmidt 2008, 303-304).

As it can be observed, this approach develops from two different lines of thought: institutionalism and discourse analysis. This article uses ID because the exploratory phase of the research showed that there were two key elements to understanding the European decisions about Latin America during these years: the ideas and the institutional context framing the debates. Considering that the discourse in this approach is conceptualized as the representation of ideas and the discursive interactions whereby the actors produce and communicate their ideas in an institutional context (Schmidt 2008, 303), ID offers to consider not only the ideas being communicated but also the actors producing them, in a particular institutional context, which is of great importance when analysing the EC/EU.

In other words, how the actors say what they think to do, to whom the ideas are directed and when and where they say it. In sum, discourse is not just text. This perspective gives insights into why some ideas are successful and why others are not, their success depends on how the ideas are projected in a specific context (Schmidt 2008, 303-309). The context is not only the international factors explaining a change of a policy but as well the rules in the institutional and political framework (Radaelli 2004, 197) constraining the discourse. This institutional context is the stage where the ideas acquire a particular meaning, the discourse has a communicative power, and the collective efforts make a difference (Schmidt 2015, 11). For that reason, some decisions can only be conceived in a specific context: a moment that gives space to a different discourse.

Among the explanatory factors to comprehend the decisions made (which include as well the actors' preferences) are the institutions, which are relevant to establishing who speaks about what, to whom, when and where, modelling the discursive interactions (Schmidt 2015, 12). These institutions were acquired during the EC integration process and are understood in this text as the set of rules that structure social interaction. They are the constraints that define and limit the human interactions and the actors' choices (North 1990, 3-4); hence, the actors' behaviour. In this manner, this perspective allows



underlining the institution structuring effect on the agents (Fernández 2006, 14). They are the practices and rules which set the appropriate behaviour and, thus, they explain, legitimate, and justify behavioural codes. At the same time, institutions constrain actors in different ways due to the structures of resources, which create different capabilities to act (March and Olsen 2009, 1). Besides, belonging to a structure affects the agents' preferences (Fernández 2006, 15). For example, belonging to a body, such as the European Parliament, influences its members.

The institutions are divided into formal and informal. On one hand, formal institutions are understood as the enforced and written (Farrell 2003, 581) rules linked to the EC organizational actors and which structure the interaction among and within them. On the other hand, informal institutions are comprehended as not written norms that affect the EC bureaucrats and politicians (Helmke and Levitsky 2006, 5) (policy agents). The first ones are EC laws, Regulations, Guidelines, and Directives, among other written rules. The second ones are customs and codes of conduct (North 1991, 98), and in this article are normally a consequence of the ideology and nationality of the actors.

Considering formal and informal institutions is transcendental for this case because the European decisions are taken considering a set of rules, which structure the social interaction among the European actors. As Immergut (1998, 6) claims, "behavior occurs in the context of institutions and can only be so understood". In this regard, it is essential to consider that the EC/EU has a specific institutional context, due to its independent powers and autonomy (Sandholtz 1996, 408-410) -although the Member States still play a fundamental role in the political process (Fernández 2006, 18)- and therefore, this specific context needs to be addressed to make sense of the decisions made about Latin America in the eighties.

Furthermore, in the institutional context, agents articulate ideas. These are the actors involved in the decision-making process, including the policymakers and the bureaucrats. In this case, they are the Parliamentarians and the Council Delegations, along with the organizational actors, and the EC bodies involved: the EP, the Council, and the Commission. It is in this context that the concept of discourse coalitions enters the picture. The agents are organized in groups, and discourse coalitions, which have the aim to influence the adoption of policies or decisions. As Jobert (2003) states the members of these coalitions do not need to share all their ideas and interests to promote a common decision (Schmidt 2015, 9). Furthermore, due to the institutional variable, not all the agents have the same degree of influence. For example, the agent with most prerogatives in the EC external behaviour is the

Council. In this way, it can be observed the prevalence of some discourses and the marginalization of others (Carta and Morin 2016, 15).

This theoretical approach permits obtaining information about the role of discourse and ideas in politics, and, as a consequence, allows analysis of the influence of the EC internal discourses on the attempts to integrate the Latin American region. In this way, the article focuses on the discourse, the “interactive process of conveying ideas” among policy agents (Schmidt 2008, 303), and links it to the mentioned decisions.

To cover the EC discourses, the article has analysed the EC public archives and its internal decision-making documents about Latin America between 1987 and 1990 because it was a key period in the EC decision-making process on its Latin America policy. Therefore, it has been considered an intra and inter-institutional process. The intra-institutional processes are the ones within the EP and the Council, for example, the debates among Parliamentarians. The inter-institutional processes are between the main EC bodies involved in the debate. The first step in this research, as mentioned at the beginning of the article, was an exploratory investigation of European decisions about Latin America in the last 70 years, information that was later organized chronically to determine the decisions' evolution. This inductive phase allowed the researcher to observe that there were contradictory decisions made in the late eighties, allowing new questions to arise.

The main European document addressing the relations with Latin America during these years was the Conclusions of the Council of June 1987. Consequently, the thread of documents previous to these Conclusions has been followed, to be able to understand the decision-making process. In the case of the Council archives, I have analysed sixteen documents (with their Annexes) that were made previous to this final decision. Their comparison allowed me to find out their substantive content, the discourse coalitions and the evolution of the discussion. Each document showed a part of the debate by containing the arguments and counterarguments of the coalitions over time. It was particularly through the notes made by the Delegations that it was possible to spot the discourse coalitions and the agreements made by them.

Additionally, it has been considered the European Political Cooperation (EPC) dialogue with the Rio Group from 1987 to 1990, and the documents and secondary bibliography focused on the matter. The selection criterion for the European Parliament documents was the subject examined in a broader sense: the policy towards the region and the political dialogue. In the case of the Commission, the documents taken into account are related to the Council decision and the ones linked to the EP's most important documents. It must be emphasized that the documents chosen are related to the ideas and

discourses affecting the EPC actions.

## The Institutional Context

In the late 1980s, the need for a policy toward the Latin American region was being discussed within the EC. This debate was mainly the product of two regional factors. The first one was the Iberian integration in 1986. This accession meant that the Latin American countries acquired a different status in the EC external relations since they became ex-colonies of their Member States and not only third countries. It is relevant to remember that the EC's external actions favoured firstly their neighbours and then their ex-colonies in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific (ACP) (Muñiz 1989, 41). These privileged relations were established in the Association of the Overseas Countries and Territories, which incorporated the African colonies of France, Netherlands, Italy, and Belgium in the Rome Treaty in 1958 and which was renovated in 1963 in Yaoundé, with the independent African countries (Gruhn 1979, 4).

Furthermore, when Spain entered the EC, the Spanish action increased in strength intending to build stronger political and economic relations with Latin America and as a result, was able to show itself as the promoter of the contacts. During the negotiations for its accession, this country influenced the EC to pay more attention to the Latin American problems. For instance, in the Central American conflict, where the EC participated actively in the establishment of the San José dialogue (Del Arenal 2011, 101-102).

In the accession process, two annexes were added to the Treaty and the Act of Accession, signed on 12 June 1985. The first one was the "Declaration by the Kingdom of Spain on Latin America", which focused on the trade relations and the consequences of the integration and the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) on some Latin American products (Gobierno de España 1985). The second one was the "Joint Declaration of Intent on the Development and Intensification of Relations with Countries of Latin America" signed by the ten Member States, Spain, and Portugal. This document reassured their will to strengthen their economic and trade relations and their cooperation with these states (Groupe ad hoc 1987).

These Declarations were a booster for the new cooperation framework with the region. The Spanish president at that moment, Felipe González, convinced the first Summit where this Member State participated, held in The Hague on 26 and 27 June 1986, to specifically discuss these relations (Del Arenal 2011, 102) and to recognize the necessity for new Guidelines for

these countries (Muñiz 1989). As a result, the Commission and the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs were engaged in preparing a study aimed to increase economic and political relations and cooperation with Latin America (Ayuso 1996). The Commission document was the Cheysson Memorandum. This text was the basis of the agreement reached in the Council: "New Guidelines of the European Community for the relations with Latin America", adopted on 22 June 1987. The discussion of this text unfolded a debate on the necessity of a policy and a dialogue with the region.

The second factor is the development of the EPC, framed by the SEA. Both elements shaped the community's external actions since 1986. One of the objectives of the SEA, the single market, encouraged the establishment of an external common policy (Gomes 1996, 76). The majority of the Council convened an intergovernmental conference to elaborate a Treaty to cover, on one hand, the amendments to the ECC Treaties to complete the internal market; and on the other hand, the political cooperation. The Commission was tasked with the elaboration of a program to set up a single market in 1992, and the result was presented with the SEA in the Intergovernmental Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs in 1986 and came into force on the first of July 1987.

Considering the political cooperation, the SEA represented the commitment to not block the EPC operation, although it did not institutionalize the way decisions were reached. It set out the rules which complemented the agreed procedures in the previous reports and the practices employed by the Member States; as a consequence, the political commitments became legal (Liñán 1988). Among the new formal institutions, this Act formalized the association of the Commission to the work of the Cooperation (Estados miembros de las Comunidades Europeas 1987). Moreover, article 30 associated the EP with the EPC. Furthermore, the Presidency, one of the most important organs for the coordination between the EC structure and the EPC, was tasked with the responsibility to regularly inform the EP about the EPC activities, and it had as well the responsibility to take into consideration the perspectives of the EP. Consequently, the Presidency had to answer the parliamentarians' questions. The use of this power was used by the Deputies to interrogate the Ministers about the EPC actions in Latin America.

Article 30 included likewise the organization of a political dialogue with third countries and regional groups. In addition, it included the prerogative to build common positions in international conferences and institutions where the Member States participated. As a consequence, the development of the external common policy represented the possibility to act as a unity, at the interregional and multilateral levels. This allowed the EC to

start a dialogue with the Rio Group. Furthermore, the SEA extended the EC capacity in several areas (research, social policy, etc.) which had an impact on the enlargement of their external actions. In summary, by expressing that the EC members were going to seek to formulate and apply a European external policy (Estados miembros de las Comunidades Europeas 1987), the SEA was proposed as concerted diplomacy. As such, the ECP was a cooperation structure with institutional and procedural mechanisms to draw up this foreign policy (Liñán 1988, 446-449).

Within this framework, Spain took advantage of the EC structure. It placed its national interests on the European agenda while holding its first Presidency in the Council from January to June 1989. In doing so, it coordinated the Member States' representations to third countries and international organizations. During these months, Spain gave priority to Latin American subjects in the EPC and in the Council, which was part of the decision-making processes in Latin America. Although this country found allies among other delegations, it was not always the case, and it had mainly opposing positions with the United Kingdom, as will be seen in the text.

Regarding the formal institutions, the most important ones are related to the decision-making process of the Council Conclusions, which contained the EC's political position on the subject. Although the Council Conclusions were not compulsory, they set significant guidelines for the relation with Latin America. Firstly, the debate started with the Commission's proposal, which gave the base for the Guidelines and expressed its organizational discourse. After being received in the Council, this proposal was examined by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) and then by the Presidency. In addition, the EPC participated in the decision-making process. Finally, when the Conclusions were decided, it included a verbal process, allowing the delegations and the Commission the opportunity to add critical ideas to the text. It is relevant to mention that the EP did not have the power to influence the Conclusions because it could only present an Opinion on the matter. Nevertheless, through other formal institutions (such as the parliamentary questions and reports) the EP expressed its discourse and pushed the Council to consider its ideas. The informal institutions were linked to the actors' ideology and nationality.

## Two Relevant Discourses and Their Contradictory Effects

In the context of new formal institutions in the EC external relations, some doubts arose about the existence or non-existence of a communitarian policy towards Latin America. Besides, it addressed the disconnection between

the EC discourse and its economical behaviour. This questioning affected the EC framework for action. It is relevant to take notice that there were different discourses among agents within each EC body. In the case of the Council, the delegations were divided in discourse coalitions defending different ideas about Latin America. The same happened in the EP, where an organizational (dominant) discourse was reached after voting. The Commission discourse, depending on the matter, supported some delegations or the EP discourse.

In the first EC discourse examined, the EC organizational actors agreed on the core issue of the discussion: the need for a regional interlocutor in Latin America. Which led to the opening and formalization of the meetings with the Rio Group. This did not happen in the second EC discourse analysis, which led to the refusal of dialogue on debt. This agreement was reached after an exchange of ideas between two discursive coalitions in the Council, that finally affected the EC's external action on the matter with Latin America.

These two EC dominant discourses had an impact on the integration process in this region. On one hand, it strengthened the Rio Group as a regional actor, and on the other hand, it did not support the attempt of the Latin Americans to coordinate themselves economically. In this regard, the Latin American presidents got together in January 1984 in the Quito Conference (UNCTAD Secretariat 1984) and sent a letter to the EC, where they called for a constructive dialogue between the debtor countries and the creditor countries. In this letter, they also mentioned the necessity to admit the shared responsibilities in the crisis. Nevertheless, this petition was denied by the seven more industrialized countries (Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, and the United States, with the representation of the European Community) in the London meeting (Montecinos 1991, 35). Among the participants were France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy and the president of the Commission (Ediciones El País 1984a). Moreover, in June of that same year, eleven Latin American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela and Uruguay) met at the Cartagena Conference, where they addressed the topic, searched for a political solution to the debt and asked for a dialogue with the most developed countries (Edificiones El País 1984b, 1984c). As it will be observed, despite the requirement of the Latin American states to start a dialogue on debt, the EC did not open such a dialogue, which would have negatively affected this effort for regionalism.

## The Relevance of a Latin American Interlocutor in the Context of the Informal Meetings Between the EC and the Rio Group in 1987

In the debate about the necessity to strengthen relations with Latin America, the EC organizational actors shared some important ideas about the region. In the case of the EP, the dominant discourse was in favour of a policy and consultation in the political field. The discourse coalition asking for a specific policy and a dialogue was composed of Spanish and Portuguese Deputies and German socialists (Parlement Européen 1987a; Parlement Européen 1988).

In a similar vein, the Commission stated the necessity to reinforce the relations with the region. In its Communication on the matter, this organizational actor proposed a debate and expressed that the different forms of relations between both regions were interconnected, arguing as a result that the political and institutional aspects should be taken into consideration when considering the economic aspects (Commission of the European Communities 1986). Consequently, it set out a global strategy of action, which covered the political area and the trade and economic area (Muñiz 1989). Concerning the political dialogue, the Commission supported the conduction of informal ad-hoc meetings for high-level political consultation with Latin America (Commission of the European Communities 1986).

The dominant discourse in the Council followed the proposal of the Commission and therefore stated that the cooperation and the consultation in the trade and economic area should be accompanied by the intensification of the political relations (Conseil de la Communauté Européenne 1987). Besides, the Council not only included the idea of informal political dialogue with the region and went further by mentioning the interest of the Member States in the new forms of political cooperation like the Rio Group (Groupe ad hoc "Amérique Latine" 1987, 10). In this way, it was recognizing this Group as a valid interlocutor for the region. In addition, it was mentioned the idea to keep the contacts within the framework of the international bodies and at the individual level, and to promote the relationship between both Parliaments. Hence, it proposed relations at the bilateral, interregional and multilateral levels. It needs to be stressed that these ideas were developed and agreed upon in the EPC framework (Président M. Leo Tindemans Ministre de Relations extérieures du Royaume de Belgique 1987).

Although the three EC organizational actors agreed on the necessity of consultation in the political domain, the EP proposal to establish formal relations since 1970 was not shared by the Commission and the Council. Both institutions opted for informal meetings (Conseil de la Communauté



Européenne 1987, 87). Nonetheless, the three agreed on the need to have a Latin American interlocutor to start a dialogue and strengthen political relations. In addition to this, the Latin American countries showed interest as well to begin a political dialogue (Commission of the European Communities 1987). As a result, both regions started a dialogue in New York on 23 September 1987, during a UN meeting (IRELA 1996, 5). These talks were part of the EPC dialogues with other regional groups and were a flexible and intergovernmental mechanism.

The beginning of the contacts was important (despite the reunions with the GRULA<sup>4</sup>, the San Jose Dialogue<sup>5</sup> and the Andean Pact) since this Group offered an interlocutor that represented the whole region in the political domain. Moreover, the EC on more than one occasion preferred these dialogues to bilateral contacts. This was a low-cost dialogue with the main Latin American countries, which could contribute to stepping up the European presence in the region. In addition, there were other two indispensable elements to take into account; firstly, it was easier to reach an agreement on the Rio Group than on Central America, because it did not involve an armed conflict such as the one in the Central American countries in the eighties; and secondly, there was a broader consensus among the Member States about their actions towards the region (Gomes 1996, 109-113), which affected the opening of the contacts.

On the Latin American side, the Rio Group had incentives to pursue these contacts. First, the meetings offered a space to deal with numerous relevant issues for Latin America (e.g. debt, drug trafficking and European protectionism) with an important actor as the EC (Figueroa and Fernández 1995). Second, these meetings gave the Rio Group a world presence. Third, it provided them with the chance to interact with other groups of States (Gomes 1996, 209). And fourth, it had an effect in the integration process, due to the new space to address the common Latin American problems.

The second informal meeting was held in Hamburg during the San José IV Ministerial Meeting in March 1988 (Cheysson 1987), and the third in New York on 28 September the same year (Perinat 1987) within the framework of the General Assembly of the UN (Van Kleveren 1989, 348). In addition to these meetings, there was a reunion between the European participants of the Major Economies Meeting (G7) on the 27 and 28 March 1988 in Toronto and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Rio Group. Likewise, there was an informal meeting in Granada on 15 April 1989, which was very relevant

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<sup>4</sup> The GRULA was the Group of Latin American Ambassadors to the European Communities, which started contacts with the EC in 1989, after having been stopped in 1982.

<sup>5</sup> These meetings only covered the Central American conflict (Estrella 1987).



because it led to the adoption of a Council common position about the debt (Edificiones El País 1989). In total there were seven informal meetings between 1987 and 1990 until the formalization of the contacts (Muñiz and Najera 1992). In summary, the EC regional factors (SEA and EPC), the new formal rules as a consequence of these changes, and the coincidence of the actors' preference to start a dialogue with the region, reflected in the organizational actors' discourses, led to creating a space for cooperation which was part of the integration process in Latin America.

## The Discourse About the Debt Crisis

"The debt crisis of the 1980s is the most traumatic economic event in Latin America's economic history." (Ocampo 2014, 87) It caused Latin America's per capita gross domestic product to go from 112 percent to 98 percent (Bértola and Ocampo 2012), and led to austerity measures, inflation and a toll in the productive capacity and social conditions in the region, among other consequences (Ocampo et al 2014, 54). For those reasons, it is known as a "lost decade". For that reason, the debt crisis was the central issue for Latin America and one of the most discussed subjects in the EC documents during these years. For example, of the 59 parliamentary questions between 1987 and 1989 to the Commission, the Council and the Ministers in the EPC framework, 19 were addressing this subject. As a consequence, the absence of this matter on the EC public and final documents is noteworthy, particularly because in 1987 it was discussed the possibility to open a dialogue on the matter.

In this regard, the most interesting organizational actor was the EP. Its organizational discourse was the result of the dominance of one coalition composed mainly of socialists and communists of various nationalities and Spanish and Portuguese Deputies. The main ideas stated by this EC body were related to the causes of the crisis. Among them were the increased protectionism, the deflationary policies, the insufficient openness to internal markets, the loans policies, the banking practices, the interest rates, and the US dollar. Therefore, it was accepted the co-responsibility of the industrial countries (Parlamento Europeo 1987; Bethell 1987) and the banks on the crisis, without forgetting the Latin American responsibility on the problem. This idea was in line with the petition made by the Latin Americans in the Quito Conference. In contrast, the discourse of the European conservatives was that the majority of the debt was due to the Latin American irresponsible lending or to its mismanagement (Jaguaribe 1986, 8).

As part of this approach, the solutions given by the EP documents

involved the Community's actions. For instance, the EP mentioned debt reduction (this measure was only taken into consideration with the Brady Plan in 1989<sup>6</sup>), which was supported by the Latin Americans (Stallings 2014, 56-57) on account of the inadequacy of the Baker Plan<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, the EP called on the Member States to contribute to reducing the debt more effectively in the multilateral financial institutions with the aim to encourage greater social justice and self-reliant economic development (Parlamento Europeo 1987). In addition, it was mentioned the expansion of the European Investment Bank operations to the developing countries, an action already suggested by the EP in 1976 (Parlamento Europeo 1988), the Commission in 1984 (Montecinos 1991, 19-20), the Latin American states (IRELA 1994) and the President of the Spanish government, Felipe González (IRELA. 1989, 3). In line with the economic solutions, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the EP proposed the liberalization of international trade and the decrease of the dependency on industrial countries as part of the debt resolution (Van Aerseen 1986).

The EP asked the Council to take an initiative to enable a comprehensive analysis of the problem and to prepare political solutions. For the EP, the debt should not be addressed with purely technical and financial criteria, it should not be left only to public and private banking operators. This criticism was the consequence of the strategy started in 1983 against the debt, which was only partially successful and caused the recession (Parlamento Europeo 1987).

The EP interest in the subject was in accordance with the ideological and concrete links that it had with Latin America. For example, due to the inter-parliamentary Conferences, where the subject had already been discussed in 1983 and 1985. In these Conferences, one of the main issues was the connection between the political stability in the new democracies in the region and the debt (Figueroa and Fernández 1995). This idea was considered in the EP, where the deputy Colette Gadioux stated that this region had to face a double challenge (democracy and debt). She assured that democracy needed economic achievements to succeed (Parlement Européen 1987). It must be underlined that belonging to a structure affected the agents' preferences, in this case the deputies in the EP, a body with traditional ties to Latin America.

In the case of the Commission, this body argued that the Latin American debt had a detrimental effect on the EC: the global funds of the industrialized countries were invested in the financial speculative markets in the world and not in the industry. Furthermore, for the Commission, the main

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6 The Brady Plan was the plan made by the U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady in 1989, which included the possibility to reduce the debt of the debtor countries.

7 This plan had the aim to eliminate the debt crisis in 1985 and was proposed by the United States Secretary of the Treasury, James Baker.

problem was the level of interest rates, which made it impossible for the Latin American states to pay the debt. For the Commission and the Parliament, the debt was a real political concern; nevertheless, Commissioner Cheysson stated that they were never supported by the Council to establish a dialogue with the Latin Americans (Cheysson 1987). This stance was reflected in the dialogue between this actor and the Cartagena Consensus in 1985, which was ended a few meetings later because this subject exceeded the Commission's competencies (Montecinos 1991, 35). Therefore, it had to be discussed in the ad hoc meetings with the Latin American region (Commission of the European Communities 1986).

As seen, the Commission took the same line as the EP and accepted that the Latin American democracies were endangered by the budgetary cuts. In the same line of thought, Commissioner Cheysson tried to draw the Council and the Member States' attention to the Latin American requests to take a joint decision on the matter and stated that these countries were trying to express themselves as a whole. In this context, eight Latin American countries (Argentina, Brasil, Colombia, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela) got together at the Acapulco Summit and requested the EC to meet them as a group. Cheysson added that this decision had to be taken between Finance Ministers, but he described them as egocentric. As a result, it was hard for these Ministers to dialogue about their common problems. They did not discuss the debt, and thus they did not adopt a joint position (Cheysson 1987) (until 1989) and tried to handle their country's issues with their methods.

The final decision about the debt was taken in the Council Conclusions on Relations with Latin America (Conseil et des Représentants des Gouvernements des États membres 1987). This debate focused on the respect of the international organizations' competencies on the matter. The discussion started with the Commission proposal suggesting meetings between the EC and the Latin American countries on the occasion of economic international meetings. The discussion in the COREPER showed that the main reserve about the Commission proposal was about these possible meetings. The British, German and Dutch delegates disagreed with this paragraph, arguing that it was covering the multilateral organizations' competencies, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the World Bank. They added that there was the risk of opening a dialogue on debt, which they did not want.

The other discourse coalition was composed of the majority of the delegations and the Commission – on the same line as the EP- and stated that this matter was of the most important ones. In this respect, the Italian and Spanish delegations pointed out that a suitable solution was needed for them to approve the text. One of the main criteria to be part of the latter coalition

was the proximity to the region: Spain was trying to be the link between both regions, and Italy was before the Iberian integration an essential ally for Latin America in the Community.

Although the European Banks were the creditors of a third of the Latin American debt (Montecinos 1991), the Council admitted that the debt was a world problem that affected the development and stability in Latin America and Asia (Secrétaire général Küster 1988), and the Commission and the EP were in favour of a political solution, the coalition against the paragraph became the dominant position in the EC. It must be remembered that the institutional variable gave to the agents a different degree of influence, and thus a few delegations could block a general agreement among other actors. The EC rules structured these interactions and became a constraint for discourse.

In the last draft of the Conclusions, this part was eliminated, and the reference to the multilateral organizations was maintained (Conseil de la Communauté Européenne 1987a). In addition, in the verbal process, it was stated that the informal meeting should not impact the competencies of the IMF or the World Bank (Conseil de la Communauté Européenne 1987b). This change meant not to find a solution at an interregional level, but to leave it at the multilateral. In the same line, General Secretary Küster said that this subject had to be addressed in the IMF, the World Bank or in the Paris Club (Robles 1987), an informal forum for debtor countries and creditors. It should be recalled that the creditor banks were dealing with the matter in coordination with the multilateral organizations and the creditor countries (Stallings 2014, 56-57). In this sense, these countries did not have an interest to open a different kind of dialogue. And thus left the solution not only to the multilateral level but to the Member States individually.

Despite this decision, the debt was mentioned during the Rio Group-EPC dialogue process. This would have been the result of the many actors wanting to discuss the subject during the meetings, particularly Spain, the EP and the Latin American states. The EPC, as an intergovernmental framework, left space for these actors to introduce their agendas during the dialogue. Nevertheless, while the Latin Americans were trying to discuss economic issues, the Europeans gave importance to political matters. The debt showed the limitations of the mechanism because it was the most difficult part of the conversation. In addition, it was difficult for the Rio Group members to reach a common discourse (Gomes 1996, 215-216).

The final decision in the EC affected the Latin American project to open a dialogue with the European countries and to develop their economic integration. In this vein, the requests to open contacts, as seen in the Quito Conference, the Cartagena Conference, and the Acapulco Summit, were

denied by the EC. In this line, the Latin Americans were not able to organize a space where they could talk about the subject as a regional group, in contrast to the creditor banks, which dealt with the matter in coordination with their countries and with the international organizations.

Historically speaking, the 1980 crisis is unique because of the tremendous coordination creditors achieved among themselves. (...) a kind of “international lender of last resort” was rapidly organized, whose function was to stabilize a financial system in the midst of a crisis. This ILLR was the outgrowth of informal measures taken by the governments of the Group of Seven -led by the United States- some of the larger lending banks, and multilateral financial organizations, especially the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In effect, the ILLR helped coordinate hundreds of creditor banks in the negotiations with each debtor country, a process designed to oblige that country to sharply adjust its economy, thus avoiding a formal default which could have destabilized the international financial system. (French-Davis 2000, 18-19).

This is particularly relevant because, on one hand, the creditors were organized and supported by their countries and international organizations; but on the other hand, the Latin American countries were not able to coordinate their answer, in part, because they could not open dialogue as a group. It is transcendental to consider that a dialogue with the European countries would have given recognition to this Latin American interstate cooperation and would have justified their *raison d'être*. Furthermore, as the debt crisis involved the European countries and the US, the Latin American groups needed to interact with these actors to solve the problem.

## The Link Between the Discourses and the Decisions

The expectations of both regions in the dialogue were asymmetrical. On one hand, the EC underlined the significance of the political realm, and thus it addressed the economic issues in a general way, and it did not make compromises to deal with the issues addressed by the Latin Americans (i.e. debt and trade asymmetries). On the other hand, the Rio Group gave more weight to the economic realm. For the Rio Group, a dialogue with the EC was very important not only due to its symbolism, but because it created a space to address subjects which were transcendental for the region. As a result, the dialogue revolved around political matters and left aside the debt. In other words, it corresponded to European interests more than to Latin Americans (Gomes 1996, 212). In the same line, in the Council Conclusions,

the economic relations and the cooperation were not so significant as other subjects. During those years, the EC discourse prioritized the political subjects and left aside the economic ones.

Additionally, the consequences of Latin American integration had different implications. Firstly, the Rio Group was able to open a dialogue with the EC, which was not only a part of their international acknowledgement but an element to foster regional integration. Simultaneously, during those years the “European support for the strengthening of regional integration projects has become increasingly important. (...) By providing such support, the EU plays a role as an “external federator” for new regional experiences through its interregional projects.” (Telò 2009, 292). Secondly, the main economic objective of the Latin Americans was not reached, which could have helped these countries to improve their economic integration. In other words, in the political realm, there was a boost to Latin American integration, but at the same time, in the economic realm, there was a negative response to support the cooperation.

Although at the beginning the Ministers of the EC refused to do a joint position on debt, finally in 1989 in Madrid, the Member States reached this joint position, powered by the EC-Rio Group meeting in Granada on 15 April (Edificiones El País 1989). Nonetheless, this document underlined what was already decided for this issue: to have a more active role in the appropriate forums. Moreover, it stated that the solutions were going to consider voluntary debt relief, although it was going to depend on each case, and it had to have the participation of the World Bank and the IMF (Consejo Europeo de Madrid 1989). The reference about the debt relief was made the same year as the Plan Brady, the restructuring plan of the US Secretary of Treasury, which included this possibility. The timing would show that the European decision to consider the debt relief would have been just a consequence of the change of the US position. Additionally, the joint position stated that the solution could not be postponed; therefore, the commercial banks and the debtor countries needed to find practical mechanisms to solve it (European Council 1989, 13). This meant that the responsibility was left to the debtor countries and banks, excluding the EC.

During the Economic and Financial Affairs Council configuration (Ecofin), the Ministers expressed that they were considering Plan Brady with interest, and, in this line of thought, the solution given for the debt was economic reform. The debtor countries and the industrialized countries had to have open markets, particularly in the context of the Uruguay Round (Council of the European Communities 1989, 5). In this frame, the elaboration of the Ministers' position was promoted during the interregional dialogue and by the Spanish government, which had the Presidency during the Ecofin.

Consequently, the dialogue and the Spanish membership had an important outcome, even though the EC's main discourse was maintained.

Another critical result of these meetings was their institutionalization, which coincidentally was made after the debt resolution was already decided. In October 1990, the EC and the Rio Group Secretary decided to convene a meeting to institutionalize the dialogue. This interest was already exposed in the Dublin informal meeting (Commission of the European Communities 1990, 12). Two months later, on 20 December 1990, the Rome Conference convened again on the institutionalization of the contacts. Moreover, in December 1989 the Group included Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, a Central American and a Caribbean representative, transforming it into a group representing more Latin American States of the region. This was quite relevant for the EC, which tried to have contact with the region as a whole (Sgarbi 2014).

The process of integration of the Rio Group included the establishment of dialogues with regions and countries, and as a consequence, this progress was quite relevant for Latin America because the EC was an important external partner. Conversely, to the EC the formalization was not a priority and just one of a set of dialogues (Gomes 1996, 203) in the frame of its changing role in the international system. This was reflected in its participation in the first meeting. While the Rio Group members sent their Foreign Ministers, that did not occur with all the EC members: Spain, Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Italy and Luxembourg sent theirs, nevertheless, Germany, France and the United Kingdom sent their Secretary of States.

The Rome Declaration formalized the contacts and contributed to a better understanding between both regions (IRELA 1996, 1). Moreover, it included the commitment to have a better political and economic cooperation (Representantes de la Comunidad Europea y sus Estados Miembros y los signatarios de la Declaración de Caracas del Grupo de Río 1990). The next meetings were held during the UN Assemblies. Furthermore, both regions, at this point, shared a common perspective in favour of the free market: the Latin Americans said that the neoliberal restructuring was going to be favourable for their relations with the EC. In this manner, although at the beginning the dialogue was mainly political, later on, there was an EC willingness to address economic cooperation. For the Member States, the economic adjustments were quite important and as a consequence, the Latin Americans were pressured to apply them (Gomes 1996, 214). Both organizations found a common ground that allowed a fruitful dialogue (Representantes de la Comunidad Europea y sus Estados Miembros y los signatarios de la Declaración de Caracas del Grupo de Río 1996), where the debt was not a topic of discussion. The EC proposal for development and debt relief in Latin America were these



structural economic changes.

## Final Remarks

The discourses analysed are defined as contradictory because they had contradictory outcomes for the Latin American interstate cooperation. While the EC discourse underlying the significance of the contacts in the political realm, promoted a regional interlocutor and led to the opening of a dialogue process with the Rio Group; on the contrary, the other EC discourse, concerning the economic dialogue, did not acknowledge the endeavour of the Latin American countries to open a dialogue on debt and, hence, created difficulties for economic interstate cooperation. Despite the Latin American interstate cooperation endeavours were created to approach the main problems affecting the region at that time: democratization and debt; only the Rio Group, which established relations with the EC, was maintained over time. Many factors explain its maintenance, among them, the institutional framework of the Rio Group; moreover, another factor was the establishment of contacts with extra-regional actors, such as the EC. These actors recognized it as a valid interlocutor, they justified its existence. In sum, the dialogue process with the EC legitimated the Group.

It is relevant to say that the dialogue on the debt would have been quite important for Latin American countries. It would have given them a space to coordinate a key subject for the region, which was being negotiated asymmetrically: between one Latin American country and the creditor banks, being supported by their creditor countries and multilateral organizations. As mentioned before, this would have affected the Latin American possibility to influence the debt negotiations and it would have had an impact on the region's interstate cooperation on the subject.

The failure of the Latin American efforts, understanding failure as not to accomplish their objectives, due to the denial of other countries to establish contacts proves that extra-regional actors can help to undermine an integration or cooperation endeavour. This happens not only when these actors offer benefits for bilateral cooperation, but when they do not leave room for another option. The Latin Americans, in this case, could not choose the type of negotiation. They had to accept the ones designed by actors like the US policymakers (i.e. Nicholas Brady and James Baker), the EC and multilateral organizations: one by one with the creditor banks (one from the US and one European) and countries. This happened due to the asymmetric relation worsened by the crisis. As was mentioned in the Introduction, the impact of these patterns must be taken into account, since the integration processes in



the Global South are not only under the control of the regional actors.

The relevance of the discourses examined is that they allow us to comprehend why the EC/EU can undermine a regionalist project despite its constant promotion of regionalism as a European idea and notwithstanding the EC's attempt to maintain their coordinated actions. In the end, the disconnection between the EC's economic behaviour and its political objectives was maintained. The reasons behind this behaviour are linked to the priorities of a group of the Member States, which ended up being more important than the integration promotion. These priorities were two. Firstly, the promotion of multilateralism. Secondly, the economic interest of European creditor countries, which had in the Paris Club a better basis to discuss the subject.

Additionally, this case shows us the importance of formal institutions, because although most actors were in favour of opening a dialogue on debt, the institutional design allowed a minority to block the measure. Thus, the limits of the discourse can be detected. In this case, the limits would be the formal institutions and the economic interest of a coalition. This perspective gives insights into why some discourses are successful and why others fail. Concerning the informal institutions, in this case, they were a result of the agents' nationality and ideology. Particularly, the Spanish agents gave an important push to the development of the relations and had an important role in the discourses. Nonetheless, their willingness had limits.

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## ABSTRACT

The need for a policy toward the Latin American region was being discussed within the European Community (EC) in the 1980s. Within this debate, two relevant discourses can be traced. One highlighted the relevance of a Latin American interlocutor, which led to the EC and the Rio Group meetings in 1987. The other was against the opening of an interregional dialogue on the Latin American debt. These discourses had contradictory outcomes for the Latin-American interstate cooperation. One improved it due to the recognition of a regional group; the other disregarded the attempt to have a common Latin-American voice.

## KEYWORDS

Latin American Debt Crisis; European Community; Discursive Institutionalism.

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# FAULT LINES IN CIVILIZATIONS AND RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM: GERMANY'S EXPERIMENT WITH DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITY VS. INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATION

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## Introduction

The first decade of the twenty-first century had, very spontaneously, associated right-wing terrorism mostly with Islamic extremist terrorism. However, events from the second decade of the same century seem to provide a deviation in such a narrative. This is mostly due to the rise in crimes committed by far-right groups that are not Islamist (Blackbourn et al, 2019). Scholars have drawn in particular on the work of Ehud Sprinzak, who describes right-wing terrorism as a particular form of terrorism that is distinctly characterized by split delegitimization. These terrorist groups lead off by developing antagonism and conducting acts of violence against groups that they deem to be 'illegitimate' - groups that do not belong to their milieu of humanity. Violent confrontations and threatening the state are secondary; however, once assured that the government in power is being negligent in fulfilling the demands of the 'legitimate', they begin to reject the government and flout the laws. They, thus function on a dual process of delegitimization that first delegitimizes the unaccepted aggregate and later delegitimizes the government. (Sprinzak, 1995)

Daniel Koehler while offering a more recent analysis of the term 'right-

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wing terrorism', explains that it essentially involves right-wing hate crimes but, in a more amplified state. They not only perpetrate crime against the specific target group but also aim for social and political goals. Both these actions of right-wing terrorists stem from a perceived sense of inequality and threat posed by the victim or target's identity. Moreover, the use of high distance methods such as chemical weapons, arson, explosives, and firearms, are more symptomatic with terrorism than a hate crime. It is thus, a combination of the above two factors, that distinguishes right-wing terrorism from other sorts of violence. (Köehler, 2017)

However, for the purpose of perpetrating violent acts of right-wing extremism, it is imperative for the actors to be strongly indoctrinated and be disposed to the right-wing extremist ideology, thereby making extremism the starting point of right-wing terrorism.

A resurgence of right-wing extremism has concurrently highlighted the resurgence of extremist ideologies that support and supposedly substantiate hate crimes and acts of violence especially against a foreigner and more recently migrants, particularly asylum applicants or refugees (Europol, 2018). The influx of refugees into Europe is one of the many discernible impacts of the Syrian conflict. In 2015 alone, over 1, 000, 573 reportedly travelled to Europe to seek refuge (Clayton & Holland, 2015).

A parallel ascendancy of far-right political parties and nationalist tendencies, accompanied by the lack of trust in the political frameworks that exist (Park, 2015), has begun to reveal the fractures in the European society that has for very long, been portrayed as an epitome of cooperation, unity, and homogeneity. In addition to these rising political cleavages, the security threat posed by the spread of terrorism from war-torn regions of Syria and Afghanistan, into Europe is also an increasing area of concern (Brady, 2017).

In the light of these circumstances, it has been observed that a majority of the European nations are leaning towards inward-looking policies, that are favorable for the domestic population (Martens, 2012). Though not necessary, this has also led to the germination of anti-immigrant sentiments and more specifically against refugees and asylum seekers, with a simultaneous rise in right-wing discourses and extremism also observed since 2015.

Of tremendous significance to this phenomenon, is Germany. Among the European countries, Germany has hosted the highest number of refugees. The number of refugees in Germany as of 2018 was 1,063,837. This is the highest number in Germany since 1993, when the refugee population accounted for 1,418,000 (The World Bank, 2018). Germany, however, displays a very peculiar case of its responses to the refugee situation as it faces a serious conundrum between domestic responsibility and international obligation.

The domestic responsibility at hand is to cater to the concerns and fears of the domestic population being threatened by the existence of refugees in the mainstream society (chiefly threatened in terms of security and identity), even if these threats might not be well founded. The international responsibility is to guarantee the safety, security, and well-being of refugees and asylum seekers, for which, curbing acts of right-wing extremism and preventing savageries of the far right, are integral to the process.

This paper addresses such a trajectory in Germany, against the influx of migrants, while analyzing the spectrum of right-wing extremism between 2015-2018. The theories of populism and Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilisations thesis have been employed in an attempt to further understand the nuances of right-wing extremism. The research concludes with the approaches of the government in this regard, while simultaneously proposing that the adoption of stringent punitive measures is likely to expedite the crackdown against right-wing extremism.

## **Contextualizing the Rise of Right-Wing Extremism Against the Background of the Refugee Crisis – 2015**

Part I Article 16a of the Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany) grants the right of asylum to people persecuted on political grounds (Bundesamt für Justiz, n.d.). The Federal Republic of Germany is also a signatory of the Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) & (1967) which obliges them to comply with the provisions provided in the Convention (UN General Assembly, 1951, 1967). Hence, in compliance with these frameworks, Germany has been consistently accepting asylum applications.

From among the pool of asylum applicants, Syrians represent the largest majority, from 2015-2018. They are followed by applicants who are mostly of Non-west European descent, from places including Iran, Kosovo, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, among others. A majority of the asylum applications are from those who have identified themselves as Muslims, forming 73.1 percent of the total number of applicants in 2015 and 60.9 percent in 2018 (Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). While a majority of Germans are either Christians or unaffiliated to any religion (Kanning, 2019).

There is a fundamental difference in the ethnicity, religion, and culture of the actors involved. Populist parties such as the Alternative for Germany [Alternative für Deutschland- AfD] have capitalized on the difference in the

cultural variables to garner support and votes by (Colla, 2018) claiming that refugees pose a threat to the German identity, thereby making the identity variable key to such political nuances.

Europe has popularly promoted itself as an entity that espouses homogenous sensibilities and identities. The foremost juncture of cohesion for this continent was Christianity, which though established in Asia, later came to assume a European identity. Another common force that brought Europe together was the Latin language. It was widely used for official purposes across Europe, until the eighteenth century. Europeans would often invoke Roman laws and the Greco-Roman culture to trace back their political and cultural heritage. Such homogeneity was more enforced than naturally found. Historians and philosophers such as Strabo, Herodotus, and Hegel, have in their times, constantly reinforced the idea of Europe occupying a pivotal position in the world. According to Strabo, no other region in the world has been able to achieve a harmony between the Greek dialectic of the world of nature and the world of men. Remarks such as these are recurrent, until the nineteenth century (Pagden, A. 2002). Such coercive homogenization or projection of an imagined superiority based on an imagined reality was however never questioned or debated in public discourses.

However, nuances in the reception of refugees, whether positive or negative will be keenly observed in a world, such as ours, that is connected more than ever. The resultant nexus between international organizations, the state, support groups, the vigilante, and civil society, facilitates the creation of platforms for deconstructing and sifting through the varied responses to the refugee crisis.

In addition to this increased situational awareness that globalization has availed the masses, is the emerging focus on non-traditional security. The value of human life has become ever more important with the emergence of the novel primacy accorded to non-traditional security. The significance given to human security, is unlike before, being discussed with equal primacy to the state, around which security discussions previously revolved (Singh & Nunes, 2016).

Right-wing extremism is symptomatic of the serious security threat that non-traditional security speaks of, with refugees and migrants turning into victims of the ethnocentric savagery of right-wing extremists. Germany presents a curious case of right-wing extremism, where, on one hand, former Chancellor Angela Merkel's government implements pro-migration policies and on the other, protests with neofascists trends are on a rise (Baradat & Phillips, 2016).

## Right-Wing Extremism in Germany – Conceptual Framework and Reality

Right-wing extremist groups aim towards creating a society and eventually a state with a specific ethnic group, or a shared racial identity. An authoritarian rule further, facilitates this process. The Nazi rule, upholding Nordic-Aryan supremacy, and the subsequent Jewish persecutions through the Holocaust, testify that right-wing extremist rhetoric along with the support of an authoritarian state has been a successful *modus operandi* for right wing extremists, which has additionally led to grave human rights violations.

Victims of right-wing violence do not belong to a particular ethnicity or nationality. They are targeted by virtue of being a ‘foreigner’ or an individual of non-German descent (Coester, 2010). The idea of *Volksgemeinschaft* aids in explaining such hostility.

The central tenet of right-wing groups in Germany, is the idea of ‘*Volksgemeinschaft*’. Martina Steber and Bernhard Gotto opine that this concept is to be understood with the meaning and the idea of ‘volk’ which as most would perceive, does not merely translate to people. National socialists considered volk to be a timeless entity and therefore, included the dead, the living, and the posterity. The existence and the demeanor of the volk were determined by their race. Nazi Germany believed that the German volk had been deprived of survival especially under the Weimar Republic and therefore were determined to amend their predicament by creating a ‘*Volksgemeinschaft*’. The German society was thus divided into two groups: *volksgenossen* – who were to become members of the *Volksgemeinschaft*; and ‘the others’ who would be deprived of the benefits that the *volksgenossen* were to be privileged with. (Steber & Gotto, 2014)

*Volksgemeinschaft* was seen as an emancipatory concept that yearned for an imagined German society. It was an ideal on the basis of which the Nazi party socially engineered the social, political and, private lives of individuals in the German society. (Steber & Gotto, 2014) The idea promised the German volk of a luminous future. It was a collective spirit that was ultimately aimed at the individual by determining whether the individual was worthy to be deemed a ‘volk’ or were they to be annihilated because they were ‘the other’ otherwise known as ‘*Gemeinschaftsfremde*’ (community aliens). However, in order to fully realize the ‘*Volksgemeinschaft*’, a framework was required. The Nazi regime, led by Hitler, served the purpose of creating the national community in Germany. Hence, the ultimate aim of ‘*Volksgemeinschaft*’ was to create a national community that is racially homogeneous.

The resurgence of right-wing extremist groups has been visible in Germany, especially after 2015. The years 2015-2017, have seen a rise in the influx of migrants, mostly in the form of asylum applicants, who migrate from war-torn regions, in anticipation of receiving refuge in countries that are relatively stable. The rise of right-wing extremism may not be completely novel to German society. The antecedents of such events can be traced back to the Holocaust and the Nazi regime and in the 1990s, during the Yugoslavian civil war, leading to the influx of migrants into Germany, with a consequent increase in the incidence of arson attacks on shelters and hostels that housed refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant workers, especially in East Germany. (Hille, 2020; Jegic, 2018)

All the above instances occurred in different international and domestic political landscapes. Despite this difference, there has been a similar pattern of response from right-wing extremists. And therefore, it is important to identify the point of cohesion that has led to cause its recurrence, irrespective of the political environment.

## The Right-Wing Extremist Spectrum in Germany 2015-2018

With the increase in asylum applications following the Syrian Civil War, there was also a parallel rise in the membership of right-wing extremist groups in Germany. The Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz [BfV-Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution] categorizes these groups into: political parties, associations that are independent of political parties, unstructured or sub-cultural groups, and violent right-wing extremists. (BfV, n.d-a.). What follows is a bird's-eye view of such a spectrum. The numbers and the data have been derived from the Annual State Reports of the Verfassungsschutz (Office for the Protection of the Constitution), which is either a semi-independent security agency, answerable to the State Ministry of Interior or a security department within the said Ministry of any given state.

### Right Wing Extremist Political Parties

AfD is the most prominent right-wing political party, that has been able to secure seats in the Bundestag after the 2017 elections (Clarke, 2017). There are, however, other political parties at the state level, that work with great efficacy towards the promotion and indoctrination of right-wing extremism and are often even supporters of violent right-wing activities. These political parties include the National Democratic Party (NPD), Die Rechte and Der III.

Weg.

Established in 1964, NPD is the oldest right-wing political party that continues to exist in Germany. The 1960s and 1990s were the only two periods where the party enjoyed significant support (Counter Extremism Project, n.d.). The Hanover-based party, strongly positions itself against immigration, asylum seekers, pro-migration policies, and against liberalization and privatization. (NPD Landesverband Schleswig-Holstein, n.d.). German authorities such as the German Federal Council, have remained unsuccessful in banning the political party, despite repeated attempts in 2003, 2013, and 2016. (Counter Extremism Project, n.d.).

Unlike NPD, 'Die Rechte' is a relatively new political party that was established in 2012 by Christian Worch, a well-known neo-Nazi in Germany (Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz [LfV] Baden-Württemberg, 2018). The party is believed to be relatively moderate as compared to NPD, in its right-wing extremist activities. However, even Die Rechte opposes immigration. The party is known to conduct its activities with a close resemblance to the erstwhile Nazis – especially with regard to the symbols used. It is known for manipulating media in a provocative manner yet within the bounds of legality (Schumacher, 2015). Like the Die Rechte, the Der III Weg party is also a recently established political party, with most of its members from the NPD or the banned neo-Nazi group of 'Free Network South'. (FOIA Research, 2019). In its ten-point program, the fourth point reads: 'Preserving our homeland', in which the party members see asylum seekers and foreigners as a threat to the German identity (Der Dritte Weg, 2016). Despite not having a seat in the parliament, the above three political parties have a strong influence on German civil society.

While membership for NPD and DIE RECHTE has been decreasing across the years, it has been the reverse for DER III.WEG, especially in the states of Saxony and Bavaria (LfV Sachsen, 2019; Bayerischen LfV, 2019). The Der III Weg has also published online guidelines to disrupt asylum seekers' camps and shelters. Similarly, Die Rechte has periodically advocated against refugee and asylum centers in their protests at North-Rhine – Westphalia (BfV, n.d-b). The two parties have been very explicit in their extremist stance against refugees and asylum seekers.

The only right-wing party that has effective political control is the Alternative for Deutschland, with 89 seats in the 19th German Bundestag. It was the third largest party in the Bundestag, after the CDU/CSU coalition and the SPD in 2020, and continues to remain an active member of the Bundestag following the 2021 federal elections (German Bundestag, 2020). Securing seats in the Bundestag has given the party significant leverage in



influencing legislation, especially with regard to the migration conundrum, that they have been so strongly opposing.

## **Right Wing Structures or Associations – Independent of a Political Party**

Associations or subcultural groups like the Pro-Chemnitz or the Identitarian Movement come under this category. The adherents of the Identitarian Movement believe that a homogenous population is a necessary pre-requisite for a stable society and therefore, they are firm dissidents of a multicultural environment. They strongly oppose the pro-migration stance of the central government and condemn the inflow of refugees. They conduct events such as speeches, presentations, music concerts, and exhibitions (LfV Baden-Württemberg, 2019). Voicing their opinion via such means may not be undemocratic. However, their belief in ethnic homogeneity, eliminating the 'other', and the expression of such a belief by using symbols or rhetoric that bears an uncanny resemblance to Nazism, is certainly against the Basic Law of the country and therefore a form of extremism. Such mediums of propagation, work more effectively in warranting acts of violence and indoctrinating the masses.

As of 2018, Saxony appears to be the state with the highest number of such extremists, with a potential of 1050 people in 2018 alone (LfV Sachsen, 2019). An increased potential was also noticed in the states of Berlin, Baden Württemberg, Brandenburg, Thuringia and Hamburg (Abteilung Verfassungsschutz – Berlin, 2019; LfV Baden-Württemberg, 2019; Abteilung Verfassungsschutz – Brandenburg 2019; Amt für Verfassungsschutz – Thüringen, 2019; LfV Hamburg, 2019)..

## **Unstructured Right-Wing Extremist Potential**

Unstructured right-wing extremism includes those extremists who are usually attendees of right-wing extremist events such as music concerts or events for leisure. (BfV, n.d-c.). Saxony and Bavaria lead the list under unstructured right-wing extremist potential, with an increase in their numbers from 2017 to 2018 (LfV Sachsen, 2019; Bayerischen LfV, 2019). The 2018 Reports of the State Office For the Protection of the Constitution, also illustrates the steady rise of unstructured right-wing extremist potential in East and South Germany.



## Violent Right-Wing Extremists

There has been a substantial increase in the number of violent right-wing extremists in the states of Saxony and Brandenburg, with a potential of more than 1000 in both the states (LfV Sachsen, 2019; Abteilung Verfassungsschutz – Brandenburg, 2019). While the number has been stable for most of the states, the figures for 8 out of 16 states are in the range of 600-1000 members. These states are Bavaria, Lower Saxony, Baden Württemberg, Berlin, Mecklenberg – Vorpommern and Hesse (Bayerischen LfV, 2019; Abteilung Verfassungsschutz - Niedersächsisches, 2019; LfV Baden-Württemberg, 2019; Abteilung Verfassungsschutz Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 2019; LfV Hessen, 2019).

## Right-Wing Extremist Potential – Total Membership

The total membership includes the cumulative membership in the aforementioned 4 categories, after deducting multiple memberships. The 2018 Verfassungsschutz Reports (2019), have projected an increase in the total right-wing extremist potential across six states: Baden Württemberg, Bavaria, Brandenburg, Hesse, Hamburg, and Saxony - from 2017 to 2018. However, of extreme concern, is the number of right-wing extremists in Hesse (LfV Hessen, 2019) and Saxony (LfV Sachsen, 2019), where the potential has progressively increased from 2015 to 2018. Saxony is seen to have the maximum membership, across most of the above four categories, with the only exception in the category of political parties (LfV Sachsen, 2019). Its neighboring state of Bavaria has a similar predicament, with the second-largest number of right-wing extremists (Bayerischen LfV, 2019).

To further complement this data from the Verfassungsschutz Reports, is the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) published by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (2018), which records a total of 145 terrorist attacks in Germany, from 2015-2018. Out of the 145 attacks, 73 terrorist attacks have been committed with the motive of right-wing extremism. For most of the data, the motive does not explicitly state right-wing extremism nor is the perpetrator of the crime known; however, there are a few attacks for which groups such as the Freital group, neo-Nazi extremists, Der III. Weg, PEGIDA, and anti-immigrant extremists have been identified as perpetrators of these crimes. For the terrorist attacks that have ‘unknown’ perpetrators, the source from which the data for GTD has been retrieved, states that the suspects have either had xenophobic motives or an act of violence against refugees, as their motive. Almost 87 percent of the

right-wing terrorist attacks have targeted refugees, with most attacks recorded at refugee camps or shelters. (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2018)

The above data would also imply that nearly half of the terrorist attacks in Germany between 2015 and 2018 have been a result of right-wing extremism against refugees and migrants. Despite an increase in acts resembling terrorism from the right-wing, the gravity of the criminal act is often underestimated as compared to Islamic terrorism. On several occasions, right-wing terrorism, is not classified as terrorist activity and is merely given the title of a hate crime (Doering & Davies, 2019). The numbers have dwindled from 2015 to 2018. Nevertheless, one cannot be sure, if these have genuinely reduced or merely not been reported or recorded as acts of terrorism.

In most of the data from the Verfassungsschutz Reports and the Global Terrorism Database, right-wing extremist membership and incidents of terror attacks and violent extremism appears to be concentrated in Saxony, Bavaria (East German states), and Hesse. The relatively stronger support for right-wing elements in East Germany as compared to West Germany is often argued to exist due to the historical processes that West Germany has witnessed prior to their re-unification, unlike the East. West Germany had experienced the migration of ethnic Germans from eastern Europe to the Federal Republic of Germany, unlike East Germany (Hayes & Dudek, 2019). Additionally, the Federal Republic of Germany was one of the initial signatories to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, while the German Democratic Republic had not been a signatory to either the Convention or the Protocol (UN General Assembly, 1951,1967). The Federal Republic of Germany is thus seen to have accepted refugees and asylum seekers from East European nations since the 1950s (Oltmer, 2017).

Therefore, the 2015 refugee influx was not novel to them in the phenomenon, but certainly in numbers. However, the same cannot be said for the regions that previously occupied the German Democratic Republic, as asylum applications and refugee migration have been a disconnected part of their history for four decades after their establishment, until the 1990s.

It was during the Yugoslav wars and the Bosnian crisis that Germany received an increasing number of asylum seekers. While this was previously witnessed by West Germany, it was a new and invidious phenomenon for the East Germans. This was accompanied by a simultaneous rise in xenophobia and right-wing extremism (Hageboutros, 2016). The contemporary scene does not differ much from the precedent that was set in the 1990s.

However, scholars find it difficult in explaining events that trigger

the growth of right-wing extremism. Thus, many of them have drawn in particular on the work of Lauren M. McLaren. She provides three factors that act as a trigger for right-wing ideology to further provide stronger currency to right-wing extremism. These three factors are: immigration, slow economy, and unemployment (McLaren, 1999). Germany seemed to be experiencing two of these three factors, between 2015-2018. Immigration has increased after 2015, due to the increase in the refugee influx. The German economy hit its lowest economic growth at 1.5 percent in 2018, in the last 5 years (Jones, 2019). However, the rate of unemployment unlike what McLaren suggests has not been high. Rather the unemployment rate is the lowest in the last 15 years and has progressively reduced from 2015 to 2018 (Trading Economics, 2020). Such a framework may have worked to explain the causes behind the German right-wing extremist scene in the 1990s; however, the current extremist scene goes beyond such an economic pretext.

## **Right Wing Extremism: A Ramification of the Clash of Civilisations and Populism**

While a combination of economic parameters may be helpful to explain the rise of right-wing extremism, the political theory of populism lends lucidity for the purposes of interpreting such an emergence, owing to the importance it accords to the identity and cultural variables. The intersection of Right-wing Populism with Huntington's Clash of Civilizations further aids in comprehending such an upsurge, from 2015-2018.

Populism as a concept is a highly contested one. Though there is no wide consensus on its definition, there are however, three chief approaches to this concept:

1. The Ideational approach
2. The Political – strategic approach
3. The Socio-cultural approach

Scholars that seek to define populism through the ideational approach such as Ernesto Laclau, Terence Ball, and Cas Mudde believe it to be an ideology. Mudde defines it as an ideology, wherein the society is bifurcated between 2 groups: 'the pure people' and 'the corrupt elite' and that politics should revolve around fulfilling the general will of the people. He further clarifies that in this context, 'the pure people' does not imply racial or ethnic

divisions, but rather is based on morality or the state of 'not being corrupt' and therefore authentic and pure (Mudde, 2017).

The political-strategic approach, on the other hand, defines populism as a means by which a personalistic leader engages or mobilizes the masses. The general will of the people is carried out by this leader, whom they follow. The leader may take advantage of adversity and maneuver the situation to increase his/her popularity (Weyland, 2017). Finally, the socio-cultural approach employs the concepts of the 'native' and the 'other'. The native represents the neglected populace, who are also variously referred to as 'Us' or the 'Self'; they are usually culturally popular. Whereas the 'other' is antithetical to this identity of the true 'us-ness', that the 'native' represents (Ostiguy, 2017).

Political parties such as the National Rally (France), Jobbik party of Hungary, Alternative for Germany, and UK Independence Party, are all linked with the common thread of being a right-wing populist party (Wike et al., 2019). Political parties such as these, have expressed their animosity towards patterns of migration into Europe; they are vastly concerned about preserving the European culture and criticize globalization and representative democracy. However, the most distinctive feature of such populist groups is the political struggle between the 'pure people' and 'the other' or 'the corrupt elite' (Kaya, 2018).

The 'other' may comprise of any individual who does not befit the parameters that accord an individual of belonging to the 'pure people'. Most of the time these parameters are set on the basis of cultural identities such as religion, ethnicity, language, race, etc. (Havertz, 2019). Therefore, at the core of right-wing populism is the sharp distinction of the individual's identity. Right-wing populism is therefore predominantly driven by the socio-cultural approach of Populism.

Nativism, which is an important part of right-wing populism, seeks to safeguard the interests of the natives; nativists perceive foreign elements as a threat to their interests. While the Germans, form the 'natives', every refugee or asylum applicant is a foreigner to the nativist. They stand in strong opposition to the government as they believe that the government is no longer safeguarding their interests, by making concessions for refugees through pro-migration policies; thereby, making the nativists believe that the government forms the 'political elite' (Hayes & Dudek, 2019). In the German Right-wing populist scene, political parties such as CSU and CSD with their pro-migration and pro-refugee stance, form the corrupt elite for right-wing populists. Political parties such as the AfD are believed to re-emphasize the idea of *volgemeinschaft* and the *volk* and also represent the 'people' or

‘natives’.

One might misconstrue that right-wing populism functions mostly at a cultural ideological level. However, Mabel Berezin’s analysis of the same proves otherwise. She provides insights into two analytical axes, that assess the success of a right-wing populist party: institutional and cultural. The socio-economic and cultural resentment together provide fodder for the proliferation of such political parties. However, culturalization of all complex issues of societal, economic, and political nature, is a maneuver that has gained wide currency among Right wing populists (Kaya, 2018). Such an inclination towards politicizing cultural fault lines, is elicited in Samuel Huntington’s thesis on the ‘Clash of Civilizations’.

Huntington in his thesis hypothesizes that global politics in the new world, post-Cold War, will be dictated by cultural conflicts. There will be divisions between cultures via different civilizations, civilization being the highest and broadest level of identification of an individual. He rationalizes the clash of civilizations by pointing out that civilizational differences have emerged through centuries, and therefore it is immutable and fundamental to an individual. The increasing interaction between the civilizations will expose each other to their similarities, differences and most importantly an awareness of the existence of the other. This may more often than not, lead to clashes between the different civilizational individuals. Huntington also points out to the rise in religious fundamentalism in all religions as a cause for this civilizational conflict. (Huntington, 1993/2013)

The success of regional cooperation, in which the member states share cultural similarities, would indirectly also suggest the success of the cultural and civilizational model, of which they are inheritors (Huntington, 1993/2013). For instance: the success or the failure of the European Union, would imply the success or the failure of the European civilization and culture, on the foundation of which such a cooperation is based. Huntington further built his theory, on HDS Grenway’s ‘kin country syndrome’, that appears to be an integral part of the civilizational war. According to this syndrome, one group within a civilization attempts to garner the support of varied groups within the same civilization, in order to fight against ‘the other’ (Nossal, 2018). The German right-wing extremist scene isn’t very different and therefore, groups such as the Identitarian movement, the Pro-Chemnitz group, or the PEGIDA work on a matrix that Grenway proposes and Huntington further builds on.

PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the West) - based in Dresden, the movement opposes immigration and the growth of Islamic extremism in Germany (Knight, 2017). Since mid-2014, PEGIDA inspired protests, have unravelled in cities across Europe such as Prague,

Calais, Amsterdam, chanting slogans such as 'Shut the border', 'Ban Islam in Czech Republic', Etc. (Hentschel, 2016). Fortress Europe, a by-product of the cooperation among anti-Islam groups across Europe, spearheaded by PEGIDA Germany, seeks to protect European culture and identity by closing borders, as they view immigrants and especially Muslims as a threat to the European identity. (Volk, 2016)

Huntington further proposes that future international conflicts and politics will be dominated specifically by the clash of the western-European civilization with that of the Islamic, Slavic-orthodoxy and African civilizations. (Huntington, 1993/2013) These civilizations possess among them deep seated cultural differences. Because these cultural differences are found in more embedded forms as compared to political differences and ideologies – when used for political manifestos and by political parties, they work more effectively in indoctrination as well as pursuing the masses in comparison to selling the idea of welfare, globalism et al. Right wing populist politicians, religious leaders and media have found increasing cleavages between the civilizational lines as a potent means of arousing mass support and of pressuring hesitant governments to pass hard policies on refugees and asylum seekers.

## Responses of the Bundestag: A Conundrum of Sorts

With pro-migration responses and policies in place, the German government has largely been in favor of creating domestic environments that are secure for migrants and refugees. However, discontent for such an approach has been manifested through populist tendencies, protests in various forms, right-wing extremist violence, and propagation of the elimination of the 'other'.

The German government is skeptical towards adopting a hard stance on refugees and migration such as Austria and Italy, already have (Barry, 2018). The above dichotomy in the responses to the refugee population in Germany, would probably make the serious challenges faced by the incumbent government in Germany, more discernible. The government faces a dual challenge. Germany having signed the Refugee Convention of 1951, is obliged to receive refugees after a thorough application and interview process; the accepted applicants are then expected to be sheltered and assimilated into the mainstream society (UN General Assembly, 1951).

However, the government is also faced with the consequent challenge of its domestic accountability and responsibility of fulfilling the citizens' demands. The perceived threat of the 'refugee' to the German 'volk', is a subject that the government cannot elude. Moreover, any visible tendencies

of the far-right in Germany, have often witnessed severe criticism from the international community, as most would return to the discourses of World War II and eventually put the blame on Germany. Thus, Germany, today, stands on the tip of a melting iceberg.

The German state holds the collective memory of the past and has institutionalized it as antithetical to its modern national identity, also known as 'vergangenheitsbewältigung'. However, right wing populist political parties, are influenced by an ideology that is based on the collective idea that Nazi's propagated, which goes against the identity of the modern political state. Moreover, the German collective past has mostly been stigmatized and their collective memory has been of an attempt to overcome their fascist past. Such a collective memory plays an important role in preventing right-wing political parties from influencing major decisions of the government (Hayes and Dudek, 2019). Therefore, in the initial years of the refugee crisis, Germany was seen to be receiving and accepting the maximum asylum applications, among the European nations (The World Bank, 2018). Had there been a right-wing party at the fore, such as the Freedom Party of Austria, the asylum acceptance rate would have differed drastically.

A right-wing political party could manifest its presence at the central level by either being a part of the opposition or a part of the coalition government. Such circumstances would befit a right-wing political party to advocate and proselytize their ideas on anti-immigration and their perceived notion of the identity threat, which is often believed to be a result of immigration. An extreme form of advocacy of right-wing ideas at the central level would even warrant right-wing extremist activities that could be of violent or non-violent natures. (Hayes & Dudek, 2019).

Therefore, in an attempt to appease all stakeholders and domestic and global actors, Germany passed the Deportation law in 2019 (Mischke, 2019) and has also been simultaneously aiding safe third countries. One such aid is the financial aid of more than 290 million euros that Germany provided to Jordan in 2018. Germany has promised cooperation in supporting Jordanian communities that are hosting a large number of Syrian refugees. Similar financial aids have been provided to Lebanon and Turkey, especially to communities that share close borders with Syria, and where the refugee population is concentrated. (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2015).



## Final Remarks

There is no contention on the rise of right-wing political parties or ideologies, as every citizen is entitled to voice their political opinion. However, their transition into extremist factions puts forth a security risk and is of prime concern to the foray of human rights that one is entitled to and is especially a violation of Articles 2 and 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 2 guarantees the right to an entitlement of all the rights enshrined in the UDHR without discrimination of any kind. Article 3 guarantees the liberty and security of a person (UN General Assembly, 1948). Acts of right-wing extremism are not only discriminatory on the basis of their religion, country, and culture, but also, a violation of the security of refugees, asylum seekers, or those who are perceived as a foreigner or 'the other'.

Conflicts such as these, that stem from cultural differences ought to be resolved in a more holistic manner. One such measure that Germany follows is the Exit Program, supervised by the 'Federal Government Strategy to prevent Extremism and Promote Democracy'. It is a Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) strategy, launched in 2000, with the aim to deradicalize right-wing extremists. The program includes counselling and family support. NGO's such as LidiceHaus, in Bremen further assist the program by providing counselling services and training (Hardy, 2019).

Another Federal Agency that is key to preventing and controlling right-wing extremism is The Bundesamt fur Verfassungsschutz (BfV - The Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution), which was established to ensure the free democratic basic order, in accordance with Article 21 of the Grundgesetz fur die Bundesrepublik Deutschland (the German Constitution). The BfV, believes right-wing extremism to undermine this free democratic order; it possesses the authority to ban political parties and groups that facilitate any sort of extremism (Coester, 2010). This Federal Agency believes right-wing extremism, to be a major social problem, and therefore they have taken precautionary measures such as dropout programs known as Aussteigerprogramm (Bundesamt Fur Verfassungsschutz, n.d-d), that offers assistance for citizens willing to opt out of right-wing extremist associations.

While awareness and sensitization could be at the root of such solutions, stronger punitive measures for right-wing extremist violence could complement CVE programs. Just as one would strongly condemn Islamic extremism, right-wing violent extremism by any other religious group or cultural orientation should also be condoned and met with strong resistance.

The rise of right-wing extremism against the background of the migration of refugees and asylum seekers displays not just hostility for 'the other' but also a very ethnocentric approach that is contrary to the current

trends of globalization and multiculturalism. Acts of extremism, terror attacks, and hate crimes against refugees originating from war-torn countries and who have suffered political and religious persecution, would destroy the very purpose of their sought for refuge. The other alternative would be a civilizational conflict, which would essentially close boundaries and economic and political frameworks that were in the first place, created by these very nations that seek border controls today. Thereby, also implying a reversal of every political development that was embarked on, across a period of 70 years, beginning from the 1950s.

Key to such a potential reversal is the role of the right-wing AfD party that has not been able to secure as many seats following the German Bundestag elections in 2021, as it did in the 2017 elections. However, the party continues to remain a strong adherent of the right-wing ideology. Simultaneously, of concern is the uptick in the incidence of right-wing extremist groups capitalizing on more pressing issues, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis, with several of such groups posing to be outlets for lockdown opponents and climate-change skeptics. The above is indicative of the strengthened presence of the right-wing extremist spectrum in mainstream society. With this, the potential for states to transform into inward-looking entities, as already witnessed in the COVID-19 vaccine nationalism demonstrated regionwide, is likely, as such ideas are liable to gain more traction, especially given the severe health and economic crisis that countries witnessed worldwide. The polarized environment is liable to strengthen in subtle ways, while eventually creating a wider scope for the proliferation of far-right sentiments in key political and economic decisions of Western nation-states.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The influx of refugees in 2015- an aftermath of the Syrian Civil War, propelled European leadership into a predicament of maintaining a cautious balance between international obligations and domestic responsibilities. While most nations adopted harder migration policies, Germany decided to navigate through such a conundrum by adopting pro-migration policies. However, the simultaneous rise in right-wing extremism posed a significant threat to those who were considered to be 'non-German'. The paper thus analyses the right-wing extremist spectrum in Germany from 2015-2018 and further employs The Clash of Civilisations thesis with Populism to explain the upsurge in right-wing extremism.

## **KEYWORDS**

Right-Wing Extremism; Populism; Clash of Civilizations; Germany.

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# MOZAMBIQUE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE SAMORA MACHEL AND JOAQUIM CHISSANO GOVERNMENTS

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## Introduction

The article analyses Mozambique's foreign policy during the governments of Samora Machel (1975-1986) and Joaquim Chissano (1987-2005), the first two governments in the post-independence period. Mozambique is a peripheral country in the hierarchy of the international capitalist division of labour, specializing in the production of raw materials, with a poorly diversified economy that exports primary products. In the hierarchy of the international system, it can be classified as a vulnerable or fragile State, with a tendency towards authoritarian regimes, experiencing conflicts and violent wars of groups that compete with the State. Despite being from the same party, the Samora and Chissano governments had different political-economic and ideological characteristics that are reflected in Mozambican foreign policy, being influenced by the fate of the Cold War. In the foreign policy decision-making process in Mozambique, the State responded more to external and international pressures than to internal inputs. Foreign policy was rarely the result of or influenced by demands from Mozambican civil society, even though most decisions were taken on behalf of the people.

In Southern Africa, Mozambique took the place of a secondary power against the economic-military hegemony of South Africa and Rhodesia of Ian Smith, its main adversaries, as well as against Tanzania, Zambia and Angola, its regional political-military and ideological partners. The Mozambican State entered international politics after independence in 1975, calling itself the People's Republic of Mozambique (RPM), with a one-party Marxist-Leninist

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government led by the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), which was confused with the Mozambican State itself. State.

In the RPM, the leaders of FRELIMO were at the same time the leaders of the State. The borders between the executive, legislative and judicial powers were porous, commanded by the Party-State that centralized decisions in the country. The government system was presidential, directed by the president of the republic (PR) and executive decisions were taken by the Council of Ministers. The legislature consisted of the People's Assembly, made up of deputies from the ruling party. The judicial power was constituted by the courts, subordinated to the executive power. This political-bureaucratic model prevailed in Mozambique between 1975 and 1990, although there were occasional changes in the Constitution, such as the introduction of the figure and position of Prime Minister from 1987 onwards.

From 1991 on, there were significant political and economic changes with the change of the Constitution: the country was renamed the Republic of Mozambique (RM), adopting the multiparty system and economic liberalism, but maintaining the presidential regime with the broad powers of the PR. In 1994, the first multiparty general elections took place, won by the Frelimo Party, with no alternation in power. The elections were contested by the opposition, which alleged irregularities and electoral fraud, but after negotiations ended up accepting the results. To decentralize power, the first municipal elections were held in 1999, which were boycotted by the Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo), the main opposition party, in which Frelimo won. Frelimo managed all municipalities. Until 2005, the two largest parties dominated politics and parliament – Frelimo and Renamo. Since the introduction of multipartyism, the country has held presidential, legislative, and municipal elections at regular intervals.

## Methodology

The article used the comparative method, combined with the techniques of bibliographic review and documental research. It was inspired by the comparative foreign policy of Rosenau (1968) – in the text *Comparative Foreign Policy: fad, fantasy, or field?* – which is based on the analysis of the behaviour of States and their choices in international affairs, to build a general theory of foreign policy. In Rosenau's (1968) perspective, comparative foreign policy assesses the impact of international variables on domestic processes. This analyst distinguishes the study of comparative foreign policy from the comparative study of foreign policy. More than a detail, the study of comparative foreign policy is a legitimate enterprise that can lead to a

disciplined field of inquiry, while the study of comparative foreign policy turns out to be an ambiguous term, a passing fad.

Foreign policy phenomena can be studied in many ways and for certain purposes. On the other hand, the comparative analysis of foreign policy is not a subject, it is a method. The comparative method is useful for generating and testing propositions about foreign policy behaviour that apply to two or more political systems. Only by identifying similarities and differences in foreign policy behaviour, from a particular case to higher levels of generalization (Rosenau, 1968).

The comparative study of foreign policy is based on the comparison of two or more States facing the same phenomenon, thus, the comparison is a method and not an object of study. In comparative foreign policy, it is about comparing characteristics in the decision-making process in foreign policy between two or more States. The comparison cannot be made between two or more political systems, but between two concrete actions in foreign policy. Hence the difference between a comparative study of foreign policy and comparative foreign policy (Rosenau, 1968).

The comparative analysis of the foreign policy of the Samora and Chissano governments helps us to understand the historical, political-economic, and social processes that Mozambique has gone through, the similarities and differences. But also, to analyse the trajectories and the results. This analysis makes it possible to understand the differences, the trajectories, the internal and internal changes that led Chissano and Samora to make the same or different decisions in the face of the same phenomenon. Although they are of two different chronological times, they are consecutive, and similarities can be found, as they are part of the same historical moment or historical moments close to the same State.

## Theory

The article assumes that foreign policy is the result of the interactive dynamics between the domestic and international environments – inter-domestic level, and seeks to understand the decision-making processes (Putnam, 2010; Figueira, 2011). It follows this perspective throughout the text, making the two environments interact. To comparatively analyse Mozambique's external relations in the governments of Samora Machel and Joaquim Chissano, the logic of Putnam's two-level games (2010) was moved. In his fundamental article on domestic politics and international relations, Putnam (2010) demonstrates that these two dimensions are inextricably

linked and that the theories that existed until then did not take this link into account, particularly those that placed the state at the centre and as the main actor in foreign policy.

From this point of view, to obtain an international agreement, the heads of state and government reconcile the interests of domestic politics with those of international politics, which the author calls the “two-level game”, a metaphor to explain the interactions between the different dimensions. domestic and international. The author emphasizes the role of preferences, alliances, institutions and domestic practices, strategies and tactics of negotiators, uncertainties, domestic repercussions of external pressures, as well as the interests of the chief negotiator.

As a rule, each negotiator believes that his interests are the interests of the state and that everything he does is in the interests of the nation. Good deals would be those that successfully combine domestic and international pressures. Partial analyses, either purely domestic or purely international, account for the reality of States. Only general equilibrium theories that combine the interaction of domestic and international factors – the two-level game – can understand the reality experienced by States (Putnam, 2010).

From this perspective, the political struggle in international negotiations can be understood as a two-level game. At the national level –1, domestic groups pursue their goals by pressing the government to adopt policies favourable to their interests, while at the international level –2, governments seek to maximize their own abilities to satisfy domestic pressures and minimize the adverse consequences of external constraints. Neither of the two levels can be ignored by decision makers because their countries remain both interdependent and sovereign. Each national political leader plays on both boards: domestic and international. On the domestic board and behind the leader are political parties, parliamentarians, representatives of national interest and pressure groups and political advisers to the leader himself. On the external board are foreign counterparts, diplomats, and other international advisors (Putnam, 2010).

In Mozambique’s foreign policy, the heads of state – Samora Machel and Joaquim Chissano – represented the Mozambican government and people, but also the interests of the political, ideological, and economic elites of the Frelimo party. Both Samora and Chissano sought to balance the interests of the Mozambican people and the Frelimo party on the one hand (level I) and the interests of the international counterpart (level II). The Samora Machel government balanced itself between the domestic demands of the people and the party (level I), at the same time it was the target of regional and international external pressure from its partners such as the



USSR, Tanzania, Zambia, ANC and even enemy governments, South Africa, Rhodesia, Malawi, or the USA (level II). Putnam's two-tier logic (2010) can be moved in negotiations such as the Incomati Agreement between the Samora government and the apartheid regime in South Africa, as well as in the Chissano government's negotiations with the International Monetary Fund/World Bank (IMF/WB).

In the one-party socialist regime, there was no political opposition, civil society, or pressure groups in Mozambique. Even though Renamo exerted pressure and opposition to the Mozambican State through civil war. The Frelimo government did not recognize Renamo as a Mozambican opposition movement, classifying it as "armed bandits". In this way, the Mozambican State only responded to external pressure from its international political-military cooperation partners: the USSR and neighbouring friendly and enemy states. The Samora Government representing the Mozambican State was a founding member of the Frontline States (ELF) and the Southern African Development Coordination (SADCC) and was part of the Socialist Bloc. It adopted a joint anti-colonial and anti-apartheid foreign policy agenda for the liberation of Southern Africa with Tanzania, Zambia, and Angola as its main friends and supporters.

In the context of the Cold War and the liberation of Southern Africa, Mozambique supported the struggle of Black nationalist movements ZANU and ZAPU in the struggle for Zimbabwe's independence, as well as the ANC's struggle against the apartheid regime<sup>2</sup>. The Mozambican state had as enemies the apartheid regime of South Africa, Rhodesia of Ian Smith, and Malawi of Kamuzu Banda, who supported the Renamo war. These friendly and enemy nationalist states and movements exerted pressure on the Mozambican state and influenced its political decisions.

In turn, in the economic-financial aid negotiations with the Bretton Woods institutions, the Chissano government had to balance the interests of the Mozambican people and the Frelimo political-economic elite on the one hand (level I) and, on the other, the pressures external resources from the IMF/WB and the Western world (level II) to effect changes in the Constitution and transition to the multiparty system, opening the country's economy to the international market and implementing structural adjustment and privatization policies.

The same two-tier game took place during the peace agreement negotiations with Renamo. At the domestic level, Chissano had to negotiate

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<sup>2</sup> *Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) e Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) e African National Congress (ANC).*

with Frelimo's more radical ideological wing while simultaneously counterbalancing Renamo's demands. On the other hand, at the international level, the Government had to deal with pressure from international mediators to end the armed conflict. In these negotiations, Chissano diplomacy was successful at both levels: internally it managed to "pacify" Renamo and maintain a political and government system favourable to Frelimo, as well as obtaining international aid and the forgiveness of Mozambique's external debt with the main donors.

## Mozambican Foreign Policy Principles and Orientation

Mozambique's foreign policy, its guidelines and principles were defined for the first time at the Third Frelimo Congress in 1977 and influenced by external, regional and domestic factors, including the fight against European imperialism and Portuguese colonialism, international solidarity with peoples oppressed by white minorities in Southern Africa, the colonial annexations of the territories of the Arab Republic of Western Sahara, of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste at the international level.

The context of the Cold War and its dynamics in Southern Africa were decisive in the definition of the external relations of the Mozambican State, among which: the hegemony of the government of white minorities in South Africa, Rhodesia and Namibia, the South African, Rhodesian aggressions and Malawians to the Mozambican people, the installation and reinforcement of military bases along the coast of Mozambique and the deployment of naval forces in the Mozambique Channel as an intimidation strategy to curb their revolutionary impetus. In the domestic sphere, the internal war waged by Renamo, which had South African, Rhodesian, and North American support. Mozambique had been unanimously admitted to the OAU and was actively engaged in active cooperation and solution of African and international problems, promoting the deepening of anti-imperialism (Frelimo, 1977). It was in this context of political and military confrontation that Frelimo defined the principles and guidelines for Mozambique's foreign policy.

In its foreign policy, the People's Republic of Mozambique strictly applies the principles of Frelimo's political line. In this context, the People's Republic of Mozambique gives priority to the establishment of diplomatic relations with the countries that have always been committed to our side. During the Transition Frelimo agreed to establish diplomatic relations since the proclamation of Independence with African, socialist, Asian, and European countries that have always supported us. The People's Republic

of Mozambique has established and develops relations of friendship and cooperation in all countries based on the principles of mutual respect for territorial sovereignty and integrity, non-interference in internal affairs and reciprocity of benefits (Frelimo, 1977: 81).

This foreign policy was a response to the rejection and blockade of the Western world. Thus, Frelimo approached the USSR and socialist bloc states such as eastern Germany, Bulgaria, Romania, Congo-Kinshasa, Cuba, China, Vietnam, North Korea, Burundi, Somalia. It had as regional allies the neighbouring states Tanzania and Zambia, nationalist movements such as ZANU, ZAPU, ANC SWAPO. It also strengthened relations with Portuguese-speaking African nationalist movements in former Portuguese colonies, with state visits to Angola, Cape Verde, and Guinea-Bissau.

Veloso (2007) considers that the desire to achieve rapid development and to satisfy the basic needs of the people in a short space of time led the Mozambican State to align itself with its natural allies, which had supported and sided with the Frelimo armed struggle. However, the alignment with the socialist bloc, which aimed at solving internal problems, relegated to the background and even antagonized the US and its close allies and made it lose sight of the strategic objective that was the development of the country<sup>3</sup>.

The choice of Marxism aimed to gain massive support from the USSR and the socialist camp, through scientific socialism to solve the people's problems. Such choices aroused hostility from the West and from various regions of the Third World, including Africa. The USSR and its allies saw Mozambique as an ideal territory to exercise geostrategic control over the immense theatre of operations that was Southern Africa. To this end, it made investments in the region and was willing to invest much more (Veloso, 2007).

Vieira (1990) already understood that the foreign policy of a country or party is the result of the conceptions, perspectives, objectives, and limits of the pursued action and combines the duty to be, wanting to be with what it is possible to be<sup>4</sup>. As well as that it obeys class interests, philosophical

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<sup>3</sup> Jacinto Veloso was a member of Frelimo and a fighter in the liberation struggle against Portuguese colonization. After independence, he held various government positions in the Samora and Chissano governments. He was national director of the Information Services and Minister of State Security in the Samora Machel government. From 1984 to 1994 he was Minister of International Cooperation, having carried out negotiations for the establishment of peace in Southern Africa in the Incomati Agreement and with the Ronald Reagan Government. In the Chissano Government, he was Minister of Information and a member of the National Defence and Security Council of the Mozambican parliament.

<sup>4</sup> Sérgio Vieira was a member of Frelimo and a fighter in the Mozambican liberation struggle,

and ideological conceptions, but it is also subordinated at the national and international level to economic, military, and strategic imperatives. From the point of view of this history of Frelimo and Mozambique, foreign policy was developed in the tension between the means and objectives of the policy, thus becoming one of the criteria for evaluating independence and consequences.

Abrahamsson & Nilsson (1994) argue that the foreign and security policy formulated by Frelimo was based on the analysis of power relations and contradictions existing during the colonial period. Frelimo had two opponents to its struggle for economic development and political independence. On the one hand, there was colonial oppression, considered a natural consequence of capitalism, and on the other, white racism in Southern Africa, the South African and Rhodesian regimes. Hence its anti-imperialist and anti-racist policy.

It was within the framework of the common strategy of the Southern African States against racist regimes that Mozambique developed its foreign policy and actively engaged with Tanzania, Zambia, Botswana, and Angola, forming the ELF and then the SADCC. At the same time, the Mozambican State strengthened the ties of friendship and good neighbourliness with neighbouring countries and tried to cooperate with Swaziland, Lesotho, and Botswana. On the other hand, Mozambique participated in the Non-Aligned Movement (MNA) and resolutely claimed to refuse intimidation and support the just struggle of peoples for the realization of their rights (Frelimo, 1977).

This foreign policy was officially in force until 2010, when the principles and guidelines of the State's foreign policy were reformulated. From the mid-1980s and particularly in the 1990s, a change in the perspective of the Mozambican Government's external relations can be seen with the negotiations with the apartheid regime, the distance from the USSR with Machel's visit to Washington and London for meetings with Regan and Thatcher and, the consequent approximation to the capitalist bloc with negotiations and Mozambique's adherence to the policies of the IMF/WB.

## Foreign Policy of the Samora Government (1975-1986)

The Samora government begins in June 1975, in a context dominated by the Cold War and bipolar dispute between the USSR and the USA, as

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having held various positions in the Samora Government and the Chissano Government. Graduated in Political Science in Algeria, where he was a Frelimo representative. He was director of the Centre for African Studies at Eduardo Mondlane University, published books and articles on Mozambique in Southern Africa.

well as the regional tension in Southern Africa between apartheid South Africa, Rhodesia, Malawi and Kenya on one side and on the other, the Marxist governments of Mozambique and Angola, Tanzania and Zambia, as well as the internal armed conflict waged by Renamo at the domestic level. The foreign policy of the Mozambican State was defined by FRELIMO in 1977 at its Third Congress. It was influenced by the regional and international environment, with its own agenda defined by the party-state, the result of liberation diplomacy, of international solidarity with oppressed peoples. As well as Samora's personal commitment and engagement with the Southern African regional agenda, among the members of the Frontline States (ELF) and after the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) (Langa, Sacavinda, 2019).

The Samora Governance was centralized in the single party of a Marxist-Leninist nature. The PR took foreign policy decisions, after going through the Frelimo Committee, the hard core of the Party-State and the Council of Ministers, with little or no contestation or opposition. The Party's ideology guided the state. In 1976, the state closed the border with Rhodesia, becoming the first and only one to apply the sanctions determined by the UN against the Ian Smith regime. This decision deprived Mozambique of revenues valued at millions of dollars annually from the taxes and fees it charged for the transit of goods from Rhodesia to its territory and vice versa through ports and railways.

One of the few times in which "popular" internal pressures influenced foreign policy decisions was the Incomáti Agreement in 1984, signed between Samora Machel and the apartheid regime. Pressure came from foreign intellectuals and cadres who cooperated with the Mozambican government, having left Mozambique in protest the Agreement. Even so, the Agreement seemed more like a strategic and calculation decision by Samora than a result of popular outcry, as the survival of the Government and regime itself was at stake in the face of South African attacks and bombings on Maputo. The negotiations were proposed and encouraged by the US when it opened its embassy in Maputo, which wanted to see the conflict between the Samora government, and the apartheid regime resolved.

The foreign policy of the Samora government represented a continuation of FRELIMO's diplomacy of making more friends and fewer enemies. However, Mozambique's foreign relations were aimed at the European, Asian and Cuba socialist blocs. Mozambique's external relations were confused with those of the Frelimo party. Zeca (2015) states that foreign policy and diplomacy were aimed at raising support for the liberation struggle, denouncing, and isolating the Portuguese colonial regime at the

international level in UN and Organization of African Unity (OAU) forums. Mozambique had two opponents: the Western capitalist system and the white minority governments of the region. Regional cooperation and the liberation of neighbouring states were preconditions for Mozambique's economic and future development.

Massangaie (2017) argued that Mozambique's foreign policy aimed to create more friends and fewer enemies in the context of the ideological bipolarity of the Cold War. Portugal's refusal to comply with the UN resolution on the self-determination of peoples, the support that the Portuguese received from the North Atlantic Organization (NATO) and the ideological conflict of the Cold War influenced the foreign policy decisions taken by Frelimo. On the other hand, the threats posed by the South African and Rhodesian regimes, the political-economic orientation adopted by Frelimo after independence, also had influences on the foreign policy of the Government of independent Mozambique.

Mozambique's foreign policy under the Samora Machel government was characterized by liberation diplomacy against colonization in Africa, particularly in the Southern region, against the minority apartheid regimes in South Africa and Ian Smith in Rhodesia, as well as international activism and solidarity with occupied and oppressed nations such as the Republics of Western Sahara, Palestine, and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. The Government of Samora Machel energetically engages and supports materially and militarily the ZAPU and Rhodesia and later the ANC of South Africa, allowing the use of its territory as a training and transit base for its guerrillas.

According to Christie (1996), Samora denounced these regimes in several international conferences, including the UN. Over the years, the Samora government managed to garner support from the USSR and China, who were disputing hegemony and areas of influence in the socialist bloc, seeking to influence countries in Africa and Asia. In addition to the European and Asian Socialist Bloc countries, the Mozambican state also requested the support of European capitalist countries such as Sweden, Norway, Finland, and the Netherlands, in addition to the countries of the Eastern European socialist bloc (Christie, 1996).

Although Mozambique was a member of the Non-Aligned Movement (MNA), in 1977, during the Third Congress of FRELIMO, it became a Frelimo party, officially adopting the Marxist-Leninist perspective and the socialist development model centrally planned by the State, as well as defining its foreign policy for the first time (Frelimo, 1977; Christie, 1996; Ferrão, 2007; Cuco, 2016). The Samora government made clear its struggle against colonial domination, its anti-colonial and anti-racist character, denouncing European

colonization and neo-colonial interference by European powers in African nations, as well as the Rhodesian white minority regimes and South African apartheid in Southern Africa.

In the Samora government, the decision-making process in Mozambique's foreign policy took place at the state and party level, the so-called democratic centralism. Issues were discussed in the Council of Ministers; the Central Committee of the Party and decisions were taken collectively. According to Hama Thay (2020), Samora Machel's leadership was democratic, participatory, charismatic, situational, and contingent<sup>5</sup>. Samora had a universalist vision of well-being for all the people, constituting a democratic leadership, with debates and joint decision-making between the leader and his direct collaborators on strategic issues. In his view, Machel's approach to leadership and governance has become one of the main focuses in organizing political and social thought in Mozambique.

Ferrão (2007), pointed to Samora as having an enormous capacity for analysis, decision-making power, and fixed ideas<sup>6</sup>. He highlights the existence of a military discipline in the Government inherited from FRELIMO – first fulfilling the mission, then complaining – as well as the absence of analysis of the country's realities and the absence of internal debate.

By establishing a one-party regime, Frelimo prevented the creation of an alternative to its political program, as well as the existence of an institutional space for a legal opposition, creating a situation of political exclusion for all those who did not agree with the dominant options. By transforming itself into a Marxist-Leninist party, Frelimo abandoned the practice of participatory democracy with the populations that had been established during the colonial struggle and in the early years of independence (Lalá, 2002). The Samora government's diplomacy was marked by marked tensions, such as the expulsion of US diplomats accused of spying for the CIA, as well as its positioning on China's side in the conflict with Taiwan, accusing the latter country of representing the capitalist interests of the US (Ferrão, 2007).

Among the most notable events that took place while I was Secretary General of the MNE was the expulsion of a group of American embassy

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<sup>5</sup> António Hama Thay is a retired general of the Mozambican Armed Forces, he has been a member of the State since independence, having held positions in different Mozambican governments, as well as a Frelimo deputy.

<sup>6</sup> Valeriano Ferrão was a Frelimo guerilla fighter since the armed struggle against Portuguese colonization and after independence was Secretary of the Council of Ministers, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Relations, and afterwards Mozambique's Ambassador to the US. These positions were held during Samora Machel's government.



employees who were CIA agents. Even today I think that such an operation was unnecessary, as all embassies in any country in the world always have a CIA station that is tolerated to a certain degree. And, on the other hand, the countries' intelligence services decide with their CIA counterparts. It is part of the game. SNAP should have joined the game. It did not, and the result is that Mozambique was played as a pawn in the cold war that pitted the United States of America against the Soviet bloc, as it was a country in this bloc that practically imposed the measure applied by the Government of Mozambique (Ferrão, 2007: 88).

Mozambique opened an embassy in Moscow, but not in Washington, something Americans would not forget. Also, the government's policy of nationalization created more animosity with Washington, which enacted an embargo and prohibited any type of economic assistance to Mozambique (Ferrão, 2007). On the other hand, Frelimo was a traditional ally of China, as it had received military and logistical support during the fight against Portuguese colonization and at decisive moments, such as during Operation "Nó Górdio", the largest ever launched by Portuguese troops during the war. colonial.

## Liberation Diplomacy

The Samora government took place after ten years of armed struggle for liberation against Portuguese colonization, in the international scenario of the Cold War and bipolar dispute between the socialist and capitalist world. In a one-party regime that was confused with the state, the Samora government faced hostilities and external aggression from the governments of the neighbouring apartheid states of South Africa, Rhodesia under Ian Smith, and Malawi under Kamuzu Banda and, internally, the Renamo's destabilization war, characterized by armed attacks on populations and social and economic infrastructure. Renamo was conceived and created in Rhodesia and had its main base in this country, from which it launched attacks against Mozambique. It received support from these countries and from the Western capitalist world and adopted this model (Christie, 1996; Minter, 1998).

To face this scenario, Samora sought external support inside and outside Africa. It relied on neighbouring countries that militarily helped the FRELIMO liberation struggle such as Tanzania and Zambia, on continental countries such as Algeria and on the Organization of African Unity (OAU) that supported it financially and diplomatically. The main support to Mozambique came from the European Socialist Bloc, from Moscow, technical, logistical,

and military cooperation. At this juncture, Mozambique and Samora Machel implemented liberation diplomacy, actively engaging in the liberation of Zimbabwe and South Africa from the domination of minority apartheid regimes, even though they were aware of the economic-military superiority of these adversaries. In its policy of international solidarity, Mozambique and Machel become founding members of the ELF in 1976 and years later it is replaced by SADCC in 1980, after Rhodesia's independence and its renaming as Zimbabwe.

After independence, Samora made trips to European countries seeking support for the newly independent country, but he failed to sensitize their governments and failed to gain support from the Western capitalist world. In 1977, at the Third FRELIMO Congress held in Maputo, at which the guerrillas of the liberation struggle and the new members met for the first time, the Government officially adopted Marxism-Leninism and the centrally planned socialist economy as official State policy and economic development model, hoping to obtain support from the European and Asian socialist bloc. It starts to receive some logistical-military support from the Socialist Bloc to fight Renamo and fortify its defences in the face of neighbouring external threats, in the context of the Cold War.

Despite having limited economic resources and having made significant investment in the army, the Popular Forces for the Liberation of Mozambique (FPLM) did not have great capabilities and military intelligence in the face of the material and economic superiority of enemies outside their national borders (Castellano Da Silva, 2017). This internationalist argues that Mozambique was a secondary power in Southern Africa and was only central to regional relations because of the inspiration that Frelimo brought from the independence struggle and the theoretical and practical support that the Front gave to state and non-state forces fighting for transformation of the South African regional order. His analysis of Mozambique's foreign policy points to the period from 1975 to 1988 as the moment of state building, highlighting the role of foreign policy-making elites. His perspective considers that the closing of the country's border with Ian Smith's Rhodesia in 1976 by the Government of Samora Machel – applying the sanctions decreed by the UN against the Rhodesian regime – constituted the first major act of Mozambique's foreign policy.

Such a sanction forced Rhodesia to use South African ports and railways to transport all its imports and exports, causing damage to both the Rhodesian and Mozambican economies. This was an ideological and impetuous decision of the Samora government's foreign policy, which did not have the desired effects, as Mozambique was the only country to apply UN sanctions. It had

drastic effects for Mozambique: the retaliation from Rhodesia that intensified the attacks and bombings installing terror in the center of Mozambique and loss of revenue of millions of US dollars, sacrificing the Mozambican people.

In the geopolitics of Southern Africa, the Samora government had four adversaries: the well-equipped South African armed forces, the Rhodesian troops, the young pioneers who constituted the military arm of President Banda of Malawi, and the Renamo guerrillas, and the population in a war of destabilization. In addition to the military support of the socialist bloc, particularly the USSR, China, North Korea, the Mozambican State also had the presence of battalions of troops from friendly neighbouring states such as Tanzania and Zambia, and, from 1980 onwards, it had the support of troops from Zimbabwe. Even so, this military and logistical support was insufficient in the face of internal and external threats.

## Defence Structures

The FPLM included the General Staff of the Armed Forces and the three branches: army, air force and navy. Mozambique's military capabilities were stable during the Samora government, with a poorly equipped army, but moralized for having defeated the well-equipped Portuguese army. Due to the war and attacks by neighbouring states, there was a militarization of the country and investments in war material with fighter planes, helicopters, anti-aircraft artillery, military training of young people at home and abroad and training of MiG pilots to act in the defence of the territory. Later, the FPLM are transformed into the Armed Forces of Mozambique (FAM).

Castellano da Silva (2017) points out that in the Samora government there was an increase in military capabilities with expenditures in the order of 40% of the country's budget, supported by partners such as the USSR, which enabled the modernization of various sectors. Even so, the various weapons were not used efficiently due to lack of training and preparation of the forces, as well as lack of discipline in military posts, economic resources, and more expressive foreign aid, limiting the combat capabilities of their forces.

Borges Coelho and Macaringue (2002) state that, in addition to regular troops, the Samora Government established an army with five infantry brigades, one of them tanks and some heavy artillery units. Two regular battalions trained in Tanzania; a few platoons hastily formed in Zambia. Later, special battalions were created in strategic locations in the south, center and north of the country, the famous Nova Vida battalions formed in Zambia, Nyanga trained by the Zimbabweans, Dayane, and the Independent Transport

Brigade. In addition to air bases in the south of the country, equipped with hundreds of tanks and BTR battle tanks. Created in 1975 under the name Força Aérea Popular da Libertação (FAPL), the Mozambican air force received support from Cuba and the USSR, particularly from Soviet aircraft to support the Government in the civil war. It had bases in Beira, Nacala and Nampula and a fleet of combat aircraft composed of MiG17, MiG21 and MiG23, MI8, MI24, MI25 helicopters, acquired from the Soviet Union.

In 1979, mandatory military service was instituted. There were Chinese military instructors in Maputo who led courses aimed at transforming Frelimo guerrilla commanders into the first officers of the new regular army. Military aid from the Socialist Bloc only arrived after Mozambique had adhered to the path of socialist development at the FRELIMO Congress of 1977, after which a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was signed between Mozambique and the USSR for a period of twenty years. Adherence to socialism was a *sine qua non* for Soviet military support. After the Treaty, significant amounts of Soviet military equipment, artillery systems, radar, armoured vehicles, and tanks arrived in Maputo. Between 1977-1980, cadres of the new army attended courses in the USSR, but also in Cuba, Bulgaria, Hungary, and the German Democratic Republic (GDR). At the same time, Mozambican officers began courses with Soviet instructors in Mozambique and the USSR (Borges Coelho; Macaringue, 2002).

In the civil-military war between the Mozambican State and Renamo, at times, the country had foreign military forces in the territory. There were presence of troops and military battalions from several African and European countries in Mozambique for combat, training and instruction of Mozambican troops and officers. Tanzanian troops acted in the north of the country, in Cabo-Delgado. From the 1980s onwards, Zimbabwean troops operated in the central provinces of Manica and Sofala, repaying the assistance received from FRELIMO during the armed struggle against the Rhodesian regime before its independence. The Samora government had the support of Zimbabwean military battalions that patrolled the border between the two countries, particularly the railway line linking the port of Beira to Zimbabwe, who were authorized to enter Mozambican territory, pursue and bomb Renamo positions.

The Samora Government also had Soviet, North Korean, Chinese, Cuban and East German military officers. Renamo had the support of South African Boer battalions, Rhodesians, Malawians, Kenyan and American officers. The Mozambican civil-military war revealed the geopolitics of the Cold War. On the Government's side was the European and Soviet socialist world and on the Renamo side were representatives of the capitalist world such

as Portugal, USA, France, Great Britain, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Kenya and Malawi and others who provided economic support. financially, logistically, and militarily to their counterparts in Mozambique. Due to the armed conflict and internal and external threats, Mozambique has become a militarized country and society.

## Coercive Structures

In 1975, the People's Police of Mozambique (PPM) were created, responsible for public security through Police Stations and Posts and the Criminal Investigation Police (PIC) subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior. The State established a capacity for coercion in the urban space thanks to political mobilization, through socialist grassroots structures, ranging from the *Chief of Ten Houses*, *Chief of Quartier*, *Militia Groups*, *Dynamized Group*, *Neighbourhood Circle*, *District Circle*, *Tribunals Popular* and *Party Cells* in government institutions and public enterprises, in addition to advanced checkpoints and military barracks.

Such structures for mobilizing, controlling, and monitoring the population proved to be quite effective, some of which remain in operation to this day. The Frelimo government had an excellent capacity to coerce the populations, inherited from the time of armed struggle and reinforced with the socialist organization and administration of the territory. In addition to the political mobilization arms of the Frelimo Party constituted by OJM and OMM, the State had a structure of social control that began in the neighbourhoods and ended at the highest levels, consisting of a Chief of ten houses, followed by the Chief of the Quartier, Dynamic Group, Neighbourhood Secretary, Neighbourhood Circle, as well as Party Cells in all state-owned institutions and companies and even in hospitals.

The Mozambican State had an internal coercive capacity, conquered shortly after independence with the "Operation Cleaning" conducted in 1974 during the Transitional Government and the "Operation Production" in 1983, as well as the creation of "Reeducation Camps" that removed thousands of people considered unproductive from the urban space to make them productive and useful to society (Quembo, 2015). These Operations and Camps were coercive mechanisms of urban management, to reverse the rural exodus, decongest cities, reduce urban problems, and remove from those areas' individuals considered unproductive, who could question and cause instability to the regime and at the same time increase production of food in the countryside, sending them to rural areas.

Gradually, attacks by Renamo and the South African and Rhodesian apartheid regime undermined military capabilities. The control model (socialist structure of society) and the military battalions provided certain security in urban areas. Even so, there were cases of banditry on the outskirts of large cities. To curb urban banditry, the government instituted checkpoints and guides for traveling citizens. Anyone traveling more than 60 km should obtain a walking guide from the neighbourhood authorities authorizing and justifying the reason for the trip. Only with the walking guide could citizens buy bus tickets. In addition to this mechanism, an armed police force was created, the militiamen, who conducted individually or in pairs the night guard in the neighbourhoods, armed with machine guns.

In addition to the Ministry of Defence, the National Service for Popular Security (SNASP) was created, a military and paramilitary intelligence agency of the Government to guarantee the security of the State, having superpowers determined by the Constitution, reporting only to the PR. SNAP was the government's secret police that provided the State with strategic information and was supposed to protect the country's sovereignty and independence. This body acted like Soviet and North Korean-style spy agencies in the identification, arrest and even elimination of subjects who contested the party and the state internally and externally.

It was a fundamental organ in coercion, having imprisoned thousands of Mozambicans who were sent to re-education camps and others having disappeared at the hands of its agents, being therefore quite feared. SNASP became famous inside and outside the country, having even acted in Portugal, South Africa, Malawi, Kenya, and Tanzania to imprison and even physically eliminate "enemies of the State", Frelimo dissidents and Renamo representatives in those countries. This entire structure of civil, paramilitary, and military control prevented the population and individuals from questioning and criticizing Frelimo, the government, and its leaders, for fear of being arrested and tortured as reactionaries.

According to Gaspar (2015), legitimized by the ideological struggle of the Cold War, defence and security strategies during the one-party regime shaped the legal and institutional framework, as well as successive armed conflicts contributed to creating a culture of secrecy that it was incorporated into the Constitution of the Republic, the Defence and Security Policy, the National Defence Law, and the Press Law, among other instruments. In this way, national security and the right to information went on opposite sides. The Government's military capabilities Samora have declined over time due to external pressures caused by attacks by the apartheid regime and Ian Smith's Rhodesia, allied to Renamo's war of destabilization. As one moved towards

the interior regions of the country, the central and party power was shrinking.

Socialism was not widespread in rural areas and was not understood by the illiterate population. As socialism progressed towards the interior and north of the country, socialism was losing strength and could not cope with social reality, even though the party-state had tried to implement it through Communal Villages and Re-educations Camps and transferred groups urban areas to the interior and regions close to the borders. Lalá (2002) points to economic devastation, social chaos in rural areas as reasons for the increasing loss of legitimacy of the State, as well as its absence, ineffectiveness throughout the national territory and the inability to protect populations and provide humanitarian aid to alleviate extreme poverty.

Mithá (2012) analyses the subjective dimension of politics and the behaviour of individuals during the Samora and Chissano governments, showing the existence of a strong proximity to the State sustained by Frelimo, particularly in urban areas. On the other hand, the rural area – different from the urban area controlled by the central power – escaped the control of the State, which reacted violently and messed with the dispersed social fabric that was vulnerable to the “enemy”. Inspired by Tanzanian African socialism - Ujamaa, the model of society implemented by the party-State in Mozambique encountered resistance and even opposition among the rural population in the most remote areas and attached to traditional values. It was in these regions that Renamo rallied its sympathizers, as well as attacked and increased the number of guerrillas to its war, through abductions and forced incorporation of children, young people and men and women.

## Changes in the State's Foreign Policy

The beginning of the 1980s marks a turning point in Mozambique's foreign policy, in a clear attempt at autonomy from the USSR and approximation to the capitalist world. The different food, military and economic crises caused by the Renamo destabilization war, the South African and Rhodesian aggressions and the insufficiency of Soviet support led Samora to a historic turn. As the situation worsened, Mozambique applied to become a member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), but its entry was vetoed by the USSR, in retaliation for the Samora Government's attempt to balance itself as a “non-aligned” state, trying to raise support from both socialist and capitalist blocs. With the veto, Mozambique found itself deprived of the socialist bloc's economic and logistical resources that it needed so much at the time.



The USSR's decision leads Mozambique to try to get closer to the capitalist world in search of financial support, at a time when the economic ultraliberalism of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher was expanding its influence around the world, attracting adepts in the Third World (Abrahamsson; Nilsson, 1994). Samora concluded that the country's situation was unsustainable in the face of South African ground attacks and aerial bombings and their support for Renamo's war of destabilization that killed the population, instituted terror, and destroyed economic and social infrastructure. Allied to this situation was the survival of the government and regime itself. Samora decided to start negotiations with the apartheid regime with a view to stopping the attacks and support for Renamo.

After years of preparation and negotiations by the core of advisors, strategically, Samora signed the Incomáti Agreement with the South African regime in March 1984, a non-aggression and good-neighbourly agreement, in which Mozambique committed to deactivate the ANC bases on its territory and South Africa to cease its support for Renamo. This decision displeased Mozambique's partners and friends in the region, Tanzania and Zambia and their heads of state who refuse to participate in the signing ceremony of the Agreement. The ANC and the Black South African population felt betrayed by Samora. The Incomáti Agreement was considered a betrayal by the ANC, South African Communist Party, Black South African population, and other anti-apartheid movements, including Black American movements.

Lalá (2002) argues that the Agreement with South Africa ignored the internal dimension of the Mozambican conflict, by marginalizing Renamo, one of the belligerent parties and part of the problem. Despite having been created by Rhodesia as an instrument of destabilization and then supported by South Africa and always dependent on external support to remain an operational military force, over the years Renamo has gained popular support, particularly from groups that felt excluded or marginalized by the policies of the Frelimo Government.

According to Ferrão (1997), negotiations for the Agreement began in 1982 with the visit of the Assistant Undersecretary for African Affairs of the US Department of State Frank Wisner to Maputo, who encouraged the opening of the Mozambican embassy in the US and the opening of negotiations with the apartheid regime to stop South African aggression. Even with the beginning of the dialogue, the South African aggressions against Mozambique did not stop and in 1983, the South Africans bombed Matola.

That same year, Samora called the Mozambican ambassadors in Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe to Maputo and appointed a commission composed of them to select future ambassadors in the various countries where

Mozambique was going to open embassies. The movement of ambassadors by the Government aimed to develop relations with the US and other countries, make Mozambique known, revive the solidarity groups that had supported FRELIMO in the colonial war and block Renamo. In March 1984, Samora summoned all Mozambican ambassadors to Maputo to attend the signing of the Incomáti Agreement. The signing of the Agreement in a public ceremony was a clear message to the South African people that from now on they would not count on the help of Mozambique (Ferrão, 2007). Disappointed and in retaliation for the Incomáti Agreement, university professors and researchers from South Africa, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and other nationalities who lived in Mozambique and supported Mozambican institutions left the country, which was once again suffering from the exodus of technical staff.

Months later, Samora begins the first negotiations with the IMF and WB in Washington to obtain economic and financial assistance and signs the first agreement that would be implemented in the following years. Mozambique is admitted as a member at that meeting and that same year, the US sends five million dollars to support the private sector of agriculture (Ferrão, 2007). It is against this backdrop that in 1985 Samora travels to Washington and London for the historic encounters with Reagan and Thatcher that had infuriated the Soviets.

According to Ferrão (2007), in 1985, Samora is invited for an official working visit to the US. Samora's visits to Washington and Downing Street were of a political nature, to address Mozambique's bilateral relations with the two powers, and did not include any economic agreement. Even so, Samora met with representatives of the IMF and WB. Renamo had sympathizers and dedicated support in the two rival parties in the US, as did the apartheid regime. In 1986 there were Mozambicans working at the IMF/WB.

Despite the change in the country's foreign policy, the attempt at autonomy from Moscow, the signing of the non-aggression pact with apartheid and rapprochement with the Western world and the Bretton Woods Institutions, Mozambican diplomacy ignored Renamo and refused to negotiate with this counterrevolutionary movement. Samora continues the rhetoric against Renamo, classifying the armed conflict as a "war of destabilization, calling its guerrillas "armed bandits", "lakes of colonialism and imperialism", not granting any kind of truce, believing in the military solution against this movement, dragging the conflict for years.

When analysing African Marxist military regimes, Visentini (2020) puts forward the hypothesis that the revolutionary processes had autochthonous roots and that the connection with the Soviet camp was a later instrumental element, although indispensable, with Moscow's interest being limited. The

military ethos of African governments in Marxist-Leninist socialism and the elements that were familiar to it – centralization and discipline – were useful for the realization of the program they proposed to execute. The appeal of African revolutionary governments to Marxism-Leninism served as a source of international support in the context of the Cold War, in a context in which the USSR, China and the socialist community in general represented the only consistent source of military supplies, legitimation, support political and economic. These were the conditions necessary for their survival. However, Soviet aid, in addition to creating dependence, was restricted to the military field, being insufficient in the economic-financial field (Visentini, 2020). In his view, without the construction of the State, the existence of ruling elites and the social transformations promoted by revolutionary processes, there would be no international role for Mozambique. In this way, the author highlights the regional impact of the Mozambican revolutionary process and regime, which generated trends and countertrends, as well as internationalized violent conflicts and civil wars.

The charismatic leadership of Samora Machel, the excessive centralization in the decision-making process in the hands of the PR and the hard core of the party prevented Mozambican counterintelligence actions in predicting attacks from enemy states such as South Africa and Rhodesia, as well as the recognition of the nationalist character. and the existence of an internal support base for the war promoted by Renamo, classifying them as “armed bandits”.

## Foreign Policy of the Chissano Government (1987-2005)

Chissano became President of the People’s Republic of Mozambique in 1987, succeeding Samora Machel, in a direct transition from Frelimo. Chissano was a head of state with strong political experience; he had been Prime Minister of the Transitional Government from 1974 to 1975, MNE during the Samora Machel Government, and had occupied functions in FRELIMO delegations abroad during the colonial struggle. But it comes at a turbulent time after Machel’s death and during Mozambique’s worst crisis. The country was torn apart by the fratricidal war with Renamo, with the social and economic infrastructures destroyed by the war of destabilization and without support from the socialist world that was in unprecedented crisis.

The Joaquim Chissano government was marked by the political-economic transition, characterized by the abandonment of the socialist model and the opening of Mozambique to the free market economy. It is in

the Chissano Governance that Mozambique's cooperation with the Bretton Woods Institutions, initiated by Samora Machel in 1984, took effect and accelerated. The State initiated a series of structural adjustment policies, following the IMF/WB primer, which consisted of opening the market to imports from the capitalist world, in the privatization of various sectors of the Mozambican economy, in the resizing and privatization of large public companies, industries and factories, reduction in the number of workers.

From 1990 onwards, Mozambique changed its political-economic system and the Constitution adhering to liberalism and multipartyism. In 1992, the General Peace Agreement (AGP) was signed, putting an end to the civil war between Frelimo and Renamo that had lasted 16 years. In 1994, the first multi-party general elections – presidential and legislative – were held, which were won by Frelimo, with no alternation of political power. The approved electoral law benefited the party that was already in power. Thus, there were no significant changes in the political life of the country, which continued with the same socialist environment and structure: services, institutions, and public companies' partisan with active Frelimo cells, including in hospitals.

There was an accelerated systemic economic change in the country with the full adherence to the IMF/WB policies and its structural adjustment recipes. The political elite remained in power and tried to transform itself into an economic elite. With the money distributed by the Bretton Woods Institutions, there was a wave of privatization without national entrepreneurs "from scratch", which transformed the old comrades and leaders of Frelimo party-state into the "new bosses". Socialist comrades become entrepreneurs by snapping up public enterprises through privatization, without having experience in business management.

There was an unsuccessful attempt by the party-state to transform the national political elite into an economic elite. In banks and credit unions, loans were granted only to Party-State members and without guarantee of return, ignoring small non-partisan national investors. Years later, the financial system registered economic scandals because of large bank loans that were never paid off. Most industries, companies, services, and banks privatized by national entrepreneurs linked to Frelimo will declare bankruptcy years later due to mismanagement and competition from investors and foreign companies that offer modernized services, of better quality and at competitive prices. Thus, a Mozambican middle class was born without its own money, originating from the privatization of industries, companies, services and public banks, whose capital came from economic-financial scandals and the appropriation of goods and services from the former socialist state.

The Foreign Policy of the Chissano Government was characterized

by the opening of Mozambique to the policies of the IMF and WB and to international trade with the Western capitalist world. With Chissano, cooperation with institutions of the capitalist world took place, whose conversations began in the previous government of Samora Machel. The Chissano Government was able to ease the tensions between Mozambique and the Western capitalist world, particularly with the US and the International Community. Mozambique had started to receive a series of technicians and co-operators' from the Western capitalist world, as well as foreign investment, in exchange for the country's adhesion to the market economy (Hanlon, 1997).

However, Chissano's foreign policy had its consequences in the economic and labour sector, with privatizations leading millions of Mozambican workers to unemployment, the closing of important national industries and factories, which were considered obsolete or outdated by the implemented capitalist model. To open its economy to the international market and to apply the guidelines of the IMF and WB, the textile industry, the cashew industry that occupied the top places in the world loses its competition to the detriment of cashew nut exports from India and Brazil. Thus, Mozambique starts to import products that were previously produced nationally. In 1992 there is a change in the country's foreign policy in relation to the Timorese issue, when Mozambique and Indonesia sign a cooperation agreement, formalizing the establishment of diplomatic relations.

This decision drew criticism from Mozambican civil society and protest from the Timor-Leste Revolutionary Front (FRETILIN). Faced with the controversy, Frelimo argues that the Mozambican state has always sought to establish diplomatic relations with all states, including those whose ideology is contrary to its own. This change of position was consistent with the economic pragmatism of the Chissano Government, which saw Indonesia as a strong player in Southeast Asia and a future trading partner, as well as anticipated, trying to prevent Indonesia from supporting Renamo in opening Mozambique to the multiparty system (Sá; De Lucca, 2021). With the end of the armed conflict, the Chissano Government's foreign policy shifts the focus of war efforts to economic development and poverty alleviation, aiming to obtain international aid and foreign debt forgiveness for its developmental project.

## Coercive Structures

During the war, to guarantee security, the transport companies had their own private militias ranging from 15 to 60 men who guaranteed the

security of the columns on long-distance, interprovincial trips. These militias were made up of ex-soldiers from both sides and deserters, armed with guns and machine guns or even anti-aircraft guns. They travelled in vans at the front and at the end of the bus columns. Sometimes, small cannons or anti-aircraft guns were attached to the roof of these trucks or vans to demonstrate firepower to the enemy.

Many of these businesspeople were Frelimo members or sympathizers and made contributions to the army and the Party. Those company carriers that were not in the “scheme” were left unprotected and did not have the monitoring and proper protection of the Mozambican army, being the target of frequent attacks that resulted in deaths, injuries and loss of buses and trucks and other damages with goods, goods, and services. Under the Chissano Government, the National Service for Popular Security (SNASP) – the state’s intelligence agency and secret police – was transformed into the State Information and Security Service (SISE) in 1991, maintaining the same powers and *modus operandi*. Both SNASP and SISE had superpowers determined by the Constitution, reporting only to the PR.

Soon after, at the end of 1992, the PPM was transformed into the Police of the Republic of Mozambique (PRM), in the context of the revision of the 1990 Constitution and the AGP in 1992. In 1999, the Rapid Intervention Force (FIR) was created, a special unit and reserve guarantee of public order, destined to combat declared violence whose resolution went beyond the normal means of action. The FIR was particularly active in dispersing peaceful civil society demonstrations. There are no significant changes in the security defence forces - PRM, PIC and SISE - they maintain the same powers and forms of action. Despite the democratization process that began in 1990, the socialist control structure was maintained, although it lost force with the end of the armed conflict.

Despite the democratization that began in 1990, the socialist control structure remained in society, although it lost its vigour with the end of the armed conflict. This structure was always used to issue declarations of residence, an important document for obtaining an identity card and passport, as well as for enrolling in educational institutions, opening bank accounts, etc. The same structure was used annually in the process of recruiting young people for compulsory military service (SMO) as places for the census of future young men. There has always been political use of these institutions and spaces, particularly during electoral periods for the purposes of political mobilization and organization, and even Frelimo party campaigns. Military registration and subsequent recruitment were and continued to be powerful instruments of coercion on young people, as they define their future. Going to

the “troop” or not can insert young people into the army and into future jobs that require military training such as border guards, forest reserves, customs, customs, private security companies or delay their studies in high school or university. Often, the SMO was used as a punishment for young people who were considered rebels or who sympathized with the opposition.

With the formation of the Mozambican Defence Forces (FADM) after the AGP, Mozambique received support from Western countries such as Portugal, France, Great Britain, and Zimbabwe, which provided instructors and battalion training to form the new army, but the Mozambican Government did not maximize such aid, having accepted only training in the demining area. Of the 30,000 men planned, the FADM consisted of around 12,000 men (Borges Coelho; Macaringue, 2002). Renamo guerrillas were never integrated into the FADM, as predicted by the AGP.

In 2003, PRM had about twenty thousand agents, in a country with more than 25 million people, 1 agent for every 1,250 citizens, a small number to prevent and fight crime in Mozambique, in a context in which repression was the word most pronounced by police spokespeople and the country had signed and ratified all international conventions on civil and political rights (Centro de Integridade Pública, 2016). This civil society organization was concerned about the militarization of police training in basic, medium, and higher education centers, with few hours of theoretical education related to human rights and the use of the AK-47 as an official weapon, including by cadets in training. The change in the Constitution in 2004 recognized the legal pluralism and traditional authorities that were valued and promoted by the State that had persecuted them in the past and claimed by Renamo.

## Defence Structures

With the end of the armed conflict, military capabilities were reduced due to the stress of war. With the GPA and the political-ideological shift towards the capitalist market economy, support from the traditional military partners Cuba and the USSR ceased. Without their support, the air force is the sector that suffered the most from budget cuts, being reduced to a symbolic force and the aircraft are left in precarious conditions and without maintenance at the air bases. On the other hand, it is necessary to link the decrease in military capabilities to the change in the scope of security, which, in addition to its strategic-military character, also began to encompass human security, something that impacted the expenditures that States made with the armed forces.



In August 1994, a new army was created, the Armed Forces of Mozambique (FADM) from the integration of the FAM and Renamo guerrillas, with two generals appointed to lead the troops, one from Frelimo and the other from Renamo. However, Renamo forces and their leaders were never incorporated into the FADM. With the end of the armed conflict, the army loses relevance and investments, sending defence and security forces to barracks and barracks. The country's agenda focuses on reconstruction and economic development. The military arsenal inherited from the socialist period and the civil war becomes obsolete and is dismantled, sold little by little on the parallel market.

After the AGP and the formation of a national army, there was a disinvestment in Mozambique's military capabilities. There was a process of demobilization of former army personnel and Renamo guerrillas and formation of a single army of 30,000 men under the terms of the AGP. Military training and training as well as its fortification with new equipment was left aside, not being a priority. Gradually, strategic parts of the war arsenal, engines and turbines of combat planes and Soviet helicopters and other parts were being sold on the parallel market, particularly in South Africa. Part of the military bases and barracks were deactivated, giving way to housing, roads, state infrastructure and the deactivated air bases or transformed into commercial airports. According to the FADM (2022), the Mozambican army participated in peacekeeping operations in Burundi, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Timor-Leste, as well as in 1997 it participated in joint Blue Hungwe operations in Zimbabwe and Blue Crane in Africa. of the South in 1999.

Part of the military figures were awarded new ranks and others went into reserve. In fact, confidence and a climate of peace discouraged military investment, in a country that was still facing drought threats and the population was suffering from hunger. Gradually there was a rejuvenation of the military forces, with the transition to the reserve of high-ranking soldiers and the introduction of mandatory military service annually for young people who turn eighteen years of age. Regarding defence, the 1992 GPA provided for the presence of multinational troops in Mozambican territory – blue helmets – under ONUMOZ until the first multiparty general elections were held in 1994. As well as the creation of a single army with thirty thousand men, of which half came from the FAM and the other half from Renamo and its transformation into FADM, with a clear numerical reduction in the number of military personnel.

## Final Remarks

Mozambique's foreign policy was influenced by the domestic, regional, and international scenario: the destabilization war, the hegemony of apartheid regimes in Southern Africa and the bipolar dispute of the Cold War. The Samora Machel government, marked the revolutionary period of construction of the Mozambican state, being characterized by a foreign policy and diplomacy of liberation, committed to the anti-colonial struggle, against the hegemony of minority governments of apartheid in Southern Africa, for the international solidarity and a firm stance on international issues such as Western Sahara, Timor-Leste, and Palestine. Influenced by socialism in a one-party regime, the foreign policy of the Samora government was the target of internal and external pressures from the global bipolarization of the Cold War: the Renamo destabilization war and aggressions by the neighbouring states of South Africa, Rhodesia, and Malawi.

External relations were intense and initiative-taking, inserting Mozambique into Southern Africa, the African continent, and the international scene – through the creation and participation in regional forums and organizations such as the ELF and SADCC – making it a political protagonist and fundamental actor, influencing the destinations in the region. As Soviet military support was insufficient for the four fronts of conflict, without economic aid and technology transfer, Mozambique had taken a turn in its foreign policy with the Incomáti Agreement and the beginning of IMF and WB negotiations. The Cold War, international factors, regional dynamics, and national circumstances influenced Mozambique's foreign policy.

The Chissano government was marked by the country's political-economic transition, end of socialism and external imposition – of the multiparty model, structural adjustment policies, capitalist market economy – from the Western world and Bretton Woods institutions, in exchange for economic aid. There were changes in the paradigm and agenda of Mozambique's foreign policy, which had become dependent on international aid, without autonomy and foreign policy was dictated from the outside in. There was a redefinition of the regional and international role of Mozambique, highlighting the regional and international foreign policy agenda, liberal development of SADC and the IMF/WB. Mozambique ceased to be an important regional and Soviet socialist player and had become a pawn of Western capitalism. Even after the introduction of multipartyism and democratization, Mozambique's foreign policy continued to be linked to the political-ideological interests of the ruling party and without the participation of non-state actors. Political-party and personal trust had been main criteria for the appointment of the MNE and

ambassadors.

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## ABSTRACT

The article analyses the Mozambican foreign policy in the Samora Machel and Joaquim Chissano Governments. It uses as a method Rosenau's comparative foreign policy analysis and the theoretical contributions of Putnam's two-level game logic. The Samora government's foreign policy was one of regional liberation, antiapartheid and solidarity with oppressed states and peoples. Engaged in the Socialist Bloc, the Mozambican State faced internal and external constraints from the Cold War. Decisions were ideological, centred on the charismatic leader and President of the Republic. With his own agenda, Samora knew how to manage popular will with nationalizations, but Marxism-Leninism imposed military doctrine and diplomatic inflexibility. The Chissano Government's external relations were one of political-economic pragmatism, it sought new ideologies and opened itself up to dialogue and negotiations with unlikely partners. Considered a technocrat and an excellent diplomat, Chissano knew how to negotiate the end of the civil war, political-economic opening and help from the Western world. However, he made unpopular decisions: structural adjustment policies, transition from socialism to capitalism and changes to the Constitution. There were profound changes between the two Governments: from being an important regional political player and Soviet pawn, Mozambique became dependent on international aid and redefined its role, becoming a regional strategic economic partner, whose foreign policy agenda came to be influenced by international economic bodies.

## KEYWORDS

Comparative Foreign Policy; Mozambique; Samora Machel; Joaquim Chissano.

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# NERINT STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

## Russian Geopolitics and Its Sense of Insecurity

José Alexandre Altahyde Hage<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the Cold War, in 1991, some terms were widely publicized in debates on international relations, as well as in the press in general. Perhaps the most well-known term is Francis Fukuyama's "end of history". The author, using the thinking of the philosopher Georg W. F. Hegel, no longer believed in the progression of history through ideological changes or great political and military leaps, as in the case of Napoleon Bonaparte's conquests against the Ancien Régime in Europe. With this end of history, for Fukuyama, under the demise of the clash between the United States and the Soviet Union, the resulting international system should not undergo sudden changes, but palliative ones.

Thus, the struggle between territorial states (as is demanded in geopolitics) for natural resources, space and other consecrated items of international politics, should give way to a new global agenda, whose premise would be that of the environment, human rights, parliamentary democracy, free trade and, currently, green power<sup>2</sup>, possibly integrated into programs for the administration of world values. And for the resolution of external conflicts there would be the use of soft power through a regulatory power of order, the United States, and international law applied to international regimes.

In the conservative-realist camp, Samuel Huntington also sought to take a position in the debate by launching his equally famous Clash of Civilizations, which should be the keynote of high-intensity international conflicts that, in part, would replace struggles and wars of classical and geopolitical projections. Conflicts over values and cultures could replace the old ones of territorial or material color. Somehow, the two professors agreed on one point: the decrease of the territorial state relative importance.

If the premises shown above cannot be ignored, in the same way,

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<sup>2</sup> Within green power there are efforts to replace nuclear energy and fossil fuels, as well as coal, in favor of renewable fuels. This intention is part of efforts to "decarbonize" the international economy. The European Union has been pursuing these policies quite intensively.

there is no way to turn our backs on the fact that the old geopolitics has not been exhausted, especially by that group of states called great powers, which includes Russia, the United States and China. In the case of the Kremlin, it became clear that the disappearance of the Soviet Union was interpreted as an incalculable political tragedy for Russian power, whose desired recovery will not occur without suffering for Europe, as in the case of Ukraine or Central Asia, Georgia and others.

It would not be credible to observe the conflict between Russia and Ukraine without taking into account the geopolitical movement in which Moscow seeks to present itself as a rising power and, to that end, use its fear of increased national security to mark its position. At this point, set out in Ukraine, Russia makes clear its view that it will not allow the presence of multinational NATO forces, or the employment of agents and institutions of a liberal, cosmopolitan composition, carrying values considered contrary to Russian interests.

There is a problem here. In the composition of Russian power, its expanded national security is not only defined by the border known as the “near abroad”, Ukraine and Belarus, at first hand, but also by countries that are ingrained with what can be called the spirit or genesis of what it is to be Russian. The idea that Western forces entered Ukraine during the current century promoting the new agenda constrains Russia, since this presence can bring out effects, in contradiction to the country’s ruling elite, of which President Vladimir Putin is the most important known character. The most feared effect would be the destabilization of Russian power.

This is a result of a process in which Kiev has been seen as a testing ground for the movement of groups in favor of the political, economic and cultural program of the European Union, which is more open, but in conflict with the position represented by Moscow. The Western step forward to Maidan Square (Euromaidan), in 2014, and the prompt entry of Russian forces into Crimea, as a counter-response, are exemplary of this fear of insecurity expressed by Russia in the face of the liberalization process of its near abroad and its attempt (real or not) of joining the Atlantic Alliance.

In the first place, the linking of Ukraine to Western expansion projects, would already be an indication that there would be a geopolitical dispute in Eastern Europe between the United States, with material assistance from some NATO powers, and Russia for regional preeminence. The current war can also lead to another observation, quite complex for the moment: what is the role of international law, treaties, and national sovereignty? For example, why Ukraine could not be affiliated with institutions and values considered modern?



In the scope of power politics, in which geopolitics is an integral part, the proximity with law is hampered by the fact that the former is not developed by the ideal or virtue, but by the correlation of forces existing between powers. Therefore, Ukraine is in a paradoxical situation, as a result of the positive peculiarities of Ukrainian geopolitics. Why is Ukraine paradoxical? Due to its geographical location, its cultural genesis similar to the Russian one, for its economy with a progressive aspect, and for being the passage of an intricate network of gas pipelines towards a good number of European States.

In fact, Ukraine has become a prisoner of its own geopolitical situation, practically intertwined with Russia's most complex interests that emerge from cultural, political and logistical particularities. At least 80% of the energy consumed on the continent passes through the Ukrainian territory – natural gas and oil from Russian or adjacent reserves. Of course, as an “energy hub” Kiev's role is fundamental for Russian movements in terms of Moscow's power projection in Eastern Europe.

On the cultural side, it should be noted that Ukraine's admission to the European Union would minimally disturb Russia in what it thinks are fundamental values of Slavophilia, but it would not be overdramatic, as money is always welcome. However, the most delicate step that the neighbor could take would be to apply for NATO membership in the face of the weight exerted by Moscow abroad. Ukraine represents the most sensitive area for the Russian geopolitical view that, in the long term, intends to establish a connection called Eurasianism, having the center of gravity in Russia and spilling over to Eastern Europe, bordering Germany and embracing Central Asia, in Kazakhstan, for example.

Due to the issues exposed above, it is possible to envision the current war in Eastern Europe not only as an expression of an international system in disarray, but also as an unfolding of geopolitical projections, whose neuralgic points are still boiling and not completely exhausted by the powers in question – maybe not even in the near future. Knowing the nature of international politics, without yearning for virtuous achievements, could be the first step towards achieving an international concert with some reasonableness. In this, the right and the duty are not guaranteed to prevail, because security issues still matter for Russia, the United States, China or the European States.

## Crisis in Ukraine: War and Games

Francisco Carlos Teixeira da Silva<sup>3</sup>

Xi Jinping is said to have conditioned support for Putin for “definitive” action in the Black Sea and Baltic Sea to the end of the Beijing Winter Olympics, which will take place between February 4th and 20th. The attempt of a “Color Revolution” in Kazakhstan, the Chinese border near Xinjiang, and the Lithuanian provocation over Taiwan, convinced Beijing: there is a need to draw red lines. Past agreements, whether on the militarization of the post-Soviet zone or on the “One China Policy”, are being put to the test by powerful forces in the West.

Coincidentally, the challenge against both Russia and China (the recognition of Taiwan) came from the new Baltic/Black Sea countries. By analyzing the weakness of the West, as shown from the Afghanistan fiasco to the lukewarmness of their leadership, Moscow and Beijing had decided that this is the moment.

Only the United Kingdom of Elizabeth Truss — the warmonger on duty — remains in a position to support Kiev at any cost. In Germany, Olaf Scholz, in the government, and Friedrich Merz, in the opposition, have already warned that Berlin will not follow any war or new sanctions. Macron distanced himself in anger at the betrayal of the AUKUS (Australia, United States and United Kingdom), for which he lost his military contracts with Australia.

Russian and Allied readiness in Kazakhstan, supported by China, spelled out Moscow’s full willingness to push NATO back to 1997, or even 1991, after the reunification of Germany and the signing of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe in Paris. What Moscow wants, more than a destructive war for all, is a new Helsinki Agreement, as in 1975, this time enshrining a new world order. But before that, it must make clear the status of the post-Soviet areas, still under dispute—and among them, the borders of Ukraine and the demilitarization of the ex-Soviet “near abroad”.

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## The Return of Russia: the Military and Diplomatic Dimensions

Francisco Carlos Teixeira da Silva<sup>4</sup>

We have to go beyond information warfare (on both sides) and stick to the structural: Russian military planning is classic. One-off attacks on transport, communication and infrastructure nerve centers paralyzing Ukraine, in addition to intense cyberattacks. Thus, airports, railways and road-railway rings are the central targets. We are not seeing cities being bombed en masse, barring mistakes on both sides — all terrible for the civilian population. What we are seeing are peripheral areas of junctions and infrastructure nodes, in addition to the occasional terrible errors.

With Ukraine's mobility capacity paralyzed, the operation of "punctual" occupation of political-administrative centers, such as ministries, barracks and, of course, the presidency begins. These are the fights we see on television, even if poorly documented (day, time, place, troops). Due to the development of the projected actions, there is no total territorial occupation plan. At this stage, Ukraine would be willing to negotiate with the invaders.

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Figure 1: Ukrainian territory occupied by the Russians, 26 February



Source: Institute for the Study of War via BBC.

The alternative would be the fall of the government and the imposition of a puppet regime. At the moment, for Russia, the most convenient thing is to negotiate with the weakened Zelensky government, instead of imposing a puppet without any international recognition. The Ukrainian president signing the peace would make a good photo for the Russians. After that, it is possible for him to be knocked down. But direct negotiation with him is highly legitimizing for Russians. Everything will depend on the price of peace — “Woe to the vanquished” (*Vae victis*, from Latin), as we have known since Antiquity.

What will be on the table: (1) The transfer of the entirety of Donetsk and Lugansk; (2) A neutrality statute for the rest of Ukraine; (3) Optional use of the Russian language in the national education system. And explosive clauses: the state of sovereignty over Odessa, Mariupol, Krakov and their oblasts.

In every confrontation we must highlight the position of the so-called “West”, in this case NATO and the European Union. Before the war, there was

clear support for Ukraine, showing material guarantees of security for the new country. In particular, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg behaved as if there was a guarantee of Ukrainian sovereignty. However, within the European Union there was no cohesion as announced by President Biden about “Atlantic solidarity”.

After the start of the war, Germany, Italy and Austria immediately refused to make a radical break with the Russians. Economic and strategic interests imply lessening the US emphasis on sanctions. European losses are already high with them (agricultural market, machinery, and equipment and, of course, gas and oil), forcing the change of commercial axis, more expensive around 25% and 30%, towards the United States and the US companies in the Middle East.

Everything is still very fluid.

## Joe Biden's Summit of the Americas

Leonardo Granato<sup>5</sup>

The events surrounding the recent installment of the Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles invite reflection on the role of this forum for dialogue and consultation for Latin America, and on the strategy of Democrat leader Joe Biden in this framework. In this sense, we seek to bring here some questions that contribute to the analysis.

The IX Summit of the Americas took place in June 2022 and, for the second time in the forum's history, the United States hosted it. The first time was in 1994, as in the first Summit in Miami, which focused on the launch of the US proposal for hemispheric integration called the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). This first summit meeting reactivated, under new guises, the 1990's Initiative for the Americas, the first post-Cold War US strategy aimed at Latin America since the Alliance for Progress in 1960. Of course, the question that emerged was about the real purpose of having a forum that overlapped with the institutional framework of the Organization of American States, aimed at discussing issues that affected the entire Western Hemisphere.

During the 1990s, in a context of full expansion of neoliberal capitalism, the Summits of the Americas were part of a set of initiatives that the United States carried out at the political, economic and military levels, in

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order to keep the newly redemocratized Latin-American region under control. At first, the neoliberal structural reforms based, among other assumptions, on trade liberalization and financial deregulation, were part of the new prescription of the American power, that subsumed to the US the standards of growth and the external insertion of Latin countries. Secondly, as a way of offsetting its external trade deficit at the expense of the Latin American region, the hegemon promoted bilateral free trade agreements that, while the FTAA project advanced, sought to cover the entire continent. At the military level, as the hegemonic position achieved by the United States depended on its “secure” relationship with the rest of the continent, military bases and intelligence forces for Latin America proved to be a priority.

However, in the 2000s, the 2001 attacks, the 2008 financial crisis and the rise of China and Russia as major players in the international system showed a context of multipolarity different from that of the 1990s. In this framework, the new popular and progressive governments, committed to neoliberal reform agendas, sought to implement policies of socioeconomic development and regional integration, in open defiance of US interests in the region. In fact, it was at the 2005 Summit of the Americas, held in the city of Mar del Plata, that the discussions around the FTAA as a common horizon to be reached were ended under the argument of the great asymmetries and inequalities that permeated the countries of the continent. However, despite the difficulties in achieving the original objectives of US power, the Summits of the Americas have survived over the years.

Such survival becomes more expressive when we consider the events of recent years. Four years have passed since the 2018 Lima Summit, which Donald Trump did not attend. In the midst of a post-pandemic context and a restrictive international scenario, largely as a result of the war in Ukraine, it was to be expected, on the part of the Joe Biden government, a pragmatic diplomatic posture that not only favored a space for a unifying dialogue in its “own backyard”, as opposed to the attitude of its predecessor, but also guaranteeing concrete material incentives, translated into the expectation of favoring a certain level of commercial flow and investments in the region. Such a stance would have avoided an even greater distance between the United States and the Latin American region, immersed in a critical socioeconomic situation, and under the growing influence of the interests of China – the only country that, according to the Biden administration’s own National Security Strategy, would be able to muster enough power to threaten American hegemony.

In fact, according to the June 2022 report by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), which analyzes the repercussions of the war in Ukraine in the region, 33.7% of the regional

population will be in poverty by the end of the year, while 14.9% were in extreme poverty. This is just a sample of a broader critical and complex picture in which the region is inserted. Regarding the second question, even though the Chinese presence in Latin America has been reaffirming the continent's external dependence by stimulating the traditional agricultural export pattern, there is no way not to draw attention to the role that the Asian giant has been playing in terms of trade and investments, as evidenced by data published in the LAC-China Network Monitor.

However, despite having a whole “favorable” scenario to make the Los Angeles Summit an instrument that honors the motto “Building a sustainable, resilient and equitable future”, the United States has shown itself, once again, negligent to the reorientation of the stagnant relations with Latin American countries. In fact, after Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela were left out of the Summit, and the negative resonances expressed in the criticism and in the absence of several leaders in the region, the Biden administration's lack of interest in adopting a responsible strategy that covered ideologically and territorially became evident for the whole continent, which would be up to the demands of the current conjuncture.

As a closure, we draw attention to at least two elements that stem from that framework. One of them, of a broader geopolitical nature, concerns the setback and frustration that, once again, the Summit of the Americas as a mechanism for dialogue and cooperation expressed (and, this time, amidst, as already mentioned, the growing Chinese influence). The second element, related to US domestic politics, refers to the Biden administration's electoral promise to implement a new strategy of cooperation with Latin American neighbors, which would represent a clear change in the practices of the Trump administration. What happened at the recent Summit confirms that Biden is falling short of the aforementioned electoral promise. But it also confirms the imperative need for Latin America to maintain its own spaces of integration and political consultation, articulators of socially inclusive and sovereign projects and agendas, which favor the expansion of the strategic action margins of states, in a world in transformation.



## Brazil and the Biden Administration: Ongoing Messages

Cristina Soreanu Pecequilo<sup>6</sup>

Since Joe Biden took over the US presidency in January 2021, the analysis and perceptions regarding Brazil-US bilateral relations present alternate moments of disappointment, distancing and euphoria pending political sidelines. These sidelines can be divided into two major positions: the opposition and the situation. In 2002, the midst of Brazil's electoral context, this dynamic is repeating itself. But it is necessary to avoid the shadows and understand these stances and the concrete policies that the democratic government is applying to Brazil.

These positions mostly represent Brazil's internal fragmentations and the way the US (and its stances) are instrumentalized to uphold a stronger coalition within these domestic and are less representative of US interests in the country and in the region. Mostly, this applies to the distancing dimension that is linked to situation forces. As Donald Trump left power, these forces searched for an adaptation of the bilateral agenda that could be able to reconcile the preservation of political priorities of the social, cultural, and religious camps, that are essential to the Executive's political coalition sustainability, with other economic national sectors. These sectors are related to the financial sector, the agricultural business coalition and parts of the Minister of Foreign Relations that seek to establish some sort of balance. Therefore, quite often, there is a detachment of speeches and non-convergent positions amongst the Executive and these other players.

For its turn, in the disappointment and euphoria axis, the Brazilian opposition agenda is placed, representing both Brazilian and US interest groups that were expecting a tour de force of the democratic government against Brazil's human rights and environmental agenda. During 2021, this euphoria was replaced by disappointment as there were no open criticism towards Brazil or the proposition of sanctioning actions. However, this was never representative of an absence of strategic and diplomatic movements from Washington in the country. From July to August 2021, the visits of CIA William Burns da CIA and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, White House high profile members, showed the country's geopolitical and geoeconomics relevance, apart several differences.

Agendas such as 5G, energy, China's advancement (defined in all

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of Biden's presidency as the largest and multidimensional threat to US interest) and the securitary dimension of the nation's presence in the region, considering the hemispheric neighborhood and the South Atlantic were debated. For most of the time, there was a certain inertia. Nevertheless, this reality started to change in January 2022, beginning with the indication of Elizabeth Bagley for US Ambassador to Brazil.

Biden maintained his stance on appointing names that belong to his closest circle of trust, and that were previously present in other democratic governments (such as Bill Clinton and Barack Obama), Bagley also is a part of the "revolving door" State-private companies in the US, and active in the law and telecommunications sector (cellular companies). In addition, is one of the most relevant individual sponsors of campaigns and bundler of democratic electoral campaigns<sup>7</sup>. As the OpenSecrets site defines, "bundler" is a definition that applies to people that, added to their individual contributions for the party till the allowed limit, function as fundraisers for additional resources for the party either/or representatives from other persons or companies.

Also, Bagley's indication showed a change in Biden's positions regarding Brazil's situation which led to some euphoria. This change is brought by two reasons: the closeness of the already mentioned 2022 electoral cycle and the deterioration of local domestic conditions in social, economic, and political terms. Beforehand, the US abandoned a low-profile stance whereas considering Brazil's democratic regimes conditions and a series of messages about the need for the electoral process and the transition of power to follow their due course, respecting institutions and the electoral results were sent.

This offensive position is demonstrated by three related events: the recollection, by the media, of news about Burns visit in 2021, in which the CIA head, had already warned the Brazilian government against the authoritarian menace, US Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland declarations in a recent passage to Brazil about the importance of free, fair elections and under the law elections and, last but not least, Bagley's Senate confirmation hearing in which the potential future Ambassador stresses the same argument as Nuland: that elections in Brazil should be fair and transparent, due to the resilience of Brazilian institutions.

These events were once more instrumentalized as proof that the US was paying attention to the attempts to destabilize the Brazilian political scene and were acting as some sort of "guardians" of the electoral process. In

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7 OPEN SECRETS. Disponível em: <https://www.opensecrets.org/search?order=desc&page=2&q=elizabeth+bagley&sort=D&type=donors> e <https://www.opensecrets.org/biden/bundlers>. Acesso em 19 maio 2022.

addition, in the euphoria-disappointment axis, these statements were linked to an April 2022 report produced by several academic institutions and class groups from both nations<sup>8</sup>. This document presented a risk warning that the events of the Capitol invasion on January 6th could repeat themselves in Brazil, and that the threats to national democracy were real, and calls up the international community and multilateral organisms to follow the elections.

Apart from this report, US perspective is more solid because of the two concrete issues already presented here, to which we can add two more: the Executive stance on Russia-Ukraine crises that, even though is being balanced by Itamaraty in the United Nations with acts of condemnation of Russian actions, had created and is still creating, some discomfort and the potential presidential absence from the Summit of the Americas that will take place of Jun 6th-10th (and also the possibility that Mexican President Lopez Obrador do not take part as well).

Despite its global projection and the image that is “not interested” in the region, US attention would never, or will ever, be lacking in its sphere of influence and towards the intra and extra regional threats that exist. If China emerges as an offshore menace, instabilities in countries such as Brazil, and the potential revival of an alliance of progressive governments are seen as regional threats. Biden’s recent offensive is amid this euphoria, disappointment, and distancing climate. After all, one may suggest that, for the Americans, the Brazilian situations rises as the worst of these scenarios of institutional crises, political changes either/or a combination of both trends.

## Partnership for Prosperity in Brazil’s Relations with China and the South Atlantic

Paulo Antônio Pereira Pinto<sup>9</sup>

Statements such as “strategic partnership” and “zones of peace and cooperation” become repetitive and indefinite, to the point where the question is often asked that “the rest of the world knows what it wants from Brazil, but Brazil does not know what it wants from abroad”. This criterion would mainly apply to relations with China and Africa.

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8 BBC Brasil. “Governo Biden recebe dossiê de acadêmicos com alerta de ‘versão mais extrema de ataque ao Capitólio’ no Brasil”. Disponível em: <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/internacional-61267152>. Acesso em 19 maio 2022.

9 Retired Brazilian Ambassador.

In this perspective, regarding China, I propose a reflection on a “partnership for prosperity”, with Brazil, in order to create mutual advantages (“win-win situations”), mainly in joint projects to be developed in Africa and Latin America. There are frequent criticisms in these countries that, once they are included in the “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI), regarding Authoritarian practices and production means, that would be restricted to Chinese nations. So, there would be an exclusion of inhabitants of countries where PRC companies operate. There is also criticism about concentrating profits for Eastern investors, while local recipients would acquire excessive debt.

From this perspective, there could be an effort to align “Chinese efficiency and needs for access to inputs for their continued economic growth”, with our ability to “promote dialogue between different cultures”<sup>10</sup>, as well as to seek common solutions to shared problems, whereas seeking to generate mutual benefits.

As far as Africa is concerned, in addition to maintaining peace and intensifying cooperation – concepts that can be seen as “horizontal” – it would also be appropriate to introduce the vector of “prosperity across the Atlantic”, which would give a better idea of “vertical” progress towards a higher-level scenario.

In this sense, initially, regarding relations with China, it would be necessary to clearly define our goals of international insertion, which could not be reduced to “reacting” to Chinese proposals for a BRI. Then, would there be the creation of a “partnership strategy”? It is worth thinking about a Brazilian “path”.

## The Terrestrial Pacific Ascension and the New Silk Route

By the way, at the end of 2020, we were surprised by the reference of the former Ambassador of the PRC in Brasília, Mr. Yang Wanming, to a line by João Cabral de Melo Neto, in the poem “Tecendo uma Manhã<sup>11</sup>”, in order to clarify the foreign policy of his country.

The aforementioned Chinese diplomat then declared, using the metaphor of the Brazilian poet, that the verse “a rooster alone does not weave a morning” may suggest Brazilian relevance, in the search for a “new world order”.

In this sense, he made an analogy with the current international insertion of his country. “Only when all countries, big and small, rich and poor, can respect each other, resolve their disputes through dialogue and reduce their differences with negotiations, can humanity hope for a better tomorrow”, he said, to everyone’s surprise; we who are used to quoting “old Chinese sayings” to explain different situations. We then hear a representative

from China resorting to a Brazilian quote to explain the PRC's strategic option.

"A rooster alone does not weave a morning: he will always need other roosters. Of one that catches that cry and that he throws it to another: of another rooster that catches the cry of a rooster before and throws it to another; and that other roosters with many other roosters cross the threads of sunlight of their rooster cries for the morning, from a tenuous web weave, among all roosters", follows the work of João Cabral.

In his talk, Wanming said that for the PRC "the new model of international relations breaks with the traditional paradigm in which the strongest countries seek hegemony or engage in a zero-sum game. And it leaves behind the Cold War mentality that divides the world into friends and foes, allies and antagonists."

"We are going to open a new way of interaction between countries dictated by dialogue instead of confrontations, by partnerships instead of alliances. We do not intend to challenge or replace anyone, nor change the world, export institutional models or engage in ideological confrontations," he added.

From this perspective, the future of relations between Brazil and China cannot be reduced to the fact that we are major food producers, while the PRC is a huge consumer, due to the obvious fact that it has about one and a half billion inhabitants.

In simplified terms, considering the ongoing rise of China, it is worth remembering that most of that country has no coastline, which leads the country to turn much more to the land than to the ocean. "Zheng He's contribution<sup>12</sup>, therefore, meant both the propagation of Chinese 'land civilization' (through Southeast Asia) and the internal dissemination, in China, of the experience of contact with 'maritime civilizations'. The 21st century will be directed towards the Oceans. Ocean thinking means openness and civilization, advancement and progress. It is therefore necessary to rescue the spirit of Zheng He and march towards the opening provided by the peaceful development of a broad maritime civilization".

The quote is part of Beijing's current discourse of resorting to history, to demonstrate the importance of the Oceans to the interaction between "Chinese land civilization" and overseas civilizations, while seeking to give a benign version of Admiral Zheng He's voyages, which took place 600 years ago, to Southeast Asia.

There are, however, severe critics of the current thesis of Chinese leaders, regarding the effects of Zheng He's journeys. Sectors of opinion

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<sup>12</sup> People's Journal, in Beijing, on June 12, 2005. Article: "Why do we commemorate Zheng He?".

describe these travels as predatory and intended to create bonds of dependency between the “visited” nations and the then-mighty Chinese Empire.

The Chinese leaders intend, in any case, to rescue the aforementioned historic maritime expeditions as a record of their “peaceful intentions” and an example of the permanent search for “harmony” – as opposed to “hegemony” – in China’s relations with its neighbors to the south of China. its borders. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), therefore, strives, both internally and in terms of relations with abroad, to convince that, at all times of emergency in the country – 600 years ago, as now –, China can be strong without posing a regional or global threat.

Moreover, there is a recent Chinese proposal to create a new silk route – better known as the “belt” – as a strategic project that aims to transform Central Asia from its current condition of “landlocked” (without access to the sea) into “land-linked” (with land connection) thus providing access for Chinese products to markets and ports in the Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf and Atlantic Ocean.

Its implementation will undoubtedly represent the improvement of the rail network through the region, linking Iran with Tajikistan, crossing Afghanistan and reaching the border with China. In its “Eurasian land bridge” dimension, sets of railways, roads and pipelines will carry goods and natural resources, in both directions, between the port of Lianyungang, in eastern China, through Kazakhstan, in Central Asia, to Rotterdam, and between the Pearl River Delta, in Southeast China, through Southeast Asia, and also Rotterdam. It is worth remembering that the Trans-Siberian railway already exists, on the route from Vladivostok, in eastern Russia, to Rotterdam.

The PRC understands, in this perspective, a “New Silk Route” as a land connection to facilitate its supply of natural resources and the sale of products “made in China”. To this end, the Chinese intention is that this intense capillarity of railways, roads and pipelines in the area to be covered by such transport routes has military protection provided by Beijing<sup>13</sup>.

It is worth remembering that the aforementioned “silk route” is located in a region that separates China from Central Asia and Europe and is one of the most inhospitable in the world. Most of it is covered by the Taklamakan desert and suffers from the absence of rain and frequent sandstorms. Despite few roads, in terrible conditions, caravans made their way for centuries.

Instead of trading silks, porcelains, carpets, pearls and spices, the Chinese today sell electronics, automobiles, telecommunications devices,

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<sup>13</sup> Lin, Christina. “Visiting Scholar at the Center for Transatlantic Relations at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies”, – Abstract of work entitled “China’s New Silk Road to the Mediterranean: The Eurasian Land Bridge and Return of Admiral Zheng He”, October 2011. “ISPSW Strategy Series: Focus on Defense and International Security”.

while investing in ports, railways, roads, oil and gas exploration projects and mines.

“Either the East wind prevails over the West wind, or the West wind prevails over the East wind”, wrote Mao Zedong in 1957, in his language at once poetic and bellicose, to describe the bipolar conflict then existing. Six and a half decades later, the current leadership in Beijing is getting the East wind to pick up steam through “belt and road” initiatives.

What was remarkable in this cynical proposal was the fact that the first train to travel from China to the United Kingdom was called the “East Wind”, having taken 16 days to cover 12,000 kilometers, crossing Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Poland, Germany, Belgium, France until reaching the London area. It is estimated that he would have made the journey using one-fifth of the time that would have been spent by sea.

An extensive bibliography is available on the values, quantities and composition of the transported goods, in the round-trip crossings of the referred train. The paths that would lead “the East wind to be, today, stronger than the West wind” have also been exhaustively described, insofar as the current Chinese geopolitical gains are praised.

On the other hand, broad criticisms are aired regarding this expansion of the Chinese economy and values of Chinese governance – as a result of the project – in terms of conflicts with cultural identities, excessive gains from China and, even facilitating new channels for the spread of viruses, with possible origin in the PRC, among other harms of the same proposal.

At the moment, China is expanding its interests, seeking access to natural resources and new markets in Africa and Latin America, where, as mentioned above, it has encountered incentives and resistance.

Hence, in the suggested perspective, the Brazilian “soft power”, in the sense of the ease of “cultural negotiation” and the identification of shared interests, with a view to the prosperity of all parties, could, gradually, come to configure the “strategy of partnership” that is intended to be established between Brazil and China.

The objective is to establish a flow of free trade and exchange of ideas, in order to promote future market integration and coexistence between different forms of governance. Thus, the Sino-Brazilian partnership would aim at new “networks” of cooperation integration (“connectivity” to use the term preferred by Beijing) between the countries to be “connected by the Chinese belt and route” and by an eventual Brazilian “path”.

## Prosperity Across the Atlantic

A Brazilian Foreign Policy for the South Atlantic is a priority. In



addition to the large number and density of multilateral and bilateral initiatives promoted over the course of decades, in order to consolidate in the South Atlantic a region of peace, cooperation and sustainable development, it is also necessary to consider the importance of the South Atlantic for the formation of our own national identity.

A route through which about 95% of our foreign trade passes, a source of great mineral and biological wealth, the potential of the South Atlantic is still not fully exploited by Brazilian society.

It is up to foreign policy to guarantee the conditions for Brazil to be able to make the South Atlantic space more and more a vector for development and integration. In this sense, as the largest country in the region, both in population, geographic and economic terms, it is up to Brazil to assume increasing responsibilities in the management of this space and in the concert between African and South American countries, in order to reconcile distinct national interests and maintain the region away from geopolitical tensions.

A brief historical perspective reminds us that the South Atlantic is not a “new axis” for Brazilian foreign policy, but rather a fundamental factor for the definition of national identity, a vector of integration of the Brazilian economy to the international economy, and the first form of integration of Brazil’s own territory.

It would be appropriate, however, to introduce a dynamic concept, such as “shared prosperity” to consolidate in the South Atlantic a region of peace, stability, democracy and development. The South Atlantic presents itself as an immense source of opportunities, not only for Brazil, but for all the countries that border it.

Our ability to transform these opportunities into concrete benefits for the Brazilian people depends on increasingly close coordination with the other countries in the region. Supporting the development of the South Atlantic countries, increasing the flow of intra-regional trade, and deepening technical and scientific cooperation must be objectives of our foreign policy for this very important region.

Regarding the proposal of a statement of “prosperity across the Atlantic”, it is worth resorting to the legacy left by the late Professor Severino Cabral – who died last year – with the suggestion that a future scenario should be reflected that values a “tri-oceanic”, “taking into account our influence on both sides of the Atlantic, in the Pacific and in the Indian Ocean”.

Professor Cabral proposed that “the imaginary of the consolidation of a partnership between “America Lusa” and “Africa Lusa” be revived, as a factor that would contribute to the identification of new forms of cooperation that would identify common solutions to shared problems”.

By the way, it appears that the emergence of the New Africa is present

both in the history, geography and politics of the contemporary African region, as well as in the evolution of the integration process of the South American region, which is formed from our side of the South Atlantic, in the southern subcontinental space of America. However, both regions still suffer the influence of their past in the visualization of their itineraries and their strategic trajectories in the 21st century.

In this sense, the great disputes over the Oceanic routes that led to wars in the 17th century, which began with the Dutch attack on the Northeast of Lusa America, the resistance and the Portuguese Atlantic victory followed by its defeat in the Indian Ocean, ended with the rise of maritime power. Anglo-Saxon to the status of “lady of the seven seas”.

These events came to determine the end of the Iberian Union, and the inevitable decline of Portugal and Spain. In this way, the contesting powers – Holland, England, and France – were completely successful in “unraveling and making the landmark of Tordesilhas disappear”.

As always according to Severino, “after the collapse of the Iberian colonies of the New World and, above all, the rupture of the ties of the Brazilian Empire, with the African side of the Portuguese sea, in the 19th century, a period of globalization took place by closed”.

In his view, the partition of Africa and the invasion of the Chinese Empire by European powers ushered in a new era. Given the new conditions of the world ecumene dominated by British hegemony associated with France (Pax Britannica), which was threatened with the rise of industrial powers such as Germany, Russia, the United States and Japan, “a new stage of the world order opens up and announces a wave of disputes on all horizons”.

This intensifies and thickens with the crystallization of North American hegemony over the world megamarket, which was generated after the war by the generalization of the industrial and urban system. The end of bipolarity put the foundations of this system in crisis by pointing to a new stage with the emergence of new poles of power in the world.

“In the international conjuncture experienced in this second decade of the 21st century, there is a real possibility of resuming the project of the new Brazil under new structural bases. They are constituted by the growing process of integration of the southern American space around MERCOSUL, the Andean Community and the Amazon Arc. It is a movement that, in a way, inaugurates a space already contained in the old map of the Iberian Union, responsible for the unification of the Portuguese and Hispanic Americas. In this new period, this movement reveals the emergence of a new pole of world power based on the creation of the South American mega state. A bioceanic space that will unite the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic and the Amazon basin to the Rio da Prata basin”, taught professor Cabral.

In this context, a “Bioceanic Corridor” would be of great importance, linking Porto Murtinho (MS) with Paraguay and then reaching the ports of Chile. Chinese investment, for example, in this project would have special value, in order to facilitate the flow of our commodity production, which is a large part of the trade we have with China, as well as making this production cheaper.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the former Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique are advancing in the direction of a development anchored in the immense natural resources at their disposal. In their trajectory towards the construction of an urban-industrial society, like their Portuguese-Brazilian sister in America, they need to integrate into the region to develop an economic, political, sociocultural, technical-scientific space capable of sustaining their respective national projects.

From this perspective, a project for the physical integration of the Southern Cone, uniting Angola and Mozambique through a complex and modern infrastructure network (transport, communication and energy), supporting both sides of Africa, is crucial for the integrated development of the economies of the South. Perhaps, there is a point of convergence between the Chinese “route” and the Brazilian “trail”, which also benefits an African “avenue”.

This project would generate a remarkable political-economic bloc for the process of the economy of the 21st century, as it would establish a link between the Atlantic with the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, generating the possibility of a “tri-Oceanic access” for the group formed by the Southern countries of America and Africa.

If the proposals with a specific order are not consolidated, in this sense, we know what are the global goals that society pursues: democracy, respect for human rights, development, social balance, protection of the environment, eradication of poverty, etc. These are the parameters from which diplomacy must define its objectives.

The reconstruction of Brazilian foreign policy is urgent to put back at the center of diplomatic action the defense of independence, sovereignty, dignity and national interests, values such as solidarity and the search for dialogue, which diplomacy helped to build as a heritage and source of pride for the Brazilian people.

Every monkey on its branch, every rooster on its perch, every country on its route, trail or avenue, in search of shared prosperity<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> By the way, in December 2010, former Chancellor Celso Amorim gave an interview to journalist Susan Glasser, from *Foreign Policy* magazine, with the following initial question: “What is the big idea, as far as you see it, for Brazil’s role in the world? Some people have argued that Brazil is a negotiating power, or a symbol of the emerging world order. What is

## Crisis in Kazakhstan: Colorful Revolution or Popular Demonstration?<sup>15</sup>

Guilherme Geremias da Conceição<sup>16</sup>

After the disastrous withdrawal of US troops from Kabul last year, Central Asia returned to the Western media in early 2022. In January, protests possibly related to the rise in the price of liquefied gas<sup>17</sup> erupted in the main link of convergence between Russian and Chinese conceptions for Eurasian Integration, namely Kazakhstan<sup>18</sup>. In this context, if, on the one hand, the Kazakh political system is the center of an intraoligarchic national dispute for control of the State apparatus, on the other hand, its economic space is intrinsically related to hidden international interests. Thus, in order to understand the interaction between the two levels of analysis, for whatever the possible domestic and external causes of this crisis may be, it is necessary to recapitulate the process of political-social formation of Kazakhstan and its post-1991 global insertion.

With the end of the USSR, the country of Turkish-Mongolian origin came to be governed by a complex arrangement of power distribution and control of resources between national clans, at the time symbolized by the political rise of former Soviet leader and former president Nursultan Nazarbaev, member of the country's largest tribal confederation, Elder Zhuz. This policy of concessions and favoritism, especially with regard to the right of economic exploitation of Kazakh oil and hydrocarbons, has fostered enmities with other groups, among which the representatives of the minority horde, region of the Caspian Sea coast, of where such resources are extracted.

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your view?

Celso Amorim: I would say, of course it's a negotiating power. But it would be very simplistic to think Brazil always looks for consensus' sake. We also have a view of how things should be, and we tend to work in that direction. We struggle to have a world that is more democratic, that is to say, more countries are heard on the world scene – a world in which economic relations are more balanced and of course in which countries in different areas can talk to each other without prejudice”.

<sup>15</sup> The author is grateful for Professor Paulo Fagundes Visentini guidance and João Pedro Mascarello Funck qualified revision and translation of this fragment.

<sup>16</sup> Undergraduate from the last semester of International Relations at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). Member of the Brazilian Center of African Studies (CEBRAFRICA) and of the Brazilian Centre of Strategy and International Relations (NERINT), Brazil.

<sup>17</sup> Widely used as fuel and main source of domestic energy in Kazakhstan.

<sup>18</sup> In addition to being a security pivot, Kazakhstan represents 60% of Central Asia's GDP, massive oil/gas and mineral resources and high-tech industries.

Adding to domestic resentment is the fact that, since 2019, liquefied gas has been traded electronically in Kazakhstan, which not only makes it difficult for the government to establish a price cap policy, but also explains why the country, despite being a major energy exporter, needed to increase the value of the input. This situation, aggravated by high inflation and domestic prices, can be listed as one of the side effects of the westernized “multi-vector” policy adopted by the Nazarbaev administration. However, what was most clearly observed was a response to the false promise of reordering political arrangements in the regional alliance game, a change long awaited by fractions of the national elite, especially after the negotiated arrival of Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to the presidency in 2019.

With the transition of power frustrated, Tokayev, as a member of the same tribal confederation as the ex-mandatory and member (until January of this year) of the same party, Nur-Otan, remained alongside figures close to his predecessor and gave Nazarbaev, now 82 years old, the position of arbiter of domestic politics. So what had supposedly started with the government’s decision to raise fuel prices soon began to demand complete regime change in the country under the slogan *Shal, ket!* (“Down with the old man”), so that, even revoking the increase and removing Nazarbaev from the command of the National Security Council (KNB), Tokayev necessitated to activate the mechanism for the establishment of a peace operation managed by the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)<sup>19</sup>.

As a consequence, in addition to the dissolution of the Prime Minister’s cabinet and the mass resignation of high-ranking members, former KNB directors Karim Massimov, Samat Abish and his brother, businessman and former security agent, Kairat Satybaldy, were arrested on charges of attempted coup d’état for participating in the apparently disorderly uprising of protesters<sup>20</sup>. “Apparently” if we take into account that the turmoil, which started in the oil city of Zhanaozen, close to the Caspian Sea, quickly took national proportions and “spontaneously” spread towards the main financial and business center of the country, Almaty, and not to the capital Nur-Sultan, former Astana. Given this coincidence, it should be noted that, due to its geographical position (close to the Chinese and Kyrgyz borders) and economic importance, Almaty can be considered a sensitive point for regional stability,

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19 In 2020, the Russian-led security structure (with the participation of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) established another peace operation in Kyrgyzstan to resolve “lightning” protests in Bishkek that, similarly to those in Kazakhstan, called for the overthrow of the government.

20 For the Kazakh government, both Massimov, a former ally of Nazarbaev, and the brothers Abish and Satybaldy, nephews of the former president, were directly involved in the riots within the KNB.

as it is also home to the largest population of Kazakhstan.

Another aggravating factor in the domestic dimension, which certainly affected part of the revolt, was the external dissemination that the demonstrations received from Muchtar Ablyazov, former president of the Kazakh bank Bank Turan Alem (BTA) and founder of the opposition party Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (QDT), now in asylum in Paris. It was also speculated that radical Islamic groups could have infiltrated the demonstrations, an argument based on the long history of activities of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in Central Asia. Which is not an absurd assumption if we take into account that the ISIS-Khorasan cells, now located near Turkmenistan, or even the Xinjiang rebels could easily move to Almaty. However, the rapid and simultaneous outbreak of protests remains without an objective explanation, even considering the domestic aspects that point to what would be the articulation of a coup carried out by forces in the Kazakh political scene.

In this sense, the heart of the matter seems to be in the international scenario closest to regional-global economic interests. Thus, while Kazakhstan for the Chinese holds the undisputed position of a bridge between Europe and Asia in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)<sup>21</sup>, for Russia the Kazakh state plays an even more relevant strategic (and historical) role: it is the nation with which it shares its longest land border, in addition to maintaining the language and a population of around 3 million Russians in its territory. This characteristic certainly made Vladimir Putin agree with Erlan Karin, Secretary of State of Kazakhstan, to send CSTO troops to the country, also in recognition of the hybrid character of the attack.

After all, considering the hypothesis of a coup engendered by internal or external forces, or even by both, the facts point to an unquestionable (and ill-fated) attempt to intimidate Russia, which took place (almost exactly) ten days before the round of talks on the Ukrainian question between Moscow and NATO, in Geneva and Brussels. The strategy of forcing the Russian retreat at that time, causing continued disturbance on its borders and keeping the country on two simultaneous flanks, was deliberately published in a 2019 *RAND Corporation* report called “*Extending Russia*”, where, in Chapter 4, the provision of “lethal aid to Ukraine”, the promotion of “regime change in Belarus”, and the intention to reduce “Russian influence in Central Asia” were minutely detailed items.

However, even though the international causes can also be visualized, there is, to date, no face behind the coordination of the riots or even a

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<sup>21</sup> Initiative launched by Xi Jinping at Nazarbaev University in Kazakhstan in 2013 and seen by the Kazakh government as a way to solidify its economy.

consensus on who were responsible for the instrumentalization of the Kazakh crisis and what their long-term objectives were. As opposition, Ablyzaov could even become the newest NATO and US alliance option on the ground, but the businessman is far from a real alternative to power in the country. What's more, there are old allies nearby. Here it is worth mentioning the regional role that Ankara has been playing as a spearhead subordinated to the interests of NATO in opposition to Moscow on the various fronts on which it has been acting, from the Syrian War to the recent Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. More precisely, it can be considered that since 2009 Turkey has approached Central Asia with the aim of increasing its local political influence, a move that stimulates the clash with the Sino-Russian concept of integration for the region<sup>22</sup>.

In this sense, a provocation to the Russians in their sphere of influence would be part of a broader movement, where not only Russia's strategic interests would be at stake, but also those of the Eurasian agenda, so that a coup d'état in Kazakhstan would doubly benefit the West. The attempt to destabilize Russia and China in their political and economic projects for the locale (BRI/EAEU/OCX), and consequently share the significant gains of the enterprise with regional allies, was quickly understood by Tokayev. Thus, the recent referendum held in Kazakhstan, which summarily removes Nazarbaev's shadow over the country<sup>23</sup>, inaugurates a new stage in Kazakh domestic politics and symbolizes not only the strengthening of the current president as a key player in the development of regional projects, but also the victory of his alliance with Beijing and, above all, Moscow. It remains to be seen whether Erdogan's meandering approach will continue to be viewed with pragmatism by the Kazakh government and how this relationship can influence future events in the country.

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22 With the creation of the Turkic Council, Ankara has been alternating Soft and Hard Power practices over Central Asia. Examples of this approach are the pressure that Recep Tayyip Erdogan established for Kazakhstan to adopt the Latin alphabet and the negotiations involving the transfer of military technology from Turkey's military-industrial complex to the Kazakh state and neighboring Uzbekistan.

23 The referendum proposed by Tokayev, approved in June by the Kazakh parliament, envisage the reduction of the president's power, an increase in the legislative role, in addition to various "sanitary measures" to isolate the former president's relatives from the party life and the country's economy.



## PARTNERS

### NERINT

The Brazilian Centre for Strategy & International Relations (NERINT) was the first Centre in Southern Brazil to focus its study and research exclusively on the field of International Relations. It was established in 1999 at the Latin American Advanced Studies Institute (ILEA) of the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and is currently part of the university's Centre for International Studies on Government (CEGOV). Its objective has always been the critical and innovative study of the international system's transformations after the end of the Cold War, from the perspective of the developing world. In parallel, NERINT has also sought to contribute to the debate on a national project for Brazil through the understanding of the available strategic options for the autonomous international insertion of the country.

The exploratory studies developed by NERINT on the new emerging countries since the threshold of the 21st century experienced remarkable expansion. Cooperation with state, business, academic and social institutions was intensified, as well as the direct contact with centres in Latin America, Africa and Asia, in addition to the existing ones in Europe and North America. An outcome of the Centre's activity was the creation of an undergraduate course in International Relations (2004) and a Doctoral Program in International Strategic Studies (PPGEEI, 2010). Two journals were also created: the bilingual and biannual *Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations* and the bimonthly journal *Conjuntura Austral*. In addition, since 2016, NERINT offers a bilingual Research Bulletin, published by graduate and undergraduate students and researchers of the Centre. NERINT is also partnered with UFRGS's Doctoral Program in Political Science (PPGPOL), established in 1973. Thus, besides the advanced research and intense editorial activities, NERINT is also the birthplace of innovative undergraduate and graduate programs.

### PPGEEI

The Doctoral Program in International Strategic Studies (PPGEEI) started in 2010, offering Master's and Doctorate degrees, both supported by qualified professors and researchers with international experience. It is the result of several developments on research and education at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS).

Its roots can be traced to the Brazilian Centre for Strategy and International Relations (NERINT), established in 1999, established in 1999 and now affiliated with the Centre for International Studies on Government (CEGOV) at UFRGS.

The research tradition that gave rise to PPGEI was based on a prospective analysis of the trends of the 1990s. The remarkable expansion of Brazilian diplomacy and economics from the beginning of the century confirmed the perspective adopted, which allowed the intense cooperation with the diplomatic and international economic organizations in Brazil. The Program is already a reference in the strategic analysis of the integration of emerging powers in international and South-South relations.

The Program's vision emphasizes strategic, theoretical and applied methods, always relying on rigorous scientific and academic principles to do so. For this reason, it has been approached by students from all over Brazil and several other countries, and it has established partnerships in all continents. Thus, PPGEI is a program focused on understanding the rapid changes within the international system. Alongside NERINT, it publishes two journals: *Conjuntura Austral* (bimonthly) and *Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations* (biannual and bilingual). PPGEI has three research lines:

### **International Political Economy**

It focuses on the international insertion of the Brazilian economy and other major developing countries in South America, Asia and Africa; discusses the characteristics and effects of globalization; and develops comparative and sectoral studies concerned with the effects of the internationalization of companies and productive sectors. Special attention is paid to international financial crises and its effects on Brazil and other countries of the South.

### **International Politics**

It emphasizes the analysis of the process of formation, implementation and evaluation of foreign policy. It seeks to confront patterns of international integration of strategic countries in South America, Africa and Asia, considering institutional patterns, trade policy, structures of intermediation of interest, governance, International Law and the role of actors of civil society in the South-South axis of contemporary International Relations.

### **International Security**

It approaches the defense, strategy and security issues in the international

system from a perspective that takes into account the most powerful states at the global level, but systematically introduces the question of the regional balances of power, the South-South axis, the existence of regional security complexes, military issues and the impact of information technology in the Digital Age.

## CEGOV

The Centre for International Studies on Government (CEGOV) located at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) develops studies and research projects on governmental affairs from a comparative perspective. The Centre gathers researchers from several departments of the University, such as Political Science, International Relations, Law, Economics, Administration, Education, Urbanism and Computer Science. It encompasses scholars from the most traditional research groups at UFRGS, such as NERINT and CEBRAFRICA, specialised in a broad range of public policy areas.

CEGOV is chaired by a Director, and its policies and priorities are determined by an Advisory Board and a Scientific Board. The activities of the Centre are undertaken by working groups, which take the responsibility for specific projects. Currently, CEGOV has eight fully established and operating working groups. The Centre's researchers work on multidisciplinary projects covering the fields of international politics and governance, monitoring and evaluation of public policies, institutional development, Brazilian and South-American economy, comparative institutional design and decision-making processes, as well as public management, democratic controls and decentralisation of public services.

The Centre is a place for interaction among scholars from UFRGS and other academic institutions, highlighting its multidisciplinary and open nature, as well as its vocation to collaborative applied research. Being a reference for research on comparative governmental studies, CEGOV offers a wide range of extracurricular activities such as extension and specialisation courses, and advisory activities.

## CEBRAFRICA

The Brazilian Centre for African Studies (CEBRAFRICA) has its origins in the Center of Studies Brazil-South Africa (CESUL), a program established in 2005 through an association between the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) and the Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation (FUNAG) of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its research activities are developed

in cooperation with the Brazilian Centre for Strategy and International Relations (NERINT).

In March 2012, CESUL was expanded into CEBRAFRICA. At the same time, the South African series, which published five books, was transformed into the African Series, with new titles. The Centre's main objectives remain the same as before: to conduct research, support the development of memoirs, thesis and undergraduate works, congregate research groups on Africa, organize seminars, promote student and professor exchanges with other institutions, establish research networks and joint projects with African and Africanist institutions, publish national and translated works on the field, and expand the specialized library made available by FUNAG.

The numerous research themes seek to increase knowledge of the African continent and its relations with Brazil on the following topics: International Relations, Organizations and Integration, Security and Defense, Political Systems, History, Geography, Economic Development, Social Structures and their Transformations, and Schools of Thought. CEBRAFRICA counts among its partners renowned institutions from Brazil, Argentina, Cuba, Mexico, Canada, South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Senegal, Cape Verde, Egypt, Nigeria, Morocco, Portugal, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Sweden, Russia, India, and China. Current researches focuses on "Brazilian, Chinese, and Indian Presence in Africa", "Africa in South-South Cooperation", "African Conflicts", "Integration and Development in Africa", "African Relations with Great Powers", and "Inter-African Relations".

## SUBMISSION STANDARDS

1. AUSTRAL: Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations publishes only Scientific articles;
2. The research articles must contain a maximum of 12 thousand words;
3. The footnotes should be of complementary nature;
4. The bibliography must follow the rules of the Chicago system (Author-date or note-bibliography), specifying the used literature at the end of the text;
5. Contributions must be original and unpublished, and can be submitted in Portuguese, English or Spanish;
6. Contributions must contain the full name of the author, their titles, institutional affiliation (the full name of the institution) and an e-mail address for contact;
7. The complete filling of the submission form by the authors is mandatory;
8. Contributions from undergraduate or graduate students are allowed, as long as in partnership with a Professor or PhD, which will appear as the main author of the paper;
9. Manuscripts from only one author must be written by a Professor or PhD;
10. There is a limit of three (3) authors per article;
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