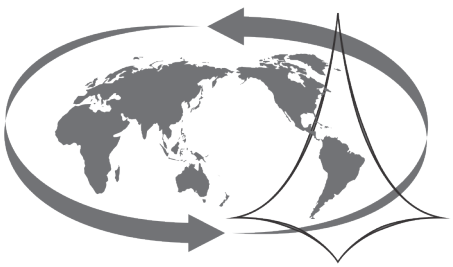
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About the Journal

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: THE UNSTABLE MULTIPOLARITY

The global system has already entered the phase of *Multipolarity*, something taken for granted by most analysts and statesmen. However, contrary to what many considered to be a universal panacea (with the BRICS GDP PPP surpassing that of the G7), it is configured as an *Unstable* Multipolarity. American actions, with the return of Republican Donald Trump to the White House, seem to reinforce the reactive character of the United States against this trend, explicitly admitted by Washington. The concept of *Unstable Multipolarity* was forged at NERINT/UFRGS and is being developed by its researchers and applied in their prospective studies.

The so-called *Unipolarity* ended without ever having existed. It was a power vacuum created by the disappearance of the Soviet superpower, which was filled by the US with unsuccessful tactical actions, as they lacked a Grand Strategy. In the 1990s, they made political advances in the post-Soviet space, but it was Europe, led by Germany, that took advantage, gaining a new lease of life. However, undeniably, the Americans maneuvered well over the chaos they created in the Balkans and the Middle East, appearing to have control of the situation and a consistent project.

At the turn of the century and millennium, however, a new reality was emerging. September 11, 2001 signaled the rise of Islamic political extremism; the great financial crisis of 2008 resulted in China's economic advance, the creation of BRICS, the Russian reaction in Georgia, the Arab Spring, and Obama's Pivot to Asia. Moscow's annexation of Crimea and the Donbass conflict, Trump's election, the Covid pandemic, the Russo-Ukrainian War under the Biden administration, and the conflicts in Israel were catalysts. The military conflict in Ukraine and economic sanctions against the Kremlin led to global realignments, increasing the connections of Russia, India, and China with the South, particularly in the Middle East and Africa, with Europe being the most affected.

Since then, alignments and realignments have been constant, temporary, multiple and multi-vector, encompassing trade, investment, defense and diplomacy. Many arrangements are being tested and changed continuously, with no longer defined "blocs", as can be seen with NATO and

the expanded BRICS. With the Trump II administration, the United States seeks to build a geoeconomic space, prioritizing the Republican tradition of rejecting multilateral mechanisms. The novelty is that Washington could now act wisely as a *primus inter pares*: instead of trying to regain lost hegemony, it can use its residual superiority in some areas to play with other powers. However, would Trump's businessman diplomacy be refined enough for this? Only time will tell.

Analysts' attention is primarily focused on relations between the great powers, their leaderships and elections in key countries. However, there are *rising middle powers* that do not receive due attention and, surprisingly, become protagonists and influence international events. They have been courted or threatened by some and others, but, given the increased number of powers, they have increasing bargaining power.

In this context, we publish here a set of articles that deal with the Silk Road cases applied to the classical geopolitics of Mackinder and Greenpeace and hybrid multilateralism. Next, we discuss the Sino-American astropolitical dispute, Australia's concerns about the growing Chinese presence in the South Pacific and the Brazil-US relationship, from Soft Balancing to Bandwagoning, the implications of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on the subsequent invasion of Ukraine. Finally, we have Jordan's foreign policy options in the face of new challenges, an analysis of the reform of the security sectors and peacebuilding in the Yemen Civil War and the construction of popular identity in ASEAN. They are scholars from the United States, Indonesia, Russia, Pakistan, Brazil, Spain and Jordan.

The edition is completed by an interesting review of the book "A Theory of Global Power", which represents a synthesis of the work of Professor José Luís Fiori, a leading academic on International Political Economy in Brazil.

The perspective of authors from the Geopolitical South enriches academic and strategic perceptions regarding the topics analyzed, materializing the permanent objectives of AUSTRAL: Brazilian Journal of Strategy and International Relations. This is crucial at a time when the global scenario is evolving into a series of conflicts and tensions, which have already led to military escalations, in a highly unpredictable scenario. More than ever, it is necessary for the Academy to urgently undertake a critical-realistic analysis, leaving aside postmodern approaches and prescriptive narratives.

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MACKINDER'S HEARTLAND THESIS AND THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE: RUSSIA'S GROWING DEPENDENCE ON CHINA IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE UKRAINE WAR

Hanna Samir Kassab[1]

Introduction

International Relations theorists tend to focus on a specific ontology determined by a research question (Wight 2006). The focus on states and their interests, regimes, institutions, identities, and norms, has been insightful (Waltz 2010; Keohane 1984; Wendt 1992). Such dedication may obfuscate reality, especially changes in state behavior and the forces that encourage such change. Moving beyond these ontological categories and focusing on geography and economics may highlight new political structures. Incorporating geopolitics, especially considering globalization, and associated technological innovation may realize new ontological frontiers. H. J. Mackinder is one such scholar who employed such an approach. His article "The Geographical Pivot of History" (1904) and book *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (1942) present such innovation. Mackinder's focus is geography and resources rather than states and their militaries. Developing categories like *heartland* and *world-island* offer insight into global politics. The core of Mackinder's argument is that whoever controls, or organizes, the heartland of the Eurasian continent controls the world's political system. The Russian state is currently in control of this vast physical space yet is not in control

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of any seaports necessary to project power globally. Mackinder warns that if Russia can gain access to a warm water port, then it will inevitably become the world hegemon (Mackinder 1942, 77-80; 99). This may become a possibility if the world's climate continues to warm and the Arctic region completely melts (Anderson 2009; Brooke 2012). However, this is not the objective of the paper.

This paper focuses on Russia's current economic isolation due to the war in Ukraine and the potential gain for China. The more Western states punish Russia, the more likely it will become economically dependent on China. The more dependent Russia is on China, the more China will exercise control over Russia. If China were to gain this political leverage over Russia, it would be in a good position to organize the heartland through loans, economic investment, and infrastructure development. The process of organizing the heartland is already in effect through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) initiative. By organizing Russia in this way, China would have effective control over the territory. This fact, along with its navy (the largest in the world) [Burgess 2020]), will enhance China's power. In other words, the international balance of power will firmly be in China's favor potentially allowing for its peaceful rise as the world's sole hegemon.

This article is broken up into three major parts. The first task is to explain the connection between the Western reaction to the Ukrainian war and Russia's increasing dependency on China. Western sanctions push Russia to trade with China more deeply, especially in areas that serve China's interests (Deveonshire-Ellis 2020). Limiting Russia's customers in this regard forces Russia to remain dependent on China. Dependency theory will be discussed to sustain this analysis. The second part of the paper links dependency theory to Mackinder's Heartland thesis. If China manages to mold Russia into its peripheral state, then it will effectively control a significant portion of the Eurasian continent. This paper's methodology is theoretical, combining geopolitics and dependency theory to analyze the significance of BRI data. Rather than studying states, this paper suggests exploring organizational principles. Economic dependency, culture, religion, nationalism, mutual interests, and norms are all examples of organizing principles (Haugevik and Neumann 2019). Organizing principles bring actors and resources together, creating policies that shape reality. By focusing solely on the state, for instance, one might be ignoring a wider and more complex reality.

Mackinder emphasizes at the end of the book, albeit crudely, that an Asian power can potentially conquer Russia and dominate the world (Mackinder 1942, 193). However, this article prefers to look at economic domination, specifically China's BRI initiative. The BRI initiative affords

China the ability to organize Russia through loans and physical infrastructure similar to what has taken place in Sri Lanka and other developing states (Freymann 2021). By financing Russia, China might be able to gain further political leverage over Russia. The concluding part of the paper suggests changes to international relations analysis. Rather than adhere to statist ontologies of realism, liberalism, and constructivism, this paper suggests moving beyond such a limited focus. A richer, more interesting analysis may be conducted by studying the concentrations of power independent of any geographic demarcation of territory.

The Ukrainian War and Mackinder's Heartland Thesis: China's Control of the Heartland

Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 (Brown 2022). From Russia's perspective, the invasion hoped to stop Ukraine from moving too close to the western world and joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO encroachment threatens Russia and has been part of an ongoing process since the fall of the Soviet Union (Mearsheimer 2014; Wolff 2017). For violating the sovereignty of Ukraine, the United States and the European Union levied heavy sanctions on Russia. Western powers are also supplying Ukraine with weapons (BBC News, March 24, 2022). The United States also banned Russia from using the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT) system. The SWIFT system ensures a smooth, efficient, and speedy payment system for international transactions (see swift.com accessed March 31, 2022). In response, Russia has sought alternatives to the SWIFT payment system (Eichengreen 2022). Russia and other anti-western states like Iran now rely on China's payment systems, backed by the renminbi to circumvent American power. Such a prospect may increase China's power and influence and undermine American hegemony as it undercuts American interests and hegemonic position. This serves the interests of China as it seeks to 'peacefully rise' relative to the United States, not simply because it offers an alternative to the United States Dollar and payment system, but because it increases its power and influence. Thus, Russia's growing isolation due to the Ukrainian War is pushing Russia into being subordinate to China. Growing Russian dependency allows China the leverage needed to accomplish specific goals such as further development of the BRI into Eurasia. This fits into China's grand strategy for creating its world-system.

Dependency theory and the World-systems Approach describe international politics as a product of economic relations (Martins 2022;

Jenkins 2012; Gulalp 1987). If one state is dependent on another, then that state may have to change its behavior (Ibid). If China continues to be the most significant sponsor of Russia in the face of western sanctions, Russia will become reliant on China. This growing reliance, or dependence, allows China the political power to influence Russian foreign politics and goals. The World-systems Approach may posit that Russia is becoming a peripheral state to China's core especially if China can constrain Russia economically (Wallerstein 1974). Such a relationship may also be viewed within asymmetric interdependence, where the Russia-China alliance is unbalanced in favor of Russia (Keohane & Nye 1989, 10). Since Russia needs China more than China needs Russia, China retains more relative power and ultimately can set the political agenda.

Simply put, Russian dependence on China will increase China's power relative to the United States. This gives China significant power over Russian territory and grand strategy. If Russia becomes a veritable vassal to China, then China can gain strategic access to the Arctic, Central Asia, and parts of the Caucuses and Eastern Europe. This will cause the balance of power to shift to China and the United States and Europe may lose significant international influence. India could also be isolated, its national security is vulnerable given its dependence on Russian resources and military weaponry and weapons systems (Kundu 2008). Geography becomes essential to this analysis. Mackinder's work on the importance of Russia and Eastern Europe is central to the international balance of power. Whoever can organize Russia alongside an advanced, numerically superior navy might be able to overtake the United States in power and influence thereby signaling the end to the liberal international world order.

To understand the potential for hegemonic change, Mackinder's Heartland thesis must be explained. Mackinder underscores the importance of geography to the balance of power. In "The Geographic Pivot of History" (1904), he offers a non-state-centric argument rather than focusing on the territorial circumstances of states. This article signifies the first time Mackinder attempts to construct such an argument focusing on the centrality of a specific region to world security: "my aim will not be to discuss the influence of this or that kind of feature, or yet to make a study in regional geography, but rather to exhibit human history as part of the life of the world organism" (Mackinder 1904, 299). The world's balance of power is a determination of this geography, specifically this notion of the pivot area also known as the heartland; both terms are used interchangeably (Ibid; Mackinder 1943). This area was never meant to be defined in precise terms (Ibid). In "The Round World and the Winning of the Peace" Mackinder explicitly states this:

> The Heartland is the northern part of the interior of Eurasia. It extends from the Arctic coast down to the central deserts and has as its western limits the broad isthmus between the Baltic and Black Seas. The concept does not admit of a precise definition of the map for the reason that it is based on three separate aspects of physical geography which, while reinforcing one another, are not exactly coincident (Ibid 597-598).

These three aspects are the wide lowland plains on the west, the rivers that flow across that plain, and the grasslands that allow for ease of travel (Ibid). In Mackinder's time, these territories were controlled by the Soviet Union. Now, they are divided into several states including Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and other Central Asian states, Mongolia and the islands of the Arctic (Mackinder 1904, 312). Mackinder discussed the 'pivot' region, that "vast area of Euro-Asia which is inaccessible to ships, but in antiquity lay open to the horse-riding nomads..." (Mackinder 1904, 434). This particular area is deemed beneficial to whoever might control it and detrimental to whoever cannot. Mackinder continues "Her [referring to the pivot/heartland area] pressure on Finland, on Scandinavia, on Poland, on Turkey, on Persia, On India and on China, replaces the centrifugal raids of the steppemen (...). She can strike on all sides and be strong from all sides, save the north. The full development of her modern railway mobility is merely a matter of time" (Ibid 313). If one state were to control this territory, then that state would be in a position to dominate the continent. Further, if the same state were to gain naval supremacy, thenthat state would essentially be able to control the entire world (Ibid). Technology such as railways would help organize the territory that would increase that state's power to such a great extent that hegemonic power would well be within its grasp (Ibid 314). Hence, exact boundaries were not a concern for Mackinder. Of greater importance was the power(s) with the ability to organize the heartland for the sake of domination.

Further, Mackinder understands the balance of power concerning geography. For instance, the heartland was important because it was inaccessible to naval power due to great mountains, plateaus, and deserts (Mackinder 1942, 1). Further, the low-land steppes to mountains made neighbors easy to invade by the power controlling the heartland (Ibid). Hence, for Mackinder, it becomes exceedingly important for non-heartland states to block heartland states from access to warm-water ports. The Crimean War was an example of this as any war in the Middle East. To ensure the balance of power, states must keep the heartland divided and small. Sea powers must maintain open seas as well as promote alliances between the rimland, those states along the border of heartland states such as the states of western Europe

(Mackinder refers to these as the rimland), and outer-islands, non-world island states like the United States. Thus, the heartland state can be effectively balanced against the world-island. For Mackinder, India and China will be useful in containing Russia and providing this balance. Russia must fail in its attempt to control all of the heartland due to the coordinated response by the rimland and outer-islands.

In summary, Mackinder's main contribution is the geopolitical importance of the heartland to world stability. A balance of power might be maintained if Russia is denied a warm-water port or if other states are denied control or the organization of the Russian heartland. Mackinder identifies two main threats to this stability: Japan (in 1904) and Germany (1942). Since Eastern Europe is the doorway to the heartland, it must be divided or controlled by the rimland or other world-island states. If a power could capture Russia without fighting a war for the heartland, that power would essentially control the world, as Mackinder's often-quoted but rarely-understood summary goes:

> Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland:
> Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island:
> Who rules the World-Island commands the World (Mackinder 1942, 50).

Mackinder's key ontology is geography which shapes the makeup of the international order. Of great importance though is the technology that organizes the territory in question. The key word here is organize and not rule. Some scholars (Laqueur 2015, 99; Brzezinksi 1997, 38) do not address this: it is not about possessing the territory but organizing it. A state may *control* another state if it can influence it through military means (Morgenthau 1985; Nye 2004). Organization is different through controlling key resources; owning key transport and communication infrastructure is central to this attempt. Mackinder warns the United Kingdom explicitly of the dangers presented by Germany having grown more powerful than Russia before World War I: "The Entente of 1904 between Britain and France was not an event of the same significance; our two countries had cooperated more often than not in the nineteenth century but France had been quicker to perceive that Berlin had supplanted Petrograd at the center of danger in East Europe…West Europe…must necessarily be opposed to whatever Power attempts to organize the resources of East Europe and the Heartland" (Mackinder 1942, 98). Organizing the heartland increases the power and influence of the organizer, making Russia much easier to control and even conquer (Ibid 150). Writing in 1904, Mackinder warns that if Japan were to defeat China completely and then overthrow the Russian empire, it would constitute the greatest threat to the international system as it would "…add an oceanic frontage to the resources

of the great continent an advantage as yet denied to the Russian tenant of the pivot [heartland] region" (Mackinder 1904, 314).

Mackinder's analysis holds enormous explanatory power but it is now over a century old. He wrote for his specific time. Since then, there have been significant socio-technological changes which shape the relationship between geopolitics and geographical environment. Mackinder could not imagine the levels of economic, cultural, and social interconnectedness brought on by globalization (Ehteshami 2017). There has never been such an interconnected economy defining an international society driven by major technological advances like the internet and the cellular phone.

The impact of sociopolitical-technological change: Mackinder's Heartland Thesis applied today

There are two main socio-technological differences between our international order and Mackinder's. The first is the technologies defining the BRI and the second is the impact of American hegemony. These two factors help us understand the political impact of the BRI with regard to potential China hegemony.

The Impact of American Hegemony

Today's international system is very different from what Mackinder observed. Germany and Japan no longer pose real threats to Russia or the international system. These powers are subservient to the United States through various defense pacts and alliances after their defeat in World War II. The rimland and outer-island together form NATO which essentially challenges the Ukrainian part of the heartland. Russia is seeking to secure itself from NATO encroachment (Mearsheimer 2014). This is of course not the crux of this paper's argument nor is it Mackinder's. "Whoever can organize the heartland effectively may become the hegemon" is the core of this paper's analysis. Economic power and advanced technological innovation (advanced weaponry, weapon systems, and infrastructure) will make the vast territories easier to organize. Thus, one needs not occupy a territory to organize and ultimately control it. China is in the best position to do this given the western attempts at isolating Russia.

To place the rise of China in political context, it is important to note the Russian perspective before the fall of the Soviet Union. Having lost the Eastern

European states and witnessing the expansion of NATO, Russian leaders saw it as essential to destroy the unipolar international system, replacing it with a multipolar one. To Putin "...the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century" (Putin 2005). The United States presented a clear and present danger to Russia and so its hegemonic status needed to be eradicated. In other words, "balances disturbed will one day be restored" (Waltz quoted in Ikenberry 2002, 4). In the face of American encroachment on Russia's perceived sphere of influence, President Yeltsin replaced his pro-western foreign minister with one with revisionist leanings in 1996: Evgenniy Primakov (Brzezinksi 1997, 115). Primakov's ultimate aim was to unite other counter-hegemonic powers in the international system against the United States. He was a specialist in Iran and China, with significant experience studying the Middle East. By supporting anti-American powers, it was possible to reduce the United States' presence in Eurasia, thereby relieving Russia of a major security threat. Yeltsin's position against the United States began to shift further into counter-hegemony and by the end of 1996, China and Russia formally stated their aim to change the international system from being "dominated by one power" (Ibid 116).

The Primakov doctrine is an effort to reform the unipolar international system into a multipolar one, Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation selected Primakov to strategize and accomplish such a goal.Primakov then developed a doctrine that follows five major tenants:

1. Russia is an indispensable actor in global politics, pursuing an independent foreign policy;
2. Russia's foreign policy is surmised within a broad vision of a multipolar world managed by a group of nations;
3. Acceptance of Russia's primacy in the post-Soviet space and Eurasia is fundamental to all diplomatic overtures to the nation;
4. Russia is fundamentally opposed to any expansion of NATO; and
5. Partnership with China forms a cornerstone of Russia's foreign policy (Kanikara 2019).

To paraphrase these points, to transform the international system, Russia had to embrace an exceptional identity and return to past prestige through an alliance with China. By supporting one another, Russia and China would rise relative to the United States and Europe. Further, by opposing any expansion of NATO, Russia would maintain control of Eastern Europe thereby maintaining a sphere of influence necessary to organize the heartland. The goal of the Yeltsin administration was a multipolar international system

through a close partnership with China. This has continued until today and is best represented by the BRI. The BRI funds construction projects globally and deepens China's political influence around the world. (Freymann 2021).

Initially, there were fears that BRI would reduce Russian influence in Eurasia. However, Russia's 2014 invasion of Ukraine quickly tarnished relations with the West. Western sanctions led Putin to advocate for closer relations with China (Ibid 198). These relations would result in BRI projects that advanced China's grand strategy, specifically energy security through the development of oil and gas pipelines, coal mines, railways, highways, free trade zones, as well as blockchains to facilitate interconnectedness between the two states. The next section will address the impact of technological change in the organization of the Eurasian heartland, focusing on energy security infrastructure.

The impact of technological change in harnessing the heartland

The Russian invasion of Ukraine (2022) aims to maintain Russian influence in Eastern Europe and curb further NATO expansion. However, along with supporting China, Russia risks growing dependent on China thereby increasing the chances of a bipolar order developing, with Russia being subservient to China. China's BRI initiative already has a head-start in its pursuit of power and domination over Eurasia. Before the Russia-Ukraine War, there were seven major BRI projects in the works in Russia in 2020 alone:

- *Power of Siberia Gas Pipeline*: A 3000km natural gas pipeline costing US$55 billion bringing in 38 billion cubic meters of gas to China each year creating US$400 billion in revenue for Russia [China will become Russia's most important customer].
- *Mezhegey Deposit mining project*: China invested US$1.8 billion in a coal mining project. Projected to produce 7 million tons of coal annually over 30 years.
- *The Eurasian High Speed Railway*: 772 km railway connecting China to Europe through Russia with service along the route's major cities
- *The Meridian Highway*: a route linking Tokyo to London as part of the BRI initiative, connecting the economies through highways, promoting trade and investment. Cost: US$9 billion for the 2000 km highway.
- *The Russian Arctic Free Trade Zone*: the development of major shipping routes including roads and rail for inland access with coordination

of Russia along the Arctic circle. Establishing a free trade area along the Arctic grants China, a non-Arctic nation, access to the Arctic. Russia and China are encouraging Arctic investment by granting tax incentives and subsidies.

• *The Eurasian Economic Union*: a trade bloc between Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. By integrating these markets, Russia can circumvent western sanctions. This area is important to China as a pathway into Central Asia and Europe.

• *Digital & Blockchain Technologies*: Russia-China partnership in the development of 21st-century technology including 5G networks, blockchain and cryptocurrencies, with the possibility of further spillover into other areas (Deveonshire-Ellis 2020).

Taking note, these areas feed into China's grand strategy and national security needs by circumventing access to the Pacific Ocean. First, all the above ensures that China cannot access the Pacific Ocean if there is a war with the United States over Taiwan. Second, all the above (except the last) is about access to energy (gas and coal) and transportation over land. This is essential for China considering its dependence on foreign sources for energy as well as getting goods to market. Most importantly, China relies on a particular choke point for oil and gas: The Straits of Malacca, commonly known as "China's jugular vein." This area can be easily closed by the United States and its allies (Ashraf 2017; Paszak 2021). An embargo would deal a serious blow to China. If China continues to develop pipelines through Russia, it would be able to survive any attempt at energy interruption.This is nothing new for China as for the past ten years it has been using its Myanmar pipelines to secure access to oil and gas independent of the Straits of Malacca (The Global Times July 27, 2023) Specifically, the Power of Siberia pipeline has been instrumental to Russia's war effort, having a direct connection to Russia's economic power position. Any reduction in energy purchases by the Europeans due to the war would be met by purchases by China. BRI infrastructure provided the ease of transaction during times of war. This is the significance of BRI for the Russian war effort; and China is taking full advantage of the situation.

The European Union significantly reduced Russian oil and gas imports. According to the European Union: "Petroleum oils imports from Russia fell from a monthly average of 8.7 million tonnes in the second quarter of 2022 to 1.6 million tonnes in the second quarter of this year (-82%) EU imports of natural gas dropped significantly (-17% in terms of net mass) in the second quarter of 2023, compared with the same quarter in 2022" (Eurostat September, 25 2023). European Union states are reducing their dependence on Russian oil and gas and diversifying, importing from Saudi Arabia and

the UAE (Ibid). China, conversely, is increasing its purchases significantly notwithstanding pressure from NATO member states. For instance, in June 2022, mere months after the war, China increased imports by 55% to a total of 1.98 million barrels per day (Reuters June 20, 2022). These import rates remain constant, even increasing in October 2023 to 2.01 million barrels per day (Hayley and Reuters 2023). These resources are shipped to Russia through existing pipelines, specifically the aforementioned Power of Siberia pipeline, a fundamental part of the BRI. Indeed, 20 days before the war, Russia and China signed a 30-year contract to supply gas to China (Aizhu February 4, 2022). The BRI infrastructure prepared before the war positioned Russia for a lengthened conflict due to the firm relations with China. Hence, China's imports of Russian oil and gas can be credited with its efficient use of BRI pipelines created before the war.

Despite the Russia-Ukraine War, the listed projects are still being used as an integral part of the Russia-China relationship. There have been no new BRI projects between Russia and China since the war began (Khalaf July 24, 2022). China's economy has slowed which could be the reason why there has not been any new projects. A report by the *Green Finance & Development Center* at Fudan University in Shanghai states that this is only temporary (Ibid). It is also possible that China may be shifting to another strategy, relying on existing infrastructure to consolidate investments, moving on to other issues promoting its leadership such as food security and climate change (Hawkins October 16, 2023). However, this does not mean that relations have altered. BRI infrastructure, particularly the pipelines, are being fully utilized to transport oil and gas. Still, there are major projects planned for wider Eurasia such as Russia's Eurasian Economic Union framework, Kazakhstan's Bright Road economic policy, Turkmenistan's strategy of reviving the Silk Road, and Mongolia's Steppe Road plan (Xinhua, October 10, 2023).

China's BRI is a fundamental part of China's grand strategy facilitating the peaceful rise of China. The aim is to provide funds for infrastructure construction providing loans to countries across Eurasia and the world through roads, rail, and sea (Freymann 2021, 2). China loans money to states like Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Greece, and these funds are spent on airports, pipelines, industrial parks, undersea cables, and any infrastructure that hopes to ease trade between China and the member states. These funds deepen China's relationship with the rest of the world. This program has been incredibly popular as member states seek access to Chinese markets and funds. However, it provides loans to developing states. However, oftentimes, these loans cost the state its political autonomy (Woods 2008), while other times, states take on these loans due to bribery (Naim 2007). Today, Russia

is an essential part of the BRI initiative and ultimately, it may have to depend on Chinese loans to survive the war with Ukraine, a war with no end in sight. China certainly has much to gain from the war continuing.

Complicating Factors to China's Rise

China's hegemony is not at all inevitable. China faces internal and external threats to its survival. These threats have the power to inhibit China's power absolutely or internally, and/or externally or relatively. Internally, China's economy seems to be growing more unstable, and its political situation more tenuous. Externally, the rise of China is perceived as a security threat to neighboring states. Any alteration of the international status quo, whether the annexation of Taiwan or complete control over the South China Sea, will be met with opposition.

Internally, there are several vulnerabilities of note including demographic vulnerabilities, a slowing economy, a property market crisis, a budding debt crisis, continuing environmental and health threats along with a restless population (Meng 2023; Xi & Zhai 2023; An & Zhang 2023; Yang et al, 2023). China is also becoming more authoritarian, with many citizens facing punishment for any criticism of the CCP. The social credit score is also quite a development, creating two classes of people: those that fit the CCP mold and those who do not. The more oppressive the regime becomes, the more likely protests will grow violent. The internment of Uiygar people is also significant. If these vulnerabilities worsen, China as we know it could collapse similar to the Soviet Union. The bubble in the property market resembles the Japanese asset bubble. In the 1980s, Japan was expected to become a hegemonic competitor to the United States. However, in 1991, the country suffered an economic collapse from bubbles in asset prices and the economy has yet to recover from it (Yoshikawa 2007). China may go the way of Japan suffering from an economy that refuses to grow. Hence, there are real possibilities that China's global ambitions may not be met given the delicate domestic situation.

Externally, neighboring states may complicate China's rise as the sole Eurasian and possibly global hegemonic power. There are three major alliances that are seeking to counter China's ambition. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD: United States, Japan, India, and Australia) and AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom, and United States security partnership) states, as well as other major powers like the Philippines, Vietnam, and other states with a declared interest in the

South China Sea, are seeking to counter China's ambition in the Indo-Pacific; same with the recent trilateral summit between the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea (Orta, August 14, 2023). Any power imbalance such as a massive relative increase in the power of China due to its control of Russia presents a major threat to relatively weaker states surrounding the Eurasian space. The QUAD and AUKUS are specific to balancing against the threat posed by China (Kassab 2023; Mouritzen 2023). Fox (2023) details the difficulties states of the first island chain experience due to China's expansionary goals. Schreer (2022) sees NATO's response to China's control of the Eurasian rimland as a threat requiring a strong response.

The more powerful China becomes, the more neighboring states will seek to balance against the threat (Walt 1985). Relatively weaker states, if they perceive little to no great power response, will bandwagon with the threat (Ibid). Major middle powers like the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, India, and Australia are militarily powerful; some of these states possess nuclear capability as well as other hardware central to containing China. Australia is an important player. As a member of the QUAD and AUKUS, it purchased a number of nuclear power submarines central to deterrence strategies (Miller and Mahdani 2023). Relatively weaker states like the Philippines are also pushing back against China's aggression in the South China Sea. These states are balancing against China with the United States. Any power imbalance is a threat to relatively weaker states. Since some states have more power than others, they will behave differently. For instance, great powers may balance against a threat, while weaker states may bandwagon with the threat. These behaviors are expected by the relative distribution of power. In other words, any relative imbalance of power will either lead less powerful states to ally themselves with others less powerful states if a more powerful state threatens the group.However, these states cannot be categorized as great powers because of this relative power differential. As the international system changes, weaker states, including middle powers, will be forced to either balance against the threat or bandwagon with the threat (Waltz 2010; Mearsheimer 2001). Some, like the United Kingdom, France, and Japan, are collaborating and enjoying productive relations with the United States and China. In other cases such as India and Australia, relations with China have collapsed. Due to their proximity to China, Australia and India are being punished for their security relations with the United States, specifically for their QUAD membership. As relative power differences between great powers widen and great power competition intensifies, middle power states may soon be forced to balance or bandwagon with either the United States or China, depending on perceptions of threat (Walt 1985). Under these circumstances,

middle powers must adapt to the new structural environment (Brooks and Wohlforth 2016; Kydd 2020).

It is important to note the rising opposition against China. Interestingly, Russia may also seek to throw off the yoke of China. China and Russia still have competing territorial claims like Vladivostok and Bolshoi Ussuriysky Island (Brennan 2023). Russia may see increasing dependence on China as an existential threat as a powerful China may redraw the boundaries of Eurasia, increasing its size and power and forever cementing Russia as its vassal. Before the 2022 Russia-Ukraine War, this fear was certainly prevalent in the Russian government, with some fearing that BRI would be "just another attempt [by China] to steal Central Asia from us" (Freymann 2021). The West might be able to capitalize on these fears, by using territorial disputes, among other types of disagreements, to drive a wedge between China and Russia. Anything that sows mistrust between these two revisionist states will degrade China's ability to organise Russia. More contemporarily and realistically, it seems that Russia is foregoing this concern for deeper strategic reliance on China. Yet this does not mean that the West should forgo a bait-and-bleed option, splitting the China-Russia partnership (Mearsheimer 2001).

It is difficult to ascertain whether Russia would simply accept a secondary role in the new international order in the long-run. Russia has a history of exceptionalism yet it was known to Russia that any involvement in an alliance with China would, in the long term, relegate Russia to a subordinate partner (Brzezinksi 1997, 117). Brzezinski notes that China, a "...more populous, more industrious, more innovative, more dynamic, and harboring some potential territorial designs on Russia...would inevitably consign Russia to the status of a junior partner, while at the same time lacking the means to help Russia overcome its backwardness" (Ibid 117). By essentially being subordinate, China can efficiently organize Russia. This may be in the works now given the conflict with the west over Ukraine and the economic benefits of the One Belt, One Road Initiative. These two factors may be the route toward China's organization of the heartland and the international system's world-island.

Conclusion: Moving Beyond the State, Embracing Organizing Principles

While one might argue that Putin's "motives, aims, and intentions... [is] important, even the most powerful figures must operate within both the international structure and domestic political context" (Lobell et al 2012, 11),

it is the makeup of geography that constructs and shapes the international structure and resulting domestic political context.

While figures like Alexander Dugin express designs on the entire Eurasian geopolitical space (Sullivan et al 2020), it is clear that China will supplant that ambition. Writers like Brzezinksi and Laqueur underscore the importance of the region but may not realize the significance of what Mackinder meant by *organizing*. Organizing principles are guiding ideas that bring resources and people together for a specific aim or purpose (Haugevik and Neumann 2019). If China can effectively dominate Russia through the BRI program, for instance, it will control Russia. The Ukraine War may usher in this dependence, giving China increased leverage over Russia.

If China, through BRI, enhances its ability to organize the Russian heartland, it will ultimately gain control of it without war. By expanding its territory, China will be able to access Russian resources, geopolitical space, and possibly its armed forces. This will make China the most powerful state in the international system. If Mackinder's hypothesis is correct, if China controls the heartland, it will control Europe and ultimately the world. It would leave the United States potentially isolated, as Russian armed forces may be brought to bear against Europe. While India and other players like Japan and Australia may help bring balance to the international system, the essential task will be to facilitate Russian autonomy rather than continuing to weaken it. Bringing Russia out of its present isolation might be an inhibitor of China's ability to organize the Heartland. Moving beyond the state then, scholars must remain ontologically flexible.

Mackinder sees China as more peripheral (based on a reductionist understanding of the international order) and possibly because during the time of writing, China was significantly weakened after its Century of Humiliation (19th century) and Civil War (20th century). Relatively weaker than Russia or Germany at the time, Mackinder did not see China as a major organizer, but rather Germany and then Japan. However, today is much different and China has grown in power and influence. Many of the variables that determine the importance of the World-Island remain the same, but now it is even more populous and wealthy. China will effectively be able to influence Russian foreign and military policy. Together, in the event of the planned invasion of Taiwan, the United States will be left to fight a two-front war against Russia and China, with the possibility of an aggressive Iran waiting in the wings. The war in Ukraine may essentially be the end of American hegemony and the beginning of China's.

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that Russia's current economic isolation brought on by western sanctions over the Ukraine War increases economic dependency on China. The more dependent Russia is, the more China will exercise control over it. If China were to gain complete political leverage over Russia, it would be in a position to become a global hegemon. H. J. Mackinder argues that whoever controls the heartland of the Eurasian continent controls the world's political system. This paper is unique in its approach as it updates Mackinder's thesis to today's international system incorporating trade networks as organizing principles. Military policymakers and practitioners can no longer consider China separate from Russia, but part of a symbiotic political unit forming a challenge to American hegemony. The methodology is theoretical in nature, synthesizing geopolitics with Realism and Neo-Marxism to explain the emerging international order. Such an approach is also new and innovative. As such, the United States military must prepare for the near-peer world, and understand the mechanics behind it. The emerging Anti-American axis led by China's economic power is defined by dependency networks, with Russia (and other actors like Iran) serving as its foundation.

KEYWORDS

Geopolitics; Dependency; Russia; Mackinder; Power; Influence.

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HYBRID MULTILATERALISM: GREENPEACE IN THE GLOBAL CLIMATE GOVERNANCE

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Introduction

Ecosystem function and biodiversity are currently being threatened by climate change. Future projections indicate that these risks will only increase. The repercussions that are anticipated include habitat destruction, a reduction in the distribution of native species that are poorly suited to heat and drought, and a shortage of water. The most significant dangers are, for instance, the consequences of heat waves and other severe occurrences like floods and droughts, changes in the patterns of infectious illnesses, and effects on food production and freshwater supply. Urban populations also face diminishing water supplies in cities and rising forest fire danger in peri-urban regions (Hjerpe and Nasiritousi 2015). Despite the dangers of climate change's irreversible effects, the global rise of a complex climate regime, where non-state actors work to reform the structure and institutionalize climate politics in various nations, has resulted in bidirectional interactions between state and non-state actors. Historically, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have made important contributions to the climate transition worldwide and negotiated advocacy networks for non-state actors since the first conference of the parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCCC) in 1995. (Liu, Wang, and Wu 2017).

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The environmental governance of intergovernmental and transnational organizations has grown significantly over the past several decades since the 1970s, when the expansion of international environmental organizations started (Elsässer et al. 2022). Today's NGOs' activity is a result of globalization, which has facilitated the emancipation of private actors' engagement, including that of multinational NGOs that conduct transnational operations (Rietig 2016). NGO involvement demonstrates that there are three reasons why NGOs are significant players in international relations. First, the growing influence of NGOs in determining the priority of global concerns, as seen by their participation in important international forums. Because activism on certain topics results in the development of competency expertise in particular domains, the second benefit is the building of competence authority in the field of NGOs. Third, the rise of NGO authority as a global force that promotes progressive norms (Wildan Ilmanuarif Shafar & Nurul Isnaeni 2016).

Greenpeace was chosen as one of the examples to represent how NGOs were involved in international climate change governance to better understand its function as an important participant in international climate negotiations. Greenpeace was founded in Canada in 1972, and when it expanded to Europe in 1979, it became Greenpeace International. Greenpeace's first goal was to transform the world using 'media bombs,' which were consciousness-altering sounds and visuals that were broadcast throughout the globe under the pretext of breaking news. The strategy was a complete success, and Greenpeace swiftly gained global media recognition. Their mission is to be an independent, worldwide advocacy group that works to alter people's attitudes and behaviors in order to safeguard and maintain the environment (Pandey 2015). Greenpeace is a hierarchical organization based on global democratic principles with a high degree of internationalism and coordination. In practice, Greenpeace campaign decisions are developed, coordinated, and monitored from the international level by Greenpeace International, with additional input from national and regional offices (Sitorus and Purnama 2023).

The existence of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) provides a level of interest among academics in multi-actor global governance. Where the starting point for researchers is an evaluation that grows institutional interactions and is not too hierarchical so that the researchers are inspired by the climate change governance system. Although the phrase "multilevel governance" was first used to describe multiple levels of decision-making in Europe, it is also used as a framework. Recently there has been increasing use of the phrase "multilevel governance" to describe the interactions between various actors at the scale of government. As a result, some autonomous activities are permitted by less hierarchical

codes of conduct (Strachová 2021). The non-state actors as well as the cities gained impetus because of the Paris Agreement. The national governments' increasing acceptance of transnational city networks broadens their options for addressing climate change (Bäckstrand et al. 2017) In this context, hybrid multilateralism is collaboration between several actors at various levels related to multilateral talks. When combined with orchestration, hybrid multilateralism serves as a tool to focus the efforts of various parties to achieve common goals (Dryzek 2017).

This research requires previous research on Non-Governmental Organizations, Hybrid Multilateralism, Climate Governance, and Greenpeace as a supporting theoretical basis for finding GAP in this research. In addition, research (Giese 2017) examines NGOs based in India, which includes Indian Climate Justice and All India Women's Conference (AIWC) role in international climate governance. He emphasized that these NGOs have a limited impact on the country's environment policies. Because NGOs have influence inside the larger UNFCCC international organization, it is possible to make weaker arguments against Indian governance when it has transitive features. NGOs can provide outlets to influence the UNFCCC, which has an impact on Indian government policy about the UNFCCC. However, NGOs in India have a significant impact on the creation of knowledge and organizational capacity, enabling them to supplement and evaluate government of India policy. In his explanation of the role of NGOs in combating global warming, Lucas J. Giese primarily focused on the case study of India.

The study by Novianti (2013) examines how several environmental NGOs responded to the flood occurrence in Prague, Czech Republic, from the standpoint of an actor-based approach. This research is comparable to that of (Nasiritousi, Hjerpe, and Linnér 2016a) who discussed the role of non-state actors in global governance and their potential impact on states. There is an underlying question in these two studies which both discuss the role of NGOs in national climate change policy. According to (Liu, Wang, and Wu 2017), NGOs such as China Civil Climate Action Network (CCCAN) and China Youth Climate Action Network (CYCAN) have taken a significant role in global climate discussions. Due to diverse political, legal, and even cultural circumstances, each country has a different role for NGOs in domestic climate change governance. According to their research, which examines China is the greatest carbon emitter in the world, therefore if it just depends on top-down administration and voluntary private sector activity, a low-carbon growth path may not be possible. As a result, it is crucial that NGOs participate as civil society actors. However, there is still little research on how NGOs are used in China's control of climate change.

Moreover, Rietig (2016) in her research examines how government representatives in international talks consider the opinions of nongovernmental groups. There are three important NGOs discussed in this paper which are People in Need Foundation (PINF), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), and The Czech Catholic Caritas (CCK)The study's conclusions were examined in the context of the 2009–2012 climate change discussions, during which time government representatives took note of advice from international advocacy groups including the Climate Action Network. Given the narrowly defined negotiation mandate that was previously agreed upon, demonstrations and lobbying activities on a global scale are frequently disregarded. To modify the government's position and restart the next discussion after it has drawn significant public attention, this calls for a long-term view. As a result, the Government encourages the participation of NGOs since they lend credibility and garner support from the general population. Only the role of NGOs in talks and NGO tools to show government legitimacy are the subject of this research (Rietig 2016).

In his study, Roberto TalentiI looks at new forms of multilateralism that amplify the function of NGOs and boost the potency of the system of international climate governance. Therefore, Roberto Talentil, based on the relevant prior research, the Climate Regime Hybrid Multilateralism concept was established, with the goal of determining the extent to which Hybrid Multilateralism enhances its position in climate governance. For example, non-governmental organizations at the global climate governance level (Talenti 2022a). And related to Robert's article, namely Kevin Michael DeLuca's article (2009), in which his research explains that Greenpeace as an NGO can organize and publish about global climate change (DeLuca 2009).

Previous research on international regimes, international organizations, and international public administration are just a few of the academic areas that have looked at how institutions interact with one another. Most of the earlier research focused on how NGOs may assist governmental actors in resolving environmental problems in a nation. This study has improved our understanding of how institutions interact at various organizational levels and the effects these have on things like the effectiveness, legitimacy, and authority of global environmental governance. We thus attempted to examine how Greenpeace, one of the influential NGOs combating the climate issue, which plays its role in the global politics of climate change in this research. Therefore, this article raises a few additional concerns in addition to describing how Greenpeace has influenced global climate discussions. First, how did hybrid multilateralism explain Greenpeace's participation in the global climate negotiations? Secondly, do international environmental accords benefit from

Greenpeace's participation in the global governance of climate change? Lastly, what are the indicators to justify Greenpeace's influence in the global climate discussions.

This research uses qualitative methodology. This research fully describes how Greenpeace is involved in international climate governance (Nurhariska, Hayat, and Abidin 2023). This research is also bibliographic in nature which aims to completely describe and analyze events, phenomena and thoughts collected through analysis of existing documents and records so that researchers can provide a clear picture, focused and comprehensive picture of the focus of the research being carried out. The data obtained is secondary data from our findings on several online news sites, official government agency websites, news, and previous research. Qualitative research that focuses on multi-methods includes naturalistic and interpretive approaches to the topic material which means, to understand or interpret events in terms of the meaning given by humans, qualitative researchers investigate objects in their natural environment. In qualitative research, the way to obtain data sources is by collecting, such as case studies, historical texts, previous journals, news, the official Greenpeace website, and official websites about international organizations on climate and annual reports, to explain the moments that occurred. Distinctive characteristics of qualitative research, as well as literature in the broad field of social sciences (Aspers and Corte 2019).

Hybrid Multilateral Conceptual Framework

This research uses the concept of Hybrid Multilateralism developed by Bäckstrand et al. (2017), who define it as a 'heuristic' to capture 'intensive interaction between state and non-state actors in the new landscape of international climate cooperation. According to these scholars, hybrid multilateralism considers two new trends of global climate policy, namely the emergence of a hybrid climate policy architecture, and the intensive interaction between multilateral and transnational climate action. In the same year, Dryzek presented the concept of Hybrid Multilateralism defined by the emergence of linkages between established multilateral negotiations and many self-governance initiatives involving various non-state actors cooperating with each other. Lastly, Strachová recently defined hybrid multilateralism as a form of cooperation among different actors at different levels. The definitions of Hybrid Multilateralism are not only a newfound accent on their role, but also heterogeneity which is when they define hybrid multilateralism as 'heuristics',

as 'linkages', and as forms of 'cooperation'. And Kupyer et al revealed that it is on the Paris Agreement that the Multilateral Hybrid is instituting through the introduction of nationally determined ones that will enable NGOs to increase 'fairness, legitimacy, and effectiveness' on the international climate regime. (Superiore and Anna 2023).

Hybrid Multilateral counseling refers to a concept in international relations in which traditional multilateral approaches to global governance are combined or complemented by more flexible, informal, or non-traditional mechanisms. This involves a mix of traditional international organizations, such as the United Nations, and newer forms of cooperation, often involving many stakeholders outside the nation-state. In a Hybrid Multilateralism where various actors, including states, international organizations, NGOs, civil society, and even the private sector, come together to address global challenges. It is not solely about cooperation between countries, but includes a very wide range of stakeholders (Dryzek 2017).

According to Kyuper, the Paris Agreement instituted a system of Hybrid Multilateralism through the introduction of nationally made contributions with the possibility of NGOs to improve the international climate regime through three points: Authority, Legitimacy, and Effectiveness. From these three points, which is an assessment of how non-state actors can contribute, play their many roles and involvement in international climate negotiations. The hybrid multilateral characteristics of non-state actors' involvement in the UNFCCC under the Paris Agreement continue to raise questions about fairness and equality when it comes to deciding who gets what, when, and how. *Legitimacy* is an essential element of governance of any system, determining whether actors perceive rules as acceptable and legitimate. The participation of non-state actors increases or hinders the effectiveness of the Paris agreement is a third important element in seeing the significance of non-state activities. The effectiveness of an international treaty can be defined as a function of the ambition and firmness of the commitment of the Parties in combination with the degree of participation of States and their compliance with what has been agreed (Kuyper, Linnér, and Schroeder 2018). The Paris Agreement will have a major influence on the ability of states and non-state actors to cope with the demands posed by global warming. And the emergence of a thought, about how this hybrid architecture can work in practice.

Hybrid Multilateralism and Greenpeace Involvement in International Climate Negotiations

The Paris Agreement emphasizes Hybrid Multilateralism, which has the dual effect of encouraging and inhibiting the participation of non-state actors in global climate management, especially NGOs. The idea of Hybrid Multilateralism was later expanded, a list of potential non-state actor entities was provided, and non-state actors were expected to have greater influence after the Paris Agreement (Bäckstrand et al. 2017). The theory of Hybrid Multilateralism seeks to explain the interactions between state and non-state actors in the emerging system of global climate cooperation. Non-state actors are groups that are not part of the government, such as Greenpeace. This explanation will be accepted by the UN Economic and Social Council for observers who have consultative status. In further research on the formation of the post-Paris international climate regime, the idea of "Hybrid Multilateralism" will be the instrument used (Talenti 2022b).

Two of the key developments in the global climate issue may be captured by Hybrid Multilateralism. First, to highlight a hybrid approach that combines nations' voluntarily making climate commitments with a global transparency framework for revaluation on a regular basis. In addition to participating in global diplomacy as observers, Greenpeace also manages the implementation and monitoring of Determined Nation Contributions (NDCs). Second, and hybrid multilateralism pays attention to the link between multilateral and transnational climate action, in which the UNFCCC Secretariat plays the role of facilitator (Bäckstrand et al. 2017). The Greenpeace participation in hybrid multilateralism has been categorized into three characteristics: authority, legitimacy, and effectiveness, as previously mentioned.

Authority

In recent years, the question of where political authority is located in the Hybrid Multilateralism era has consumed scientists studying climate governance. More than 12,000 contributions to the Non-State Actor Zone for Climate Action (NAZCA) database demonstrate the significant involvement of non-state actors in the governance of climate change today. While some database contributions are directly tied to nation-state regulatory activities, many show that non-state climate action experiments have increased since the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) (Bäckstrand et al. 2017). According to (Hoffman 2012), Following a meeting in Copenhagen, which is a landmark in global climate management, companies and NGOs decided to take action themselves to address climate change. And this may be a trend

caused by the expansion of global urban networks and urban participation in climate governance. A number of studies have also been conducted on the expansion of commercial emissions accounting standards, public-private partnerships, global city networks, and certification programs in recent years (M. M. Betsill and Corell 2017; Hoffman, 2012).

Cities, companies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are no longer limited to adhering to intergovernmental treaties or the directions of nation-states as they have started to create their own laws and standards that others have chosen to adopt. They have established personal domains of jurisdiction apart from the sovereign state and have become independent rulers (M. Betsill 2013).

Legitimacy

The form of legitimacy that non-state actors have in the UNFCCC has been a topic of dispute between the Copenhagen and Paris Agreements. Non-governmental organizations are given the opportunity and encouraged to provide valid input and output in the Paris Agreement. The National Designated Authority and regional stakeholders created a self-reporting and monitoring framework for the Green Climate Fund and invited non-governmental organizations to participate in its development. However, the position of NGOs in the hybrid architecture of the Paris Agreement remains unclear (Fisher 2010). NGOs are requested to decrease their emissions by voluntary promises, although at one stage they were asked to work with governments to determine the procedure for monitoring emission reductions. While some NGOs also serve as watchdogs, others do not. Legitimacy binds authority and power. Legitimacy strengthens authorities by legitimizing them in the eyes of the governed (Bernstein 2011). Greenpeace believes that the opinion doing so is not only within their legal rights, but it would also be negligent and irresponsible of them not to (Schmidt 2013).

The effectiveness of the Paris Agreement will also depend on how choices are made. The quality of deliberation, in its most basic sense, concerns how decision makers can convince others of the reasons for their decisions. Countries are not yet required to provide detailed explanations of their NDCs, but more than 170 national commitments are enough to be agreed to in the Paris agreement (Brun 2016). In 2018, States will take part in discussions aimed at supporting their pledges for the long-term objectives of the Paris Agreement. In this, non-state actors will be crucial, especially through the TEM and TEP procedures. At the nexus of hybrid multilateralism, discussions

about non-state contributions to the LPAA, NAZCA, and future Global Climate Action (GCA) are being held more often between the UNFCCC and non-state actors. Because they provide a forum for demonstration and discussion, these orchestration initiatives allow state and non-state actors to participate in the same process (Chan, Brandi, and Bauer 2016).

Effectiveness

The rise of transnational climate governance has prompted many researchers on how the UN can coordinate, mobilize and accelerate non-state and public action to address climate change, as well as keep global warming to 2°C or less, and support climate change resilience and decarbonization (Widerberg and Pattberg 2015). The ambition and strictness of an international agreement's obligations coupled with the degrees of state involvement and compliance determine the effectiveness (Bang, Hovi, and Skodvin 2016). If there is an increase in commitments while maintaining the same level of involvement, effectiveness will be improved.

Non-state actors, in this case NGOs are often seen to support implementation while also monitoring and evaluating conformance. By identifying problems, formulating objectives, setting rules, disseminating information and resources, building capacity, evaluating compliance, and so on, NGOs also promote ambition and involvement. In order to achieve low-carbon futures, Post-Paris effectiveness also entails coordinating non-state and intergovernmental initiatives under a comprehensive framework (Hsu et al. 2015). To reduce the emissions gap, non-state contributions outside the UNFCCC must be increased. How can the NDC achieve its decarbonization and mitigation goals while reducing greenhouse gas emissions through non-state and sub-state voluntary commitments and actions? Apart from climate change adaptation and mitigation, the UNFCCC also does much more (Bäckstrand et al. 2017).

The Paris Agreement aims to end poverty, advance sustainable development, and strengthen the international response to combat climate change. This will encourage growth with low greenhouse gas emissions that do not endanger the world's food supply, keep global temperature rise below 2°C, increase resilience to climate change, and align financial flows with these goals. Non-state players are anticipated to contribute to a number of the agreement's components, which might conflict with (Bäckstrand et al. 2017).

Greenpeace Roles in International Climate Negotiations

After understanding how Hybrid Multilateralism helps us comprehend

Greenpeace's role in global climate governance, we will explore Greenpeace's effectiveness in international climate discussions. Due to their responsibilities and methods, their involvement will yield positive results. Thus, we will first discuss their roles and ways to improve climate negotiations. NGO participation in international environmental discussions and accords has grown dramatically in recent decades. Although many researchers believe that NGOs like Greenpeace impact global environmental politics, their roles, and efforts on international conferences, notably for climate problems, are disputed. UNFCCC is one of the environmental discussions and conferences that focus on climate change. Greenpeace participated in climate discussions through the International Climate Agreements. Over 60% of parties say NGOs help publicize climate change (Nasiritousi, Hjerpe, and Linnér 2016b). NGO perspectives on the matter may vary.

Even though they only act as observers, NGOs have also played an important role in UNFCCC discussions. And also at the Conference of the Parties (COP) has given permission to NGOs as observers (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, n.d.) These NGOs have extensive relationships with different interests or points of view, but most have something in common. And many NGOs are present as observers, and some of them have significantly influenced the party's stance through lobbying and other means such as representing various levels of government, documenting and assessing the negotiation process, or acting as monitors. (The Climate Policy Info Hub 2023).

Greenpeace International is one of the groups that the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC has awarded observer status to. (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, n.d.). Greenpeace has been actively involved, participating in meetings, and discussing ideas with other attendees, including delegates. It is acknowledged that this engagement enables crucial knowledge, skills, views, and experience from civil society to be included into the process to provide fresh ideas and methods. Additionally, Greenpeace's involvement and access as observers to the process encourage openness in an increasingly complicated global issue. Greenpeace's involvement in UNFCCC agendas thrives in an environment of trust where others are respected for their ideas and where consideration is given to the nature of international sessions (United Nations Climate Change Secretariat 2017).

Indicators of Greenpeace Influence in Kyoto Protocol and

Paris Agreement

As NGOs gradually came to be acknowledged as the world's ears and eyes, researchers made substantial attempts to comprehend nonstate actors' effect on the formation of international environmental politics. However, (M. M. Betsill and Corell 2017) claim that there are still open concerns about how and when NGOs may have an impact on the politics of the climate problem. Understanding the circumstances in which NGOs like Greenpeace impact climate change politics, particularly when it comes to influencing the international environmental discussions, depends on taking into account what is meant by their influence. It may be difficult to grasp each party's position in this hybrid multilateralism for addressing the climate catastrophe if there is a hazy concept of what influence means. In order to evaluate if NGOs like Greenpeace have succeeded or failed in influencing any international discussions on the climate problem, we would need to explain what we mean by NGOs impact and what type of indicator may be utilized to characterize their influences in this section.

Influence may occur when one actor communicates information to another across international boundaries that modifies the latter's behaviour from what would have happened in the absence of the information. Therefore, their effect on this idea led to changes in the state actor's behavior in accordance with the information provided. International governmental organizations fighting the climate problem need to know about NGOs because of this sort of effect in the political sphere, where governments typically retained the authority of decision-making over both parts of procedural issues and substance of the agreements or decisions. NGOs need to have a solid foundation of information in order to have an influence on knowledge that can be utilized in international climate discussions or accords (M. M. Betsill and Corell 2017).

Some academics depend on evidence of NGOs' actions, such as making decisions for negotiators on specific positions, providing material, and lobbying, to determine if NGOs really have an impact on international governmental talks (Liu, Wang, and Wu 2017). An analytical framework that provided an index to gauge NGOs' influence in global climate discussions or accords existed. The indicators included the following: (1) the presence of NGOs at the negotiations; (2) the ability to influence the agenda; (3) the opportunity to define the environmental issue under negotiation; (4) the capacity to provide information in writing and orally in support of a position; (5) the capacity to advise government delegations directly; and (6) the capacity to ensure that information can be incorporated into the negotiations or

agreement. The first four indicators must be met to evaluate if NGOs have affected a negotiation. This is because the first four indicators focused on NGOs' participation, which may be utilized to determine the extent of their impact (M. M. Betsill and Corell 2017).

The Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change aims to mitigate catastrophic anthropogenic climate change by assigning to all Parties "common but differentiated responsibilities" that take into account each country's greenhouse gas emissions and the ability to reduce those emissions. (Ki-moon 2017). This global agreement aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while stabilizing the concentration of these gases in the atmosphere at a level that can prevent adverse human impacts on the climate system. To do this, the Kyoto Protocol incorporates several elements from previous international environmental agreements, such as the requirement that each country reduce its national greenhouse gas emissions by a certain percentage starting from a base year. The Clean Development Mechanism is another tactic under the Kyoto Protocol that allows rich countries to fulfill their obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by assisting developing countries' initiatives (Rowlands 2001).

The Kyoto Protocol made an agreement on limiting and reducing GHG emissions bringing together 37 prosperous countries and economies in transition. When President Clinton came to power, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol was created and signed, but the US Senate never ratified it. The United States withdrew from the Kyoto Protocol in March 2001, not long after President Bush took office. President Bush's decision to remove the United States from the Protocol sparked demonstrations and demonstrations in April 2001 in front of the White House and the presidential grounds in Texas. In a letter dated May 2001, Greenpeace addressed 100 of the world's leading companies, some of which had collaborated with the US government to resist climate change efforts. And companies in the world are also asked to openly support the Kyoto Protocol. In June 2001, Greenpeace launched a boycott of gas stations targeting ExxonMobil because the company was a key supporter of Bush's decision to withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol. The following month, Greenpeace continued its efforts to persuade major American companies, such as Ford Motor Company and Coca-Cola, to support the Kyoto Protocol in order to exert indirect pressure on the Bush administration to reverse its rejection of the Protocol (Dib 2021).

At the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development in August 2002, Greenpeace joined the global Business Council for Sustainable Development to call on governments around the world to accept the Kyoto Agreement as the basis for a new set of universal laws to combat global warming. When the

United States was a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol, Greenpeace began small-scale campaigns and demonstrations to urge governments to comply with the Protocol. However, once the Bush administration took office and left the Protocol, Greenpeace concentrated on subtly pressing significant business leaders who had links to and partnerships with the federal government. These business leaders have influence on the federal political agenda due to the financial assistance they gave the government, which indicates that they had influence over the industry (Dib 2021). This proved that Greenpeace succeeded in influencing the industries.

Regarding the Paris Agreement, Greenpeace examines its inability to influence international environmental negotiations. Most countries in the world have ratified the Paris Climate Agreement, an international agreement that promises to fight climate change. After years of discussions, an agreement was reached on the Paris Agreement, which marked the world's first climate agreement. This is seen as significant progress in the global community's search for solutions, despite its shortcomings. Of course, this is usually the intention when the topic of the Paris Agreement is raised in the context of climate change. The Paris Agreement aims to maintain global warming at 1.5 degrees, ideally less than two degrees, so that the bad consequences of climate change are likely to be prevented by doing so (Greenpeace 2021).

The United States formally declared its intention to leave the Paris Agreement on November 4, 2019, and the Trump administration has started the procedure to do so. The unjust economic burden placed on the American workforce, taxpayers, and companies led to the decision. They claimed that between 1970 and 2018, they had effectively reduced air pollution by 74%, and between 2005 and 2017, net greenhouse gas emissions had decreased to 13% while the economy had grown by almost 19% (Pompeo 2019). Unfortunately, this decision has caused the loss of roles of Greenpeace in influencing the Paris Agreement.

Annie Leonard, executive director of Greenpeace US, stated that the United States' decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement by the Trump administration would transform the country from a global climate leader to the country's biggest climate failure. (Greenpeace 2017a). Protecting the planet and its inhabitants is a moral obligation, no longer a legal or political obligation because protecting the Planet is very important for the environment and Global Society. In the Paris Agreement, more than 200 countries agreed to this, and if the Trump administration intends to violate that commitment, then executives and business leaders who are emitters of greenhouse gases must hold accountable those who cause global environmental pollution (Greenpeace 2017b). According to the statement

released, Greenpeace believes that Trump's decision to withdraw from the accord would make it more difficult to maintain a secure future for life on Earth, and that this task will be too great for national governments to handle alone.

As was previously said, this incident has shown Greenpeace's inability to influence climate change discussions. They are no longer permitted to collaborate with US coalitions of non-federal entities to monitor the Paris Agreement's implementation. They were unable to dictate the agenda of the negotiations, contact directly with government delegations to provide detailed recommendations, and, most importantly, present at any of the discussions (M. M. Betsill and Corell 2017). NGOs are the least capable player in the global governance of climate change. Only pressure and persuasion will allow them to exert influence (Allan and Hadden 2017). Due to their inability to participate in the discussions and the fact that much of the material they sent to the decision-makers did not make it into the final version of the agreement draft, Greenpeace lost influence over the Paris Agreement because of the US decision to leave. Furthermore, the final version could not accurately represent the objectives and guiding principles of NGOs in the battle against the climate disaster (M. M. Betsill and Corell 2017).

Conclusions

The Paris Agreement is a prime example of Hybrid Multilateralism, which involves both state and non-state players in international climate change discussions, according to this study's findings. Non-state actors, such as NGOs, have a significant impact on global climate change indirectly. The fact that Greenpeace participates in Multinational Hybrid, which evaluates organisations on three criteria—authority, legitimacy, and effectiveness—shows that it is an NGO engaged in international climate change discussions. As an observer in international negotiations, Greenpeace promotes openness in increasingly complex global issues by taking an active role in discussions with other participants, including delegates to international conferences. Greenpeace also offers many roles and benefits in global climate change governance.

Greenpeace evidence affected the global discussion on the Kyoto Protocol when the Bush government withdrew from the agreement, in addition to the organization's influence indicators in global climate discussions including the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. Due to financial support from business owners to governments that have an impact on the industry,

Greenpeace subtly highlighted significant businesses that have partnership relationships with the federal government by taking part and boycotting major American corporations that were Brush's primary backers. However, the Paris Agreement shows that Greenpeace is powerless to sway debates on climate change. Greenpeace is not permitted to work with a coalition of US non-federal organisations to oversee the Paris Agreement's implementation. Therefore, Greenpeace cannot set the topic for the negotiations, speak with government delegations directly to offer specific proposals, and, most significantly, cannot attend any of the meetings. Greenpeace's impact on the Paris Agreement was diminished as a result of its inefficiency.

This study examined Greenpeace's role as an NGO in international climate change, with a focus on Greenpeace's involvement in hybrid multilateral international negotiations, Greenpeace's function and advantages in global climate change governance, and Greenpeace's influence in international discussions. There is a need for recommendations for more study to delve into greater depth on Greenpeace's participation in global climate governance as a non-state actor towards nations who are at war over environmental harm.

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ABSTRACT

The study seeks to explain the non-state actors' roles in international climate negotiations. The existence of the Paris Agreement in our view strengthens the hybrid multilateralism architecture that makes it possible encouraging non-state actors to take part in global climate governance, such as Greenpeace. Based on literature research, this study uses qualitative research approaches. In addition, we utilize secondary information relevant to the subjects covered in this research from academic publications and online news sources. From this research, we found that three main key points, authority, legitimacy, and effectiveness in hybrid multilateralism best explain Greenpeace involvement in international climate negotiations. Furthermore, by following certain indicators of non-governmental organizations' influence, Greenpeace is seen to have succeeded in influencing the Kyoto Protocol yet lost its role in influencing the Paris Agreement upon the United States' withdrawal under Trump's administration.

KEYWORDS

Greenpeace; Authority; Legitimacy; Effectiveness; Non-Governmental Organisation.

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ASTROPOLITICS AND USA-CHINA'S NEW GEOPOLITICAL RIVALRY AREA

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Introduction:

With the development of human technology, new environments have been proposed for geopolitical games (Vasegh & Isanedjad 2021). Geopolitics has traditionally been an Earth-centered field, but technological progress and the space race during the Cold War created a new context for this science: "*Astropolitics*". Although the space realm, the moon, and other celestial bodies are still far from the focal point of geopolitics, they are becoming an important base of national power because of their characteristics and resources. Global security is increasingly intertwined with space security, as space-based communications are heavily dependent on broadcasting and observations. In this context, the complexity of threats in outer space and the proliferation of new acting agents have made astropolitics a very interesting topic (Vozmediano 2021, 6).

Equally important, space has always been a geopolitical competition field. Since the beginning of the space age, programs and goals have been driven primarily by the Cold War competition. This is nothing new, although US officials have complained that space is no longer a sanctuary. Apparently, space was never a sanctuary, and satellites were always in danger. For this reason, most nuclear reduction agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union contained clause warnings against targeting national technical vehicles or data-gathering satellites. What has changed now is the role that space plays in the United States: it is, in fact, an important provider of national security. For Russia, however, space, while important to some of its national security efforts, is more of a way to maintain geopolitical importance. There is also a complexity in strengthening China's space capabilities. This, coupled with the growing interest in global anti-space capabilities, allows conflict on

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Earth to spill over into space orbit; alternatively, misperceptions of activities in orbit lead to conflict on Earth (Samson 2021). With an ever-increasing number of countries pursuing their own interests, geopolitics has turned into astropolitics. Near-Earth outer space can become a battlefield just as the New World has become a battlefield for European nations. However, since warfare is an energy-taking activity and energy production is costly for any human pursuit in space, most conflicts in space are non-violent and require hybrid, electronic, cyber, and electromagnetic technology to maintain economic, legal, informational, and institutional stability. The political and psychological war of this type of astropolitical conflict may be appropriate for countries with a community of growing space assets dedicated to supporting their geopolitical security and economic interests (Giri 2022).Therefore, this study illustrates the role of contemporary geopolitics in today's space based on the dynamic nature of astropolitics and assesses the emerging geopolitical competition behind the rise of international interest in space. Methodologically, primary and secondary sources were used to shed light on this research and these sources were diversified to obtain sufficient information: books, articles, websites, and official institutional publications were used to prepare this article. Given the current and future orientation of this study, almost all referenced documents are relatively recent.

Theoretical Framework

Geopolitics

Swedish geographer Rudolf Kjellén first used the term geopolitics in his article on the formation of Sweden's natural borders in 1899. Kjellén defines geopolitics as a theory that describes the state as an organism or geographical phenomenon at a certain level. Karl Haushofer, one of the important German intellectuals between the two world wars, defines it as the doctrine of spatial determinism of general political processes based on many elements of the science of geography. During World War II, Edmund Walsh, an American political scientist, defined geopolitics as the combined study of human geography and political science (Tovy 2015, 1). The term geopolitics was removed from academic and public discourse after the Second World War but gradually came back into use, since the 1970s. In academia, progressive geographers such as French geographer Yves Lacoste reclaimed geopolitics as an active and emancipatory approach to geography and politics. Realist diplomats such as the US Security Advisor and Secretary of State Henry

Kissinger (1973-1977) reintroduced the concept of geopolitics to counter political choices based on idealism and ideology and to put "national interests" on the agenda of foreign policymakers (Mamadouh & Dijkink 2006, 350).

Contemporary geopolitics defines the sources, practices, and representations that enable territorial control and resource extraction. States continue to practice statesmanship. In this sense, "*all-seeing*" interpretations of the world are still offered by political and intellectual leaders. But their "*situated knowledge*" is increasingly being questioned by others in "*situations*" different from the clubs and boardrooms of politicians and business leaders. Geopolitical knowledge is seen as part of the struggle because marginalized people in different situations seek to resist the dominance of the views of the powerful (Flint 2006, 17).

Since geopolitics deals with fundamental aspects of the development of civilization, its analysis in the form of a complete methodology has a fourfold purpose: (**1**) to establish a solid theoretical foundation from which to develop geopolitics as a systematic discipline; (**2**) to examine the nature of contemporary regional and global geopolitical development, including the seabed and space; (**3**) to reconstruct the geopolitical history of a particular country, region, or the world; and (**4**) to analyze the national power of key countries. Therefore, geopolitics have both theoretical and operational aspects, (Nuhija et al. 2021).

Geopolitics is a dynamic struggle between powerful states trying to possess the new "space" and organize it in their interests. Therefore, geopolitical interests in space can be defined as opportunities to achieve maximum freedom of action, develop full-space capabilities, and seize key positions and resources in space. The essence of outer space activity is to pursue these interests with the most cost-effective means among the limited options (Wang 2009, 436).

Using geopolitical analysis, it is not surprising that we understand the region at the center of this analysis as either strategic (an independent field of conflict) or operational (an active area of operations). On one hand, this field has characteristics that influence thinking about the interaction between space forces and other acting agents. However, they are related to other areas and mutually influence their activities carried out in them. Physical nature then places fairly clear limits on the nature of the operations that humans are currently capable of performing. In this case, the level of technological development is still basic and the technology used is not advanced. Therefore, any activity in space is determined by the level of technological complexity, because without appropriate technologies, humans cannot perform any task (Doboš 2020, 238).

Astropolitics (Geopolitics of Space)

Space has strategic utility and meaning and constantly intersects with terrestrial geopolitics and geo-economics. Space may be a vast physical vacuum, but it is not a political vacuum where scientists occasionally conduct experiments and governments carry out unique missions, such as sending humans to the moon and returning them safely to Earth. In the early 21st century, space has become as important to geopolitics and geo-economics as the world's complex transportation routes in oceans or continents (Sheldon 2021, 8).

Earth's orbit, constellations of satellites based there, supporting infrastructure on the ground, and infrastructure applications provide a wide and diverse range of services and data that governments, non-state actors, and individuals can use for real and nefarious purposes. From an altitude of approximately 100 km to 40,000 km, the Earth's orbit is a geographic environment used by actors of the international system for a wide range of political, commercial, diplomatic, scientific, and infrastructure needs that are currently very important. In this strategic sense, it is no different from using the oceans and the Earth's atmosphere (Bowen 2020, 22). In addition, the definition of this limit is still unclear, because developed countries refuse to recognize the claim of sovereignty of equatorial countries over the areas just above their airspace, which extends to the fixed earth orbit between thirty-five and 40 thousand kilometers above Earth's equator (Klinger 2019, 675).

Remote sensing, as a field of official scientific interest, began in October 1957 with the launch of the Sputnik satellite. It is widely understood that future satellite launches and national space programs will require international agreements on satellite orbits, capabilities, and future space exploration efforts. On December 13, 1958, a year after Sputnik, the United Nations created a Special Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, whose main purpose was to "promote international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space". A year later, on December 12, 1959, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 1472 (XIV), which authorized the establishment of the permanent Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) (Salla 2014, 95-96). However, since the Soviet Union first placed a man-made object in orbit in 1957, space has become an increasingly geopoliticized area (Williams 2010, 785).

The Outer Space Treaty came into force in 1967 as the first major multilateral treaty on space. The treaty established a set of basic principles regarding governmental use of outer space, including the inherent right of all nations to freely access, use, and explore outer space. The parties to

the treaty also agreed that space and all celestial bodies cannot be claimed as land, property or exclusive territory of any country (Conrad et al., 2012). The international community quickly ensured the international character of space by signing the Outer Space Treaty in 1967, which enshrined its non-sovereign status. During the Cold War, space was a relatively undeveloped area of bipolar tension, apart from the Cuban Missile Crisis and Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (better known as Star Wars) (Williams 2010, 785). Since the beginning of space activities in the Cold War, the geopolitical context of international relations and space platforms have also changed significantly. For more than three decades, space has been seen as one of the sites of peaceful Cold War competition between the United States and Soviet Union to replace armed conflict. However, in the context of the "*space race*", international cooperation was central to the political strategy of the two space powers (demonstrating leadership ability and technological capabilities) for similar reasons (Peter 2016, 146). During the Cold War, the importance of space became apparent when the United States and former Soviet Union developed their own space programs as competitive tools. Since then, the number of state actors has increased. The use of space technology has grown exponentially, and this is evident in contemporary space weapons (Argyris 2021).

Just as the Cold War was the defining context of the first space age, the fall of the Soviet Union marked the beginning of the second space age. The Persian Gulf War in 1991, sometimes referred to as the "*First Space War*", is another defining event of this era. The dominant features of the second space age include (**1**) the emergence of globalization with the enormous increase in communication and information flows made possible by the global landscape of satellite technology; (**2**) shifting military emphasis on using space to enhance strategic capabilities, to using space to gain operational and tactical advantages in ground warfare; and (**3**) decreasing and changing emphasis on civil space. It is possible to change the unipolarity of today's international system to a multipolar environment with much wider and more diverse actors. As power is dispersed among these actors, the nature of power in space will begin to change. Other potential features of the next space age may include (1) major technological advances that would significantly lower barriers to entry for space actors; (2) a shift from a geocentric to a solar system perspective; and (3) renewed strategic competition in space (Hays & Lutes 2007).

However, the beginning of the 21st century is witnessing a historical development destined to transform the world, although relatively in its infancy. For the first time in decades, the United States has been a real competitor in terms of both economic and global ambitions. John Ikenberry argues that

the current US-created international order has the potential to integrate and absorb China in the long run, rather than replacing it with a Chinese-led one. This is an important measure of the meaning of China's rise. Thus far, the rise of a new global hegemon has led to a major change in the international order, both in Britain and the United States. Given that China promises to be so powerful and diverse, it is difficult to resist the idea that its rise will eventually herald the birth of a new international order. One field in which competition between America and China will be experienced is the space field (Constantin-Bercean 2022, 123).

Space is the fourth military domain after air, land, and sea; and cyberspace is classified as the fifth domain. According to the US Department of Defense Joint Doctrine Publication on Space Operations: (1) space capabilities have proven to be force multipliers when integrated into military operations; (2) spatial capabilities provide global communications, such as Positioning, Navigation and Timing (PNT); environmental monitoring; space Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR); and warning services for Combatant Commanders (CCDR), services and agencies (Quintana 2017, 94).

In addition, the development of space weapons shows that the geopolitical picture of space is now a contested competitive situation in which the United States and China are the main acting agents, and maintain the belief that space is a way for these countries to pursue their military and economic interests. The ideological dominance resulting from the historic space race between the United States and the former Soviet Union during the Cold War has already shown that a country with a geopolitical advantage in space has superior military, intelligence, scientific, and commercial power (Argyris 2021).

Further, "*astropolitics*" is a theory rooted in geopolitics and applied to space in its broadest sense. Astropolitics is often studied as an aspect of security and as a subfield of international relations in political science. This includes the role of space exploration in diplomacy as well as the military use of satellites, for example, for surveillance or cyber warfare (Young 2021).

Astropolitics considers outer space full of geopolitical significance. This means that the state that can best reflect its power in occupying important positions and using resources in space, becomes the ruler of this new "*space*". Based on this assumption, the competition for dominance of outer space (in terms of the relative efficiency of technology to achieve the allocation of outer space resources) is not only the key to achieving a power that ensures its survival in the space age, but it is also considered its central dynamic; to be transatlantic astronomy (Wang 2009, 440).

Astropolitics is defined as the political study of stars, celestial bodies,

and activities in space. Space activities include those that have been recognized by the national space programs and military forces of different countries through the release of official media. However, it is these activities that are not officially recognized that pose the greatest challenge to a comprehensive study of astropolitics (Salla 2014, 98).

Similar to Mahan's focus on natural sea lines and "choke points" and Mackinder's emphasis on geographical regions, Dolman sees orbiters, space zones, and launch sites as critical geopolitical assets over which states can be expected to compete for competitive and strategic control (Havercroft & Duvall 2009). Everett C. Dolman (2005, 6-7) under the influence of classical geopolitics and Mackinder's Heartland theory says:

> "He who controls low-Earth orbit also controls near-Earth space.
> One controls the near-Earth space rules of Terra.
> Whoever rules Terra will determine the fate of humanity".

Four different astronomical regions of space are described here according to their physical characteristics (Dolman 1999, 92):

1. Terra or Earth, consisting of an atmosphere extending from the surface to just below the lowest altitude, capable of supporting an unpowered orbit. Here, Earth and its atmosphere are the conceptual equivalents of a coastal zone for outer space. All objects that enter orbit from the Earth and re-enter from space must pass through it.
2. Terran or Earth space: from the lowest habitable orbit to just beyond rest altitude (approximately 36,000 km). Global space is the operational environment for the military's most advanced reconnaissance and navigation satellites, and all existing and planned space weapons.
3. The lunar or moon-space void is the region that extends from a fixed orbit to slightly beyond the orbit of the Moon. Earth's moon is the only visible physical feature that stands out in this area, but it is only one of several strategic locationsere.
4. Solar Space includes everything in the Solar System (i.e., in the Sun's gravitational well) beyond the Moon's orbit. It is clear that expansion into this area will be limited by the use of existing technologies. However, solar space exploration is the next major goal of manned missions and eventually permanent human colonization.

Astropolitics and Space Competition between America and China

United States of America

With the onset of World War II, US foreign and defense policy bureaucracies, along with think tanks and members of the national security community, conceptualized the identity of the US government through the National Security Charter and Global Strategy. Among the US national security elite, space is no longer considered the ultimate battleground, if not the next. Geopolitics and outer-space diplomacy have now become commonplace, and astropolitics has emerged as a genuine geopolitical discourse on outer space (Grondin 2009, 108).

The United States has made several attempts to propose a "*national strategy*" for space. It is likely that these have taken the form of national space policies since 1958. That year, the United States under the Eisenhower administration, the US drafted and passed the National Aeronautics and Space Act. This comprehensive law, known to abolish the National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics and replacing it with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, introduced spaceflight and its political and economic benefits to the country and provided legal mechanisms for such activities (Constantin-Bercean 2022, 127).

In the 21st century, President George W. Bush announced on January 14, 2004, at NASA headquarters that he plans to establish a permanent base on the Moon as part of this "*vision*" for "*the Moon, Mars and Beyond*". Beyond space exploration, it was followed by an executive order to create a commission to review and recommend the implementation of the "Bush Vision Thing". The Presidential Commission (2004) concluded in its final report, a Journey to Inspire, Innovate, and Exploration, released in June 2004, that "fundamental changes are needed in the nation's approach to space exploration and successful space management" (Bormann 2009, 81).

On October 11, 2010, President Obama signed the NASA Authorization Act authorizing $58.4 billion for NASA's space exploration and development programs over the next three years. In conjunction with various other laws and policies initiated by the United States, some initiatives are encouraged, including advanced space transportation systems, custom spacecraft development, commercial habitats, space stations, space settlements, commercial mining, techniques to optimize spacecraft trajectory for landing on near-Earth asteroids, commercial spacecraft construction, interplanetary

and interstellar communications, and space exploration missions to near-Earth asteroids, the Moon, Mars, and the two Mars moons Phobos and Deimos (Weeks, 2012, p.2). Meanwhile, in 2017, US Director of National Intelligence, Daniel Coats, presented a report to the Senate entitled Global Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community, confirming that space warfare operations will soon become an inevitable reality:

> "Russia and China seek to counterbalance any advantage the United States derives from the use of civilian, military, or commercial space systems. They are increasingly considering satellite attacks as part of their war doctrine.Both Russia and China are seeking a wide range of anti-satellite weapons to reduce US military effectiveness. These systems will include the development of kinetic destructive tools in the next few years. Russian and Chinese militaries consider anti-space weapons as part of a larger arsenal and are pursuing different technologies to target satellites in all orbits" (Spagnulo 2019, 104).

In March 2019, US Vice President Mike Pence declared:

> "Make no mistake. Today, we are in a space race, as in the 1960s, and the stakes are even higher. These statements indicate a new competition for space, especially between the United States and China" (Vozmediano 2021, 16).

In May 2020, when NASA publicly announced its intention to draft a new international agreement to support lunar exploration, activist concerns about the geopolitical implications of this quickly increased. Initially, it was unclear whether the new agreement would be global in scope, relying on the existing legal structure or simply it would be a set of bilateral arrangements aimed at legitimizing and supporting US lunar activities. A few months later, on October 13, 2020, when seven partner nations signed the Artemis Agreement, it was clear that the agreement was the path taken by the space superpower. In fact, the treaties so far have clearly targeted "like-minded" countries that have entered into bilateral relations with the United States by signing the treaties (Emilia 2022, 15).

The US, on the other hand, plans to go even further with Artemis as the growing competition with China expands in space, eventually building a moon base to launch a manned mission to Mars by the 2040s. The Artemis program consists of three stages. If the current mission is successful, a manned spacecraft will be launched to fly to the moon in 2024. A third mission will launch in early 2025 to land astronauts, including the first woman, on the

moon. NASA's partners in the Artemis program include space agencies from Japan and Europe. Orion carries two microsatellites developed by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, one of which (Omotenashi) will be the first Japanese spacecraft to land on the moon (Shiraishi & Tabeta 2022).

The United States also recently established the US Space Command and the US Space Force, which serve as the command and service branch of the nation's space warriors, respectively. The United States is currently looking to land a crew on the moon in 2024, and together they are building a "*lunar gateway*" – a space station orbiting the moon. In recent years, NASA has increased its reliance on a wider range of commercial actors to deliver its programs. This was done to increase competition between contractors and the number of NASA exit options to reduce costs and avoid program disruption. This, among other factors, has enabled the commercial space industry in the United States to grow significantly, as innovative companies like SpaceX push the boundaries of what is possible in the current decade. In 2019 alone, the United States saw more than $4.6 billion in venture capital investment in American space companies (Gautel 2021). Again in this context, the US Space Command (USSC) report illustrates the current US narrative about China's space program: China's goal of establishing a leading position in the economic and military use of space, or what Beijing calls the "space dream". It is an essential component of realizing the goal of "Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation". To achieve this goal, China has devoted high-level attention and considerable funding to eventually surpass other spacefaring nations in terms of space-related industry, technology, diplomacy, and military power (Gadd 2021).

Speaking on April 18 at Vandenberg Air Force Base, about 155 miles northwest of Los Angeles, Vice President Kamala Harris said: "We will continue to focus on writing new rules for the road to ensure that all space activities are conducted in a responsible, peaceful and sustainable manner. The United States is committed to lead the way and to lead by example" (Einhorn 2022).

Perhaps not coincidentally, on November 22, the US Space Force became the first US base in the Indo-Pacific. The Defense Department's largest combined combatant command was almost entirely focused on countering the rise of China. "I applaud and congratulate the Space Force for bringing the first service component to Indo-Pacom", I believe it is the right place at the right time for this" U.S. Space Command chief Gen. James Dickinson said on Nov. 29. Gen. B. Chance Saltzman, chief of U.S. Space Force in Space Operations, spoke at a ceremony at the Indo-Pacific Command headquarters near Honolulu, Hawaii, to formally establish the space component. He said:

"We find ourselves competing with a thoughtful enemy that continues to field its anti-space systems as well as its superior space support systems for its increasingly capable ground forces" (Erwin 2022).

"It's a fact: We're in a space race", said Bill Nelson, NASA administrator appointed by US President Joe Biden in 2021. Nelson said he and others are worried the communist country could claim land on the moon once it arrives. It is better to make sure that they will not reach anywhere on the moon under the guise of scientific research. It's not unlikely for them to say, 'Stay away, we're here, this is our territory,' Nelson explained (Bender 2023).

China and Space

China's space program, which launched its first astronaut in 2003, has evolved significantly over the past two decades. The truth is that China is rapidly falling behind the United States in space capabilities, despite being removed from the International Space Station in 2011. According to one estimate, China's industry can cycle through new space technologies twice as fast as the US space industry (Araya 2022).

Additionally, since 2013, Xi Jinping has invested in Mao's nuclear program with the same credibility and resources as China's space development, saying: "The space dream is part of the dream of making China stronger" (Lin, 2021). In this regard, China's defense documents continue to emphasize anti-space capabilities as a central part of the concept of "*informationized warfare*" to blind the enemy. In December 2015, the People's Liberation Army announced the creation of a strategic support force to oversee space, cyber and electronic warfare operations (Quintana 2017, 96).

In 2015, after the successful launch and implementation of the first phases of China's Lunar Exploration Program (CLEP), an orbiting, landing and return project, China proposed a program to be completed before 2030. The program includes exploring the lunar environment and resources, building a long-term fundamental research platform and validating technology to utilize existing resources. The general scientific objectives are: (1) to investigate the global distribution, content and source of water and volatile compounds; (2) Investigating the composition and structure within the moon; (3) age measurement of the Antarctic-Aitken basin; and (4) investigating the spatial physical environment above the south pole of the moon (Li et al. 2019)

Furthermore, China's military strategy aims to wage a "war beyond all borders and limitations" in any future war. To achieve this goal, China has set an ambitious space program to improve its military and diplomatic

influence by putting the entire world within its reach. Robert Johnson says: "The more precise combat vehicles of the future will continue to require more warfighter-technicians who can operate these devices, both defensively and offensively, such as next-generation anti-missile technology and semi-autonomous vehicles" (Khan & Khan 2015, 188).

In March 2016, General Zhang Yulin, National Legislator and Vice President of the Weapons Development Department of the Central Military Commission, stated that China will use the space between the Earth and the Moon for solar energy and other industrial development purposes. "Earth-Moon space will be strategically important for the massive rejuvenation of the Chinese nation", Zhang said (Donnellon-May 2022).

In 2016, China's navy also captured a US underwater drone that was officially mapping the South China Sea. To do this, the Chinese used automated robotics technology that could soon be used in space. In 2016, the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation tested its powerful new Long March 7 rocket and launched Aolong-1, a small satellite built by Haibing Institute of Technology whose mission is to retrieve orbital debris with a special robotic arm. This type of technology has a clear dual purpose. On the one hand, it allows the connection and manipulation of debris to clean outer space. Also, like a submarine drone under the sea, it enables the capture of satellites (Spagnulo 2019, 107).

"The universe is an ocean, the moon is the Diao Islands, and Mars is the Huangyan Island," says Ye Peijian, head of China's lunar exploration program. "If we don't go there now, even though we can afford it, we will be scolded by our grandchildren. If others go there, then they take the responsibility and you can't go even if you want to. This is enough reason" (Davis 2018).

China is also building the Gaofen High-Resolution Earth Observation Satellite Constellation (a collection of Chinese civilian remote sensing satellites for the Chinese High-Resolution Earth Observation System (CHEOS) program that feeds the Earth observation component of the Space Silk Road). These Earth observation satellites provide imagery to China and the Belt and Road Initiative countries for a wide range of applications from resource, land and urban management to disaster response and national security (Sheldon 2021, 16).

Meanwhile, as of 2019, China has launched more missiles than any other country. In relation to commercialization, in 2014, China released Document 60, titled "State Council Guiding Views on Reinvestment and Financing Mechanisms in Key Areas and Promotion of Social Investment", to encourage Chinese private companies to engage in space activities. The result

of this initiative is that China now has about 100 private space companies (Wibowo 2022, 132).

In March 2021 leaders of the China National Space Administration (CNSA) signed a memorandum of understanding with the Russian Federal Space Agency (Roscosmos) to build a lunar outpost called the International Lunar Research Station (ILRS). With these characteristics, the potential for military action if needed seems clear. China's ambitions to compete with America's leadership in space extend beyond the moon. China's presence on the International Space Station was vetoed by the United States on charges of technology theft. China's response was to build its own space station and open it up to other countries and private initiatives to compete directly with the ISS. Chinese officials describe the station as

> "a comprehensive scientific experiment base with the capability of long-term autonomous operation, built on the lunar surface and/or [in] lunar orbit that will carry out multi-disciplinary and multi-objective scientific research activities such as lunar exploration and utilization, lunar-based observation, basic scientific experiment[s] and technical verification" (Sanmartí 2021).

China also plans to conduct multiple missions to Mars and nearby comets and asteroids to return samples to Earth. And perhaps most importantly, China has announced plans to build a joint moon base with Russia-although no timeline has been set for the mission (Tepper & Shackelford 2022).

On March 10, 2022, China launched a long-range rocket from the southern island province of Hainan to deliver cargo to the orbiting Tiangong spacecraft, which Beijing plans to complete this year, making China the only country to manage its own space station. The following month, Xi Jinping ordered officials to build a world-leading spacecraft launch site in Hainan. "To explore the vast cosmos, develop the space industry and build China into a space power is our eternal dream", Xi Jinping said in the introduction to the White Paper on China's space program released in January. Ye Peijian, commander of the robotic Moon missions and chief designer of China's first lunar probe, told state media at the time that China could send astronauts to the moon for the first time by 2030. "China really wants to be seen as the NASA of the future", said Michele Hanlon, co-director of the University of Mississippi Center for Air and Space Law and editor of the Space Law Journal. "China wants to be the leader. China thinks China's time has come," she said (Einhorn 2022). Also, the announcement of the first international experimental projects of the China Space Station, the discovery of fast and

repetitive radio bursts by the 500-meter radio telescope, the official opening of Beijing Daxing International Airport and the first expedition of "Shulong 2", China's first research icebreaker, the official commercialization of the next generation internet services, the discovery of the largest black hole known so far, and the completion of the core of the BeiDou satellite system, are other space achievements of this country (Kazemi 2022).

These achievements strengthen China's international reputation as a technologically advanced country and help strengthen the position of the Chinese Communist Party in the eyes of Chinese citizens. However, China is struggling to maintain positive momentum due to its public security-focused stance on space. China believes that space is a high ground to be fought over and dominated to ensure that wars are won on "*informatisation*" terms (Rajagopalan 2016).

Conclusion

Currently, China seems to be making faster and more coordinated progress in this field. Since this country is currently one of the contenders in the global clean energy competition and has ambitious space programs in its plans, if it develops space-based solar energy before the United States and other parts of the world, it can become a force to be converted. Space is at a premium. This could lead to a key element in China's Belt and Road Initiative, and Beijing offers this type of clean energy alongside opportunities for economic development and greater connectivity with other countries. The growing interest in the development of solar and space-based energy can expand the existing strategic competitive environment to geographical dimensions. To date, the growing competition between the United States and China on Earth has led to competing designs for scientific and economic dominance in space.

China's space program differs from the US and Soviet space programs in only one way, and that is the use of the military in space missions. But one thing is certain: the Chinese basically have special plans for the moon. Meanwhile, the United States, in particular, has serious concerns about China's possible military plans on the moon.

On the other hand, research shows that the space competition between China and the United States will intensify and deepen in the coming years. Therefore, the two sides are intensifying their efforts to shape a new international system that benefits the national interests of both sides. Both China and the United States are significantly increasing their space industry

budgets. Of course, in this competition, the Chinese are moving faster (in terms of increasing the budget of space programs). Therefore, it can be said that a new competitive race based on mastery of the moon has begun.

In the US-China debate, threats have escalated as the two sides have placed economic barriers against each other, and ideological differences fuel these confrontations due to the pandemic and political conflicts. Failure to cooperate in space not only risks an arms race, but could also lead to conflicts over the extraction of hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of mineral resources on the Moon and other planets.

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ABSTRACT

Space has always been a place for geopolitical competition, and concepts such as astropolitics have even emerged in the scientific world. However, in the last two decades, technological advances have led to an increase in interest in space activities and new global space competition involving many public and private organizations. In addition to political and commercial competition in the world, China and America have expanded the scope of their competition to somewhere outside the world, that is, outer space, and they are trying not to lag behind their competitors in this field. A new round of competition between China and the United States to return to space was formed, which was reminiscent of the space program competition between the United States and the former Soviet Union. The purpose of this research is to analyze the space competition between America and China from the perspective of space geopolitics, using the concept of Astropolitics. Therefore, this study illustrates the role of contemporary geopolitics in today's space based on the dynamic nature of astropolitics, and assesses the emerging geopolitical competition behind the rise of international interest in space.

KEYWORDS

Space. Geopolitics. Astropolitics. America. China.

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KANGAROO CONCERNS ABOUT SWIMMING DRAGON AMBITIONS

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Introduction

China introduced a third aircraft carrier into its naval force on June 17, 2022. The carrier is named *Fujian*. It is the most significant and recent addition to the People's Liberation Army Navy (Sharma 2023). Though the organization of PLAN was founded in 1949, its build up over the years has been a steady journey. But in recent years its modernization has been boosted. The previous and contemporary decade has seen many improvements in China's navy. It has launched aircraft carriers, invested in submarines and in the state of the art naval warships. Today China's navy has the largest number of ships (Bahtić 2021) in the world. Modernization of the current Chinese Navy dates back to the 1990s (Li 2009).

During the Cold War China had a small navy which was up to securing its cost lines only. To better define it, it was a coastal navy. But with the passage of time, China's navy scope expanded from securing its coast lines to the near seas active defense and later on it encompassed near and far seas operations in its naval strategy. China has expanded the role and capabilities of its navy to secure its interests in East Asia and beyond. The 2015 Chinese Defense White paper assigns the navy with offshore waters defense including open seas protection (China's Military Strategy 2015).

As Chinese interests are increasing in the open seas this study makes an effort to identify the implications of China's naval modernization on Australia. As the International system lacks an authority to regulate the actions of states, every state therefore has to look after its security by its own

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(Waltz 1979). The actions of a state definitely have implications for other states in the region and even beyond its immediate neighbors. A country like China whose interests are expanded throughout the Indo-Pacific region, its actions can impact any country within this region. Australia in recent years has increased its military spendings and made new defense agreements to enhance its security. This study explores if there is any link between China's naval modernization and an increase in Canberra's military spending and defense agreements. Australia has been chosen because there is little availability of studies regarding this region and its reactions facing Chinese naval modernization as most of the scholars focus on East Asia or the Indian Ocean region.

Australia has one of the world's longest coastlines. Its continental shelf ranks second in the world. The country has the world's third-largest Exclusive Economic Zone (Bateman and Bergin 2009). More than 95 percent of Australia's overseas trade is transported by sea (Royal Australian Navy 2000). Fiber optic undersea cables carry almost 99 percent of the data traffic that passes through communications networks to Australia (Australian Communications and Media Authority 2007). Despite its tiny size in comparison to other countries, Australia's fishing industry contributes more than $50 billion to the national economy each year (CSIRO1988). Moreover, almost 85 percent of the Australian citizens live within an hour of the coastline (Kaye 2020). Australia is interested in the Indian Ocean, Southern, and Pacific Oceans from a maritime security perspective. Protecting its vast maritime resources, safeguarding the security of the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs), and ensuring the sovereignty of its offshore territories are among its top maritime priorities (Bateman and Bergin 2009). The Indo-Pacific security environment has direct impacts on the national interest of Australia. Therefore, Canberra considers that bolstering a favorable alliance for the balance in the region is timely. Due to the changing security environment Australia has embarked on the path of military modernization and reinforcing alliances in order to strengthen its security. Before looking into how China's naval modernization has implications for Australia, it is pertinent to know Australian Defense Strategic Interests.

Australian Defense Strategic Interests

According to the Australian Defense White Paper, Australia's primary *defense strategic interest* is to make Australia secure and resilient. It entails that Canberra is safe from invasion or the fear of invasion or any coercion

where it has complete control over territories and borders of the country. Geographically it extends to the country's *northern approaches, EEZ, as well as offshore territories* that include the Southern Ocean and territories in Antarctica (DWP 2016).

The second defense strategic Interest of Australia is to secure its nearer region. The security of the country cannot be guaranteed if its neighborhood which includes '*Timor-Leste*', '*Papua New Guinea*', and '*Pacific Island Countries*' become a source of threat to it. This also entails the possibility of a military power from other region attempting to exert influence in ways that could jeopardize the security of Australian maritime approaches. Instability or violence in Southeast Asia would jeopardize Australia's security as well as its crucial and expanding economic ties in the region. Because Australia relies on maritime trade with and through Southeast Asia. The security of Australian maritime approaches, energy supplies, and trade routes within Southeast Asia, as well as freedom of navigation, which allows for the free flow of trade in international waters, must be protected (DWP 2016).

Australia's third defense strategic interest is to maintain stability in the '*Indo-Pacific region*' and also to safeguard the contemporary *global order* which supports its interests. According to the Australian DWP 2016 "Indo-Pacific includes North Asia, the South China Sea and the extensive sea lines of communication in the Indian and Pacific Oceans that support Australian trade". Stability in the so-called '*rules-based order*' is vital to ensure Canberra's access to a secure, open and free trade while also reducing the risk of instability and coercion, both of which can directly damage Australia's interests. This allows Australia to deal with problems before they become existential threats, and it allows unrestricted access to maritime routes, and transportation to support Canberra's economic progress (DWP 2016).

To ensure the defense of the country, the Australian government has set relevant defense objectives. According to the Australian DWP defense objectives are as follows:

> "Deter, deny and defeat attacks on or threats to Australia and its national interests, and Northern approaches; Make effective military contributions to support the security of maritime Southeast Asia and support the governments of Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and of Pacific Island Countries to build and strengthen their security; Contribute military capabilities to coalition operations that support Australia's interests in a rules-based global order" (DWP 2016).

The above defense strategic interests of Australia outlined are primarily

giving a sense of concentric circles of security for Australia. The first circle consists of securing the mainland of Australia, its territorial integrity, and sovereignty. The second circle entails the stability in Australia's immediate neighborhood including the governments of '*Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, and Pacific Island Countries*', and maritime Southeast Asia. Lastly, the security and stability of the *'Indo-Pacific' region* and the global '*rules-based order*' form the third circle of security for Australia. Some even have suggested the island chain concept for security in Australia.

In a recent essay, published in the *Australian Defense Business Review*, Brian Weston emphasized the importance of the first island chain in building an effective defense and deterrent policy for the country. Weston argues that Australia's 'first island chain' could be defined "as stretching from Sri Lanka, along the Indonesian archipelago from Sumatra and Java to Irian Jaya, through Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, and on to Vanuatu and Fiji" (Weston 2020). These concepts are emerging within the Australian defense and strategic community because of the China threat. Specifically, China's naval modernization is perceived as a threat that could not be destabilizing in Southeast Asia only but for the wider *'Indo-Pacific' region* and the global '*rules-based order*'. Also, the operational scope of PLAN is being expanded to include far seas operations officially, this has alarmed the policymakers in Canberra who are worried about securing their own defense strategic interests.

So, on the one hand, China is formulating its naval strategy while expanding the operational scope of its navy, on the other, there is increased emphasis on the island chain concept for security in Australia. This will, in turn, definitely be resulting in a clash of island chains if not in the near future but in the long run. Other than this, Australian defense strategic interests are impacted by China's naval modernization directly or indirectly.

China's Island Chains vs Australia Concentric Circles for Security

With the introduction of open seas protection along with near seas, *active defense* expands PLAN's operational range and scope (China's Military Strategy 2015). This operational expansion can be threatening from an Australian security perspective. Though the concept of '*far seas operations*' has been known since the 1990s in studies of Chinese naval modernization, this was officially not present in any Chinese defense papers released by Beijing until 2015.

Liu Hauqing promoted that People's Liberation Army Navy will operate in

China's near seas or the maritime area also known as the first island chain and its surroundings for some years to come. Also, he suggested that Chinese naval power will increase with the expansion of the country's economy and advancement in technology. As a result, the PLAN will be able to expand its operations from the first to *second island chain*. When the PLAN becomes capable of effectively operating outside the '*second island chain*', it will make it a regional '*blue water navy*'.

Figure 1: Australia First Island Chain



Source: Robbin Laird, "Feature – ON TARGET: AUSTRALIA'S 'FIRST

ISLAND CHAIN' – PART 1" Australian Defense Business Review. (https://adbr.com.au/on-target-australias-first-island-chain/).

Figure 2: China's existing and proposed Island Chains for Security



Source:"4th and 5th Island Chain JPEG", Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative- CSIS. (https://amti.csis.org/chinas-reach-grown-island-chains/4th-and-5th-island-chain-jpeg/).

In 2015 DWP, China clearly mentioned that PLAN is now assigned to safeguard offshore waters defense including open seas protection (China's Military Strategy 2015). Today China has a stronghold in its near seas. Its anti-access and area denial A2AD capabilities are so strong that it has created serious challenges for the most technologically advanced and powerful navy like the US Navy (USN) in '*first island chain*'. So, in the coming decades, China could possibly strengthen its navy to effectively control the first as well as '*second island chain*'. Even the above figure shows where some analysts perceive that a third island chain is already existing in Chinese strategic thinking. In future China is going to expand the operational scope of its navy to the third, fourth, and even fifth islands in order to further its economic and military interests. If the swimming dragon (PLAN) becomes ferocious or expands its territory in the coming years in the waters of the Indo-Pacific it will increase the concerns of Canberra. The control over waters of the Indo-Pacific by the

dragon will diminish the freedom of the Kangaroo in these waters.

Australia is a country not so concerned about foreign incursion as it lies at great length from other continents. There is no power within its immediate neighborhood which can create any security problems for it. But China's naval modernization is a threat for Australian security in the sense that with the expansion of the operational range of the PLA navy, Australian strategic interests are challenged.

Australia has its own concept of concentric circles for security. The Indo-Pacific arc and the Melanesian arc are of immense importance to Australia for maintaining stability in its region. The above two figures clearly show how Chinese naval expansion can be consequential for Australia and its strategic objectives. China's naval expansion in terms of range and capabilities can be detrimental in the long term if not in the short term. Because when PLAN expands its operational range in the future it will impact the operations of the Royal Australian Navy. Even today Chinese naval vessels are witnessed near Australian borders which are suspected of intelligence gathering by some analysts. PLAN is also increasing its influence in Pacific Island countries through naval visits. These activities by PLAN are viewed in Australia with wary eyes.

Australia on a Crossroad

Chinese naval modernization and increased assertiveness in the South China Sea (SCS) created a dilemma for Australia either to choose between its long trading partner (China) or its strongest security ally (the United States). Australia has long-standing trade relations with China. Australia exports a large amount of Iron Ore and Coal to China which significantly contributes to its gross domestic product (GDP). But, the US, on the other hand, is of great significance to Australia for its security and strategic interests. Recent years have revealed that Australia has now chosen to permanently side with the US to safeguard the existing rules-based global order, as this order suits Australian strategic interests. Any challenge to the contemporary rules-based order is considered a challenge to Australian strategic and security interests in Canberra. Today, Australia perceives Chinese military modernization and specifically naval modernization as posing serious challenges to the security architecture in East Asia and the global rules-based order. Australia is concerned about the security of its Northern approaches and trade routes. Conflict or any destabilizing actions in its immediate neighborhood (for instance Southeast Asia and South Pacific) is considered detrimental to Australian security and

strategic interests by policymakers and the strategic community in Canberra. So, a peaceful South China Sea is of immense significance to Canberra because it is the region from which passes Australia's extensive shipping trade with East Asia.

Dr. Andrew Carr from *Australian National University* (ANU) told in an interview to the author that China's naval modernization's implications for Australia are threefold (Carr 2022)[3].

1. "China is increasing its ability to project influence into Southeast Asia/ the South Pacific. This means more work for Australia to identify and track Chinese vessels. The potential for problems to emerge from this increased presence is still low but growing. This simply complicates issues".
2. "China may decide to change its purpose in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific. The great Australian fear has always been that an adversary would establish a naval base within the South Pacific. The Australian continent is too large to meaningfully invade or harm without such a supply base nearby. Hence, if the Oceania region is free of adversarial bases, then the Australian continent is secure. China as yet does not seem to be seeking to establish such a facility, though rumors have emerged in recent years and the Australian government has been quick to show its concern (both towards Beijing, but also to the South Pacific countries to discourage such behavior)".
3. "Finally, the expansion of the Chinese navy has implications for the power balance with the United States. This may change both regional relations, as well as conflict outcomes. This is not something Australia can meaningfully influence, but it is important for Australian security overall".

From Andrew's points, one can deduce that Australia is concerned about PLAN's increasing influence in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific in the first place. And with the passage of time PLAN's influence will increase in the South Pacific which is a major source of concern for Australia. He also showed concerns about potential Chinese naval bases in the region. There were media speculations about a Chinese naval base in Vanuatu, an island country in the South Pacific (Panda 2018). Such development can directly

3 An email interview with Dr Andrew Carr, a senior lecturer at *Strategic and Defense Studies Centre, Australian National University*, Jan 11, 2022. He can be reached at: andrew.carr@anu.edu.au.

impact Australian security. While responding to the question about the Chinese naval base in the South Pacific he said that "It may be thought of as a pre-emptive strike, an attempt to make clear and forestall a threat rather than a direct indication one was about to emerge". He mentioned that "concern about an adversary with a major supply base in the South Pacific is a 150+ year concern for Australians, so it is something to be watched very closely" (Carr 2022)[4].

Other than this, Australia is concerned about the changing balance of power in the region. Australia has greatly relied on the US for its security. The rise of China and its subsequent military modernization is gradually pushing the US out of the region. Therefore, the Australian defense community is deeply concerned about this development in the region. They consider China a revisionist power that is up to changing the status quo. The contemporary international rules-based order has greatly served Australian interests that's why they are worried that if the status quo is changed in favor of China it will hurt Australian interests.

PLAN's Long-term Goals and Australian Threat Perception

Tom Shugart argues that China established a timeline with three broad goals for its navy. First, to develop sufficient forces for exerting control over the sea regions within the '*First Island Chain*' by 2000. Secondly, extending control out to the '*Second Island Chain*' by 2020 (Shugart 2021). And lastly developing a global navy by 2050. He further argues that China's DWP 2015 specifically highlighted defense of its overseas interests and strategic SLOCs as aims, to be attained by the added mission of "*open seas protection*". According to the author this signals China's desire of projecting maritime power wherever it wants. He also quotes the former chief of PLAN Admiral Wu Shengli, who said in 2017 "wherever the scope of the nation's interests extends, that is where the perimeter of our combat development will reach" (Shugart 2021).

Tom Shugart further explains that China's desire may be dismissed as inconsequential considering China lacks the capabilities to do so. But China has motivation, as well as industrial might to fulfill its words (Shugart 2021). From Shugart's analysis, one can infer that China is up to building a global navy. Though it seems an uphill task, China has the resources as well as the resolve to become a global navy. A global Chinese navy means PLAN's vessels

4 Interview with Dr. Andrew Carr.

operating everywhere in the ocean. Former chief of the PLAN, Admiral Wu Shengli statement is the manifestation of this argument that the PLAN will try to safeguard its interests anywhere in the oceans.

Though these look like simple statements they represent a lot of the Chinese ambitions of controlling critical sea lanes of communications. From an Australian security perspective, any future scenario where China is controlling critical sea lanes of communications is consequential for their economic and defense strategic interests. So, a global PLAN aiming at controlling critical SLOCs is perceived in Australia as consequential for its security and economic interests. Chinese actions are perceived in many countries in the Indo-Pacific as hegemonic. Specifically, countries like Australia which is a strong US ally in the region would not be happy accepting any Chinese assertive and hegemonic behavio.

Lack of Transparency and Uncertainty Associated with China's Military Modernization

China's rise as an economic power significantly added to its military modernization drive. Due to increased military spending by China, its neighbors are worried about the former's intentions. They are concerned that China's military spending lacks transparency. In this anarchical world the uncertainty associated with it increases the problems of its neighbors. Adam P. Liff and the co-author claim in their manuscript that there is "widespread uncertainty about China's intentions given the confusing doctrine of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and Beijing's relatively low transparency concerning its military affairs and policy decision making" (Liff and Ikenberry 2014). They further worry that "China's relative lack of military transparency appears to exacerbate widespread concerns about its rapidly advancing capabilities and intentions" (Liff and Ikenberry 2014). This situation in turn has created a kind of security dilemma not only for its immediate neighbors but also for Australia which is worried about increased military spending by Beijing. No country would ever trust or would be certain of any action of other states in this anarchical world. Therefore, states like Australia who are worried about their security, are searching for the enhancement of their own capabilities through the modernization of their own forces or through establishing alliances with like-minded states.

China's Assertiveness in the South China Sea: An Australian

Perspective

China has actively claimed much of the SCS as its sovereign territory. This claim by China includes some territory within Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia's 200-mile exclusive economic zones (EEZs). The rising power has been threatening the US military's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) in China's EEZ. This in turn is challenging US FON (US Department of Defense Freedom of Navigation) and overflight operations outside China's EEZ. Though Beijing has been using, in particular, its coast guard, fishing fleet, and militias for these activities. But all of these entities are backed up by the PLAN. Together, these actions have systematically pushed Vietnam's and the Philippines' smaller maritime forces out of parts of their EEZs and threatened Malaysian as well as Indonesian forces (Burgess 2020).

Furthermore, in the Spratly and Paracel Islands, Beijing has built *artificial islands* along-with stationing PLAN and PLAAF (People's Liberation Army Air Force) units, as well as *surface-to-air* and *surface-to-surface* missiles, thereby increasing '*anti-access, area-denial*' (A2/AD) capabilities which threatens the US and its allies in SCS (Burgess 2020). China has been harassing US naval and air operations for more than two decades. It has challenged US '*freedom of navigation operations and overflight operations*' (FONOP) in *Spratly* and *Paracel Islands* since 2015. Beijing's maritime development activities now allow it to potentially obstruct the exploration of oil and gas. Its '*anti-access/ area-denial*' (A2/AD) capabilities pose threats to the USN (United States Navy) and its Aviation Force operations. Also global maritime and air traffic is being threatened (Burgess 2020). China could impose an *ADIZ* over part or all of the SCS in the future, similar to the ECS ADIZ it established in 2013. Warnings issued by China against US military aircraft flying over PLA installations in the *Spratly* provide evidence of this (Weitz 2018). To sum up, PLAN poses a possible threat to economic flows, extraction of resources, and military operations in a vital waterway.

The above-mentioned actions by Beijing in the previous decade and potential threats have alarmed security and defense analysts in Canberra. They perceive that China's assertive behavior, which is only possible through a powerful navy, in the waters of the SCS not only threatens Beijing's immediate neighbors but also other countries of the Indo-Pacific region. Other nations of the region will be deprived of the Freedom of Navigation, Resource exploration and the US navy´s influence will be diminished significantly as China's claims in the SCS nine-dash line map are reinforced, affecting the security of the countries in the region. Australia is one of the countries that relies on the US and its allies in the region for its security. Australia's trade goes through

the waters of the SCS to East Asian countries. Also, establishing control over the nine-dash line by China will demonstrate that it is challenging the rules-based order which has great significance for Australia. Therefore, Canberra is concerned about Beijing's actions in the SCS.

Australian concerns about Freedom of Navigation in the Indo-Pacific

FONOPs are vital for Australia's economic and geopolitical interests. This is mostly due to Australia's reliance on seaborne trade, the majority of which goes through the North and the Northeast archipelagos of Australia. The archipelagic arc, which stretches from 'Indonesia, the Philippines, and Papua New Guinea (PNG) in the north to the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Fiji' in the Northeast, is critical to Australia's strategic interests. This is the area where a danger to Australia may most readily come from or pass through. It is also an area where Australia may collaborate on mutual interests with the goal of making the region more secure and stable (Bateman and Hanich 2013).

For Australia, the security of ships travelling through this Arc is a critical strategic concern. By value, the Arc carries over 62 per cent of Canberra's merchandise commerce (73 percent of exports and 52 percent of imports) (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013). These merchandise goods pass through the *Indonesian archipelago* or from the east coast of Australia to the east coast of Papua New Guinea. As a result, Australia has a strong stake in the Pacific Arc's freedom of navigation (Bateman 2015).

Therefore, Australia is concerned about freedom of navigation in its immediate neighborhood, SCS, East China Sea (ECS), and the wider Indo-Pacific region. The government in Canberra considers that every country has the right to move freely through the oceans. But recent Chinese actions in the SCS and the ECS have increased the worries of policymakers and government officials in Canberra. These concerns and worries are clearly indicated in government defense documents and media statements. In a speech, Australian Defense Minister Peter Dutton chastised China. He said that while the Chinese claim of working with other states for maintaining *freedom of navigation* and safeguarding maritime routes, as well as to resolve territorial disputes through dialogue and consultation, the reality is quite different (Mahadzir 2021).

Dutton cited the occupation, fabrication, and militarization of disputed territories in the SCS for establishing 20 outposts, the rejection of *The Hague's Permanent Court of Arbitration's* 2016 verdict by China on claims of historic

rights in the SCS, sending large numbers of military jets into Taiwan's ADIZ, using militia-crewed fishing vessels while intruding the Philippines' EEZ, and escalating tensions in the ECS with Japan (Mahadzir 2021).

China is leveraging its growing dominance in trade and economics, security, media, and internet to coerce cooperation, according to Dutton, who also emphasized that China's military has significantly risen in size and capability. With 355 ships and submarines, China today possesses the world's largest navy, a force which has more than tripled in size in the last twenty years. He noted that Beijing has built vessels equivalent in tonnage to the whole *Royal Australian Navy* every 18 months on average over the last four years, and the former's navy is expected to grow to 460 ships by 2030 (Mahadzir 2021).

Morrison was asked during a news conference about accusations that the PLAN surveillance vessel had been spying on Australia in August and September. Morrison replied to the question that

> "They have every right to be there under international maritime law, just like we have every right to be in the South China Sea, and other free liberal democratic countries have every right to be having freedom of movement in the South China Sea. Our movements in the South China Sea and those of other countries have been an issue of challenge to Australia" (Mahadzir 2021).

This statement by PM Morrison shows that Canberra is aware of Chinese actions in its neighborhood and is deeply involved in monitoring the latter's actions near its coastline. Also, it signifies that other countries must be allowed to operate freely as Chinese naval vessels are operating near Canberra's coastline.

So, basically, the concern focuses on FONOP. In this vein, Australia has for long been considering FONOPs in the SCS along with the US. Security and defense analysts in Australia have conflicting views on Canberra's move towards FONOPs in the SCS. Some suggest going for it in order to create deterrence against assertive PLAN behavior in SCS and bolster the balance of power in the region. While some others consider this will invoke a reaction from Beijing which is detrimental to the already strained relations between the two nations (Bateman 2015).

Other than this, Canberra is also concerned about overflight FON in the SCS and its Northern approaches. Beijing established an ADIZ in ECS in November 2013 (Ho 2016). The announcement of ADIZ in ECS triggered worries that Beijing would soon implement similar zones over the SCS. If

China goes the same for the SCS it will create problems for Australia because the movement of its flights will directly be impacted in the SCS and its Northern approaches.

PLAN Increased Interest in the South Pacific: A Source of Concern for Australia

Australia is concerned about China's increasing role in Pacific Island countries. China has increased its diplomatic, economic, and military engagement with the Pacific Island states. People Liberation Army (PLA), especially PLAN, has been at the forefront and has made multiple visits in the last one and half decades. According to Ron Mathews "The process began years ago, with PLA delegations visiting 24 Pacific islands between 2006 and 2019, more than 60% involving PLA(Navy) ships. This emerging threat has begun to focus the minds of Canberra's policymakers, as the danger of conflict increases" (Matthews 2021).

Increased engagement by China, especially through its navy has enhanced Australian suspicions of strategic encirclement by the former. Ron Mathews argues that China is up to strategically encircling Australia by giving loans to the Pacific Island countries and influencing them through soft power (Matthews 2021). This will in turn enhance Chinese influence in the region which will be consequential from an Australian security perspective.

Australia has always been wary of naval bases in its neighborhood. Recent PLAN engagement with Pacific Island countries has increased the likelihood of a Chinese naval base in Australia's immediate neighborhood. Professor Robert responded in an email interview to the author and said that "Many Pacific Islands states do not have armed forces and the South Pacific is not heavily militarized. But visits by PLA forces (including the navy) are now part of the region's interactions with larger powers. Australia is concerned about the prospect of China seeking to establish military facilities in the South Pacific, which is one reason for working with the US on infrastructure in Manus Island (part of PNG)" (Ayson 2022)[5]. There were media speculations in 2017 that China is going to build a military base in Vanuatu, a small island state in Pacific Island countries. This news shocked security and defense planners in Canberra. Such developments are deeply observed by the security

5 An email interview with Dr. Robert Ayson, Professor of the *School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations, at Victoria University,* Wellington, New Zealand, February 10, 2022. He can be reached at: robert.ayson@vuw.ac.nz.

community in Australia. In any case, China builds a naval base in Australia's neighborhood, which will increase problems for the latter.

Conclusion

This study explored the implications of China's naval modernization for Australia. It presented Australian concerns regarding PLAN's modernization drive. Major implications for Australia are in the form of Chinese increased assertiveness in the SCS which enhances former concerns for its sea borne trade to East Asia. Canberra is concerned about freedom of navigation in the waters of the SCS and the ECS. Also, Canberra is worried about PLAN's increased engagement with Pacific island countries. Australia has its own concentric circles concept of security. In any case China breaks through the first island Chain it will be a great source of concern for Australia in times of tension and crisis with the former. So, Chinese and Australian strategic interests will be clashing regarding the maritime security perspective of the two countries. This is due to the fact that China wants to transcend the island chains for its own security in order to overcome the security challenges posed by its neighboring states and keep the US away from its coasts and project power globally. This in turn enhances security concerns in Australia which is always wary of securing its territorial integrity.

It can be said that there is no direct threat to the Australian mainland from PLAN in contemporary times. But as Australia sets strategic interests in its Defense White Paper which extends from mainland Australia to its immediate neighborhood, and then to the wider Indo-Pacific, the later part of strategic interests is most likely to be impacted in the coming years. At the same time, one has to acknowledge that securing those strategic interests other than mainland Australia are also of great importance. Any hostile nation, for instance China, which is perceived by the Australian strategic community as a danger, can inflict serious threats to its mainland if it could not be contained or restricted in the Australian Indo-Pacific arc (Southeast Asian Archipelago). Because Australia is surrounded by waters and is militarily weak, it cannot withstand any such a scenario where a state like China might be in an Australian perceived island chain with evil intentions.

Also, the issue of '*freedom of navigation*' is of great importance to Australia not only to secure the rules-based international order but also to secure its commerce. As Australia exports coal and iron ore to China itself, the commercial fleets will not be having many problems. Besides securing commerce, and creating deterrence against Chinese naval forces, Australian warship's navigation is also at stake with increasing Chinese assertiveness in

the SCS. Australia can have problems if this assertiveness extends to the wider Indo-Pacific which is not likely in the near future. However, it is a possibility as China's naval modernization accelerates in the coming decades.

In response to these developments, Australia has embarked on the path of modernizing its own maritime forces. Canberra destined a significant amount of money for defense spending in the coming decades. It has strengthened its alliance with the US and other partners such as AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom and the United States), QUAD (Quadrilateral Dialogue- Australia, India, Japan and the United States) and RAA (Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement).

The AUKUS deal signed in 2021, is considered the deal of the century. From an Australian perspective the deal is to strengthen its defense. The deal can be considered an act of balancing against increasing Chinese naval strength in the Indo-Pacific. This deal will enable Australia to deter the Chinese navy at a distance from its territory. Nuclear-powered submarines acquired through the deal would be able to operate for almost 70 days in SCS which is of vital interest to China. No doubt this development will enhance the range of operation of Australian maritime forces but will annoy China which has been a trade partner for the former.

Also, Australia has reinforced its alliance with the US, Japan, and India in the form of QUAD. Australia shifting back to QUAD indicates that it worries about China's increasing role in the Indo-Pacific region which it considers detrimental to its defense strategic interest. As discussed earlier, Australia deems necessary a '*free and open Indo-pacific*'. According to analysts PLAN's assertive behavior in the SCS has compelled Australia to tilt back towards QUAD which was given lesser attention in previous governments. Besides, AUKUS and QUAD Australia are also part of other bilateral and multilateral arrangements for security. Those security arrangements include the RAA, the Five Power Defense Agreement and the ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, the United States). No doubt the last two arrangements are not targeted against China, but they will gain more relevance in the coming years considering the China threat.

Looking at the strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific region China's naval modernization may accelerate in the coming years. This is not a positive sign for the security and economic development of the region because the bulk of national budgets are and will be diverted towards military modernization. This arms race will increase the possibility of war in the region. This situation is neither in the interest of China nor Australia. Both the countries directly need to benefit from each other. If these two states keep themselves busy spending more on their militaries rather than economic development, they

can confront many challenges on the economic front. Therefore it is in the interest of both nations to enhance economic interdependence and stabilize the already strained relations.

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ABSTRACT

China has accelerated its naval modernization in recent years. There are multiple factors behind this modernization drive. The rise of China in many ways is impacting political, economic, and security dynamics around the world but particularly in Asia-Pacific (Indo-Pacific). Australia is one of the countries in this region which is not an exception in this regard. This study looks for the implications of China's naval modernization on Australia. The study makes an important contribution to the literature because this part of the world has not been looked into while analyzing Chinese naval modernization. Data is collected through primary and secondary sources. Besides reviewing the existing literature, data is collected through key informant interviews and policy documents of China and Australia. Australian threat perception is evaluated by analyzing Australian Defense White Papers, speeches of Australian leaders and an account of the country's security analysts views. The study finds that challenges posed by other nations in the region are prompting China to modernize its navy. In turn, this enhances security concerns in Australia which is always wary of securing its territorial integrity, economic interests, and the global liberal world order which has contributed to its development and security. Australia, in response to these developments, has embarked on the path of modernizing its own forces. It has bolstered its alliances with the US and other partners..

KEYWORDS

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FROM SOFT BALANCING TO BANDWAGONING: CONTEMPORARY BRAZIL–US RELATIONS IN SOUTH AMERICA

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Introduction

Since the global financial crisis of 2008–2009 and, more recently, the outbreak of the pandemic of COVID-19 in 2020 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, labels such as "crisis of the liberal international order" have been frequent in scholarly writings (Ikenberry 2018). The recent United States (US) retraction from the international order it helped create after 1945 and the rise of China has led International Relations (IR) scholars to argue that the world is moving towards a new Cold War bipolarity in which China is the key competitor of the US (Mearsheimer 2021; Zhao 2022). In contrast, others contest the idea of a power transition from the Atlantic to the Pacific (Brooks and Wohlforth 2023).

Although these debates refer mainly to the structure of the international system, it is important to call attention to regional power dynamics as well, since regional powers have assumed crucial roles by either supporting the international order or contesting it from within. In Latin America, more specifically, the end of the Cold War brought about significant changes. Once considered in the past to be the American "backyard," the successive US retreatment from the region opened windows for regional states to reevaluate their relationship with the hegemon and seek ways to focus on economic development and display political autonomy (Long 2015; Fortin, Heine and Ominami 2021). In this paper, I specifically analyze Brazilian foreign policy towards the US in South America from 2003 to 2022 using the concept of soft

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balancing (Pape 2005; Paul 2005, 2018). The concept has been extensively used to understand great power-level dynamics (He and Feng 2008; Larionova 2020). Still, its focus on diplomacy and institutions also holds considerable potential for exploring the regional power level as well (Flemes and Wehner 2015; Merke 2015; Yang and Lee 2020).

The presidential mandates in the period considered amount to a total of four: Lula (2003–2010), Dilma Rousseff (2011–2016), Michel Temer (2016–2018), and Jair Bolsonaro (2019–2022). To compare them, it is necessary to identify variables that account for variations and help explain (possible) different outcomes (Landman 2008). The variables I consider are the foreign policymakers' beliefs, particularly the President and their Minister of Foreign Affairs' worldviews, and Brazil's place in the regional power distribution. This focus derives from a methodological choice of prioritizing agents with institutional resources and symbolic power to propagate ideas and translate them into practice, and to consider regional power distribution as a constraint to states (Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro 2009).

I argue that from 2003 to 2022, Brazil has implemented two different strategies related to US regional primacy: First, from 2003 to 2016, Brazil relied on initiatives that did not aim to undermine the regional order, but instead, they sought to ease the existing asymmetric distribution of power and to frustrate the US presence in the region by increasing the costs of its actions. Brazil did it by activating institution-creation to "lock in" regional countries in its sphere of influence and marginalize Washington's participation. During this period, Brazil strengthened its political-economic relationship with China to enhance its ability to soft-balance the US in the Americas. There was, then, the adoption of a soft balancing strategy.

The second strategy occurs in the context of regional and Brazilian domestic political changes, particularly in the foreign policy maker group's beliefs that have supported Lula and Rousseff. In foreign policy, Temer's new administration prioritized a close relationship with the US and distanced itself from the region. China remained important, but the bilateral relationship changed from a strategic partnership to a narrowed focus on trade and investment. Temer's two-year mandate is considered a transitional period from the first phase to the second phase. It is marked by the beginning of a retraction of the Brazilian soft balance towards the US to a more aligned position with Washington, which will reach its peak with the 2018 Bolsonaro election.

The rise to power of a far-right president opened space to an agenda of combating what Bolsonaro's Foreign Minister, Ernesto Araújo (2019–2021), called "globalism," resulting in the establishment of an "automatic alignment"

with US Trump's government (2017–2021) (Hirst and Pereira 2022). This diplomatic posture was profoundly marked by a contest of the liberal international order (Casarões and Farias 2021) and significant modifications in the region's discourse and practices towards the US. Also, the relationship with traditional regional allies such as Argentina deteriorated, and Brazil displayed an unusual leaning on US demands to counter the presence of China in the region. Beijing continued to be crucial for the Brazilian economy, however. The preference towards the US resulted in a bandwagoning strategy (Schweller 1994; Mearsheimer 2014), although the outcomes of this close relationship fell short of what was envisioned.

Therefore, between 2003 and 2022, Brazil moved away from the role of soft balancer vis–à–vis the US in South America during Lula's and Rousseff's terms to a tactical convergence in Temer's to bandwagoning in Bolsonaro's. This paper discusses how policymakers can determine the direction of regional powers' balancing behavior towards great powers and combine domestic and regional factors to explain the variance in the strategies adopted in each presidential mandate.

To develop and illustrate these arguments, the article proceeds in three sections: First, I briefly approach the soft balancing and bandwagoning concepts and the mechanisms through which it is mobilized and discuss the importance of considering beliefs and power in foreign policy analysis. In the sequence, I turn to Brazilian regional foreign policy towards the US, discussing the main drivers of the approaches displayed by each president. In conclusion, perceptions of the US and China and the material ability to check the great powers explain the differences in Brazilian strategies adopted in the last twenty years.

Soft balancing, bandwagoning, and the importance of the beliefs

In the context of unipolarity and US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, a heated debate emerged in the pages of *International Security* opposing those who thought that it was difficult, if not impossible, to balance US hegemony due to its global primacy (Brooks and Wohlforth 2005; Lieber and Alexander 2005) and the others arguing the contrary, that balancing was on the way but in a "softer" fashion (Pape 2005; Paul 2005). The common ground between them was the consideration of the usefulness of the balance of power theory as a primary theoretical approach to studying international relations and its implications for analyzing a state's foreign policy. Since then, the debate has

brought new contributions. It now incorporates discussions on the concept's utility, its validity, the conditions under which it may flourish – and work or not – and to what extent it can explain the strategic behavior of great and regional powers in different contexts.

According to Paul (2005, 20), differently from hard balancing, the soft version means that a state balances the relatively stronger state, aiming to "[restrain] the power or aggressive policies of a state through international institutions, concerted diplomacy via limited, informal ententes, and economic sanctions in order to make its aggressive actions less legitimate in the eyes of the world and hence its strategic goals more difficult to obtain."

Although soft balancing entails using nonmilitary tools, it nonetheless aims to challenge power. Among the instruments available to states that behave in a soft balancing fashion are territorial denial, entangling diplomacy, signaling of resolve to participate in a balancing coalition, and economic strengthening. Denying one state the use of the territory has both a military and political-economic connotation since a state may deny access to its territory in the form of troops or goods. Entangling diplomacy uses multilateral institutions and other formal/informal arrangements to obstruct or frustrate the hegemon's moves considered threatening to others. This mechanism is close to signaling resolve to participate in collective efforts to balance the hegemon. Still, it differs from it in that it may be mobilized without an institution. Economic strengthening means shifting relative economic power in favor of the weaker state through, for example, trading blocs or increasing economic exchange. Then, "a core purpose of soft balancing is not to coerce or even impede the superior state's current actions, but to demonstrate resolve in a manner that signals a commitment to resist the superpower's future ambitions" (Paul 2005, 37).

On the other hand, bandwagoning occurs when secondary states partner with the hegemon in response to a perceived threat. In that sense, it is a strategy of states aligning with a dominant power rather than opposing it. States that bandwagon expect to reap security, economic, or protection benefits from potential threats. This strategy is often pursued when a state perceives that opposing the hegemon would be futile or too costly. Bandwagoning involves alliances, partnerships, or subordination to the great power (Mearsheimer 2014).

Considering this theoretical approach, discussing how the state interprets behavior is essential since different actors interpret a particular act – threatening or not – differently (Keohane and Goldstein 1993). IR scholars have suggested a correlation between how authorities "conceive" and interpret things surrounding them and decision-making (Hermann and

Hermann 1989; Hermann et. al. 2001; Jervis 2013, 2017a, 2017b). For a state to design a balancing strategy towards the other, it should consider the other's behavior or intention a threat to its interests or the interests of its allies. When one talks about perception, a central feature of the concept is the notion of "belief" – or worldview –, which is "[a] cause-effect relationship which derives authority from the shared consensus of recognized elites... Such causal belief guides individuals on achieving their objectives [and] imply strategies for attaining goals, themselves valued because of shared principled beliefs, and understandable only within the context of broader world views" (Keohane and Goldstein 1993, 13).

In foreign policy, the worldview refers to a comprehensive framework of beliefs, values, and perceptions through which individuals or decision-makers interpret and navigate the complexities of international politics. Understanding one's worldview is paramount as it provides a foundational framework that informs and structures overarching principles and priorities that tend to guide foreign policy decisions. "[P]olicies and decisions must be mediated by statesmen's goals, calculations, and perceptions" (Jervis 2017b, 13). These mediations include ideological orientations, cultural and historical factors, and geopolitical considerations. The worldview is one mediation that helps to order the world and shape agendas by reducing the number of conceivable alternatives and turning actions onto certain tracks rather than others, which ultimately has the potential to shape outcomes. So, there is a correlation between "belief" or "conceiving" a specific view of the world and acting on it. A realist worldview, for instance, may shape beliefs about the importance of the state's interests and the centrality of power politics, leading to a focus on the balance of power and competition instead of cooperation (Waltz 1979).

The 1988 Brazilian Constitution postulates that the Executive has the prerogatives of formulating and implementing foreign policy. By "foreign policy," I mean the agenda, initiatives, and guidelines developed and carried out by Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs – known as Itamaraty – and its most relevant players, particularly the President and their Minister of Foreign Affairs. In the Brazilian case, the foreign policy design and implementation attributes a considerable role to the Executive and those subordinate to it. Many works have called attention to the political–institutional dynamics surrounding Itamaraty's bureaucratic model and pointed to its agency's centrality in foreign policymaking (Figueira 2010; Amorim Neto and Malamud 2019).

In this paper, I focus on the worldviews of the Presidents and their Ministers of Foreign Affairs because they occupy the main institutional posts

in the country's foreign affairs, which matters in terms of what they say and do[2]. Although the literature points to different reasons for the President to nominate their Minister of Foreign Affairs (Lopes and Praça 2015; Aldgeire 2023), one can expect that the two share some fundamental beliefs regarding worldview. Accordingly, one expects a cognitive convergence on fundamental issues such as how international politics work, Brazil's role, and Brazil's major interests in foreign policy. The combination of the President and their inner circle on foreign affairs accounts for setting the goals, establishing the ways to meet them, and implementing the policies according to the evaluation of means and ends. Thus, I use the concept of soft balancing and how each President's inner circle considers Brazil's main regional interests to grasp and analyze Brazil's regional foreign policy towards the US in the last twenty years. Specifically, I try to demonstrate that the previous four Presidents relied on soft balancing and bandwagoning strategies to check other powers' behavior in South America, but for different reasons correlated to their different worldviews about Washington and Beijing.

The Brazilian regional foreign policy towards the US: From soft balancing to bandwagoning

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the US's definition of its international agenda and the importance it concedes to Brazil within it constitute one of the main structural features in the Brazilian foreign policy calculus (Hirst 2005). Over the years, the US has become the regional hegemon in the Americas. After the Second World War, it also became Brazil's main political ally and trade partner. For Brazil, this situation poses a set of challenges in terms of how to deal with the regional hegemon because, since the 1940s, Brasília has adopted a pendular posture between an alignment with the US (called Americanism) and a universalist approach, especially towards South-South relations (called Globalist) (Pinheiro 2010) – but never assuming a posture of confrontation against Washington. The relationship of Latin American countries with Washington varies in time and space (Russell and Tokatlian 2007; Livingstone 2009), and Brazil–US bilateral relations have historically experienced transformations, ranging from "alignment" to a

2 While the centrality of the following analysis rests on the beliefs or worldviews of some particular people, I am aware of the methodological limitations of correlating beliefs with policies. There are works that show case studies problematizing this correlation and others corroborating with it, but all of them have pointed out the analytical validity of relying on this theoretical mechanism to grasp an important feature of foreign policymaking and, particularly, foreign policy strategy design (Amorim Neto and Malamud 2015; Burges and Bastos 2017)..

"strategic dialogue" (Soares de Lima and Hirst 2006; Long 2018).

South America, considered by Teixeira (2012) as a regional subsystem in the Americas, is critical to Brazil in at least two ways: First, the region can represent a source of instability in the neighborhood, affecting Brazilian interest in exerting influence – either political, economic, or institutional – in a potentially dysfunctional area. Due to the presence of organized crime, transnational traffic, and "fragile" states, the intervention of the hegemon may be required to stabilize the situation, which Brazil seeks to avoid. Spektor (2010) argues that this situation is particularly delicate as some of Brazil's neighbors seek to align with Washington (e.g., Colombia and Chile), and others contest vocally the American hegemony (e.g., Venezuela). Either way, both cases ultimately bring the US's attention and pose a challenge to Brazilian positioning in the region since it raises expectations in Washington about how Brazil would work to face these challenges and turn Brazil into a target of US pressure when their interests are not convergent.

The second way South America matters to Brazil is that it represents a key source for Brazilian international status. As the dominant economy in the region, Brasília tries to turn the region into an asset to establish a regional political-institutional framework to advance its interests and facilitate negotiations, dilute conflicts, and strengthen its position when dealing with outside powers. South America has also been a recurrent theme in Brazilian arguments for pushing a UN Security Council reform that grants Brazil a permanent chair – although there is a clear rejection of this proposal from other regional states. As Amorim (2011b, 265) notes, "Even a big country as Brazil is also a small one in a world like this [...] we do not have the ability to, alone, speak for ourselves, [That is why] Brazil has not a full existence with the union [with South America]".

First phase: Lula–Dilma Rousseff and the rise and fall of soft balancing towards the US

Lula's international agenda was formulated by his Foreign Minister, Celso Amorim (2011a, 2011b); Itamaraty's General Secretary of External Relations, Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães (2001, 2006)[3]; President's Foreign Policy Advisor, Marco Aurélio Garcia (2018); and the President himself also displayed presidential diplomacy. This foreign policymaking inner circle favored designing a strategy to augment Brazilian global status, particularly

3 In 2009 Guimarães was replaced by Antonio Patriota, former Brazil Ambassador to the United States.

in the established global governance institutions. Regionally, the main goal was assuming a prominent regional leadership, primarily through institution-building processes.

Lula's foreign policy also tended to privilege South–South relations, although it did not disregard the importance of North–South relations. A common feature in these goals was the long-term view of a Brazilian desire to be as autonomous as possible from the US since the regional hegemon was considered a challenge to Brazil's political and regional interests, particularly in the local institutions where Washington has more relative weight on collective decisions, such as in the Organization of American States (OAS). During Lula's years, Brazilian foreign policy was based on an assessment that the world was becoming multipolar, and that multilateralism matters for Brazil. Consequently, this reflected a perception of a relative decline in the US's weight on global affairs, with significant consequences for Brazilian foreign policy options (Guimarães 2006).

The 2008–2009 global financial crisis accentuated the process of power redistribution, with Brazil, China, India, Russia, and others playing a prominent role in the traditional multilateral institutions[4], particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, and creating new arrangements of their own, which the 2009 launching of the BRICS (Rinaldi 2021) and the G20 illustrates accordingly. These episodes consolidate a process of a multipolar world order that Amorim explains as a "subway map," with lines intertwined and a network of connected stations – some of which, as he notes, remain more important than others (Amorim 2010). On many occasions, Amorim presented the idea of a "benign multipolarity," according to which many poles would assume a proactive stance on decision-making processes and contribute to augmenting the representativeness of global governance mechanisms. This structural configuration favors the democratization of the international order embedded in the principle of multilateralism.

Implicit in the discourses was a normative belief that multipolarity is superior to any other distribution of global power, especially the 1990's "unipolar moment" (Krauthammer 1990/1991). In Amorim's view, political, economic, and military changes in world politics reinforced the Brazilian strategy of multidimensional cooperation with its own region. He used to say, "Cooperation, integration, and peace: it is around these goals that Brazil wishes to contribute, together with its neighbors, to realize a benign multipolarity" (Amorim 2011a, 23). Guimarães (2006, 275) also posits that

4 In this period Brazil moved from the fourteenth to the seventh position in the world economy.

Brazil should work "consistently and persistently favoring the emergence of a multipolar order in which South America would be one of the poles, and not be considered as a mere sub-region for other pole's economic and political exploitation."

Lula's regional foreign policy priority was strengthening the regional integration process, particularly in the economic and political dimensions. According to Amorim (2009), the Common Market of the South (Mercosur) was the regional integration masterpiece. The trade bloc is the only one in the region that created density and development in trade, welfare, politics, and democracy. Another crucial regional goal was to promote political cooperation and commercial integration among Latin American countries. The Union of South American Nations (Unasur) was the political-institutional instrument to find common solutions to regional crises and a way to put aside eventual hegemon interference since Washington was not invited to join. Brazil resumed previous projects of Latin American integration and, in 2004, established a free trade agreement between Mercosur and the Andean Community, creating a South American free trade zone. Brazil also agreed to settle a dispute resolution tribunal under the Mercosur umbrella and establish the Secretary-General's office of Mercosur headquarters in Montevideo. Two years later, Brasília supported the creation of Parlasur – a legislative organ with civil parliamentary participation from all Mercosur members – and helped to build the Mercosur Convergence Fund, a financial mechanism to lend money to Uruguay and Paraguay for investing in infrastructure projects[5]. Amorim (2011, 230) calls these regional initiatives "responsible activism," seeking to enlarge Brazilian political institutional compromises with the region.

On the political dimension of regional integration, in 2008, all South American countries signed in Brasília a constitutive treaty by which they created the Unasur. This was a crucial step towards an institution-building strategy, as all states could now count on a common institutional framework to settle political-diplomatic regional disputes. The institution effectively became an active arrangement for discussing themes as sensitive as security and democracy. The consolidation of the South American regional integration processes and the efforts to reach Latin American and Caribbean countries can be illustrated by a 2008 summit in Brazil gathering a Mercosur Summit, a Unasur Summit, and a summit of all 34 Latin American and Caribbean states. Two years later, Brazil was one of the main driving forces behind creating the Community of Caribbean and Central American States (Celac). In Amorim's words (2011, 230), it was "the first [time] ever to take place in 200 hundred years of the independent life of most countries... [it] was the

5 See https://focem.mercosur.int/pt/o-que-e-focem/

first occasion on which the Heads of State and Government of Latin America and Caribbean nations met without the sponsorship or tutelage of Europe or North America."

Historically, both countries have prioritized regional stability in the Brazil–US relationship. However, there were differences in how each conceived the proper way to address this goal. While Washington has long promoted liberal democracies and is suspicious of left-wing governments' initiatives, Brazil and other American states have emphasized the diplomatic tradition of non-interference. Brazil and the US also shared differences in the hemispheric talks and institutional governance framework on themes such as migration, (narco)terrorism and drug trafficking (Herz 2011). Washington supported OAS as the leading regional institution to face regional problems, while Brasília advocated for the Unasur or Celac's role. In 2005 Brazil and other South American states opposed the US initiative of establishing a "democracy monitoring mechanism" within the OAS targeting Venezuela's Hugo Chávez. Few Latin American governments have supported the US economic sanctions on Venezuela's human rights record or embraced the ongoing American commercial embargo on Cuba and its suspension of the OAS. On many occasions, Brazilian leaders antagonized such policies, which helps to explain the desire to build regional institutions where the US was absent (Piccone 2011).

Despite the differences, the Brazil–US relationship during Lula's years was marked by what Pecequilo (2021) has called a "positive agenda." After the reelection of George W. Bush in 2005, he and his Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice sought to regain the trust of regional allies, and Brazil was chosen in Latin America to strengthen political ties and to sign a "strategic dialogue" with Washington (The White House 2010) – whom the US shares with countries such as Great Britain and India. The Brazilian momentum was best captured by the words of former US Ambassador to Brazil Thomas Shannon, according to which "The US needs to get used to the idea that, from now on, it will come across Brazil in places where it previously would not expect to find Brazil" (Pecequilo 2021,148).

In line with the US' global security agenda, Washington deployed its 4th Fleet to patrol the South Atlantic, which raised serious concerns in Brasília. Amorim (2011b, 273) notes, "The resolution of South Atlantic issues should be done without the presence of states or organizations alien to the region." Since the 1980s, the region has complied with the South Atlantic Zone of Peace and Cooperation, and the treaty was immediately invoked by Brazil, Argentina, and other countries from South America and the Atlantic coast of Africa to denounce the US military presence in the region. Washington also

maintained Plan Colombia – including US troops in Colombia – clashing with Brazil's position of favoring a demilitarized region. In this context, Brasília proposed the creation of the South American Defense Council within the Unasur umbrella, excluding the US from the institutional security framework that was being put in place in the region. All these regional institutions' strengthening illustrated the Brazilian foreign policy goal of bypassing hemispheric institutions traditionally led by Washington to carve out a space for soft balancing in the region.

As Lula's foreign policy strategy was designed to check the regional hegemon and increase Brazilian influence in South America, signaling a resolve to participate in a balancing coalition and economic strengthening toward South–South cooperation was a central hallmark of the diplomatic choices. At the heart of this balancing strategy, there was China. In Amorim's and Guimarães' views, the Chinese were considered not only an important trade partner, as its participation in the Brazilian external trade rapidly grew over the years, but also a crucial political-strategic ally to help to consolidate the notion of a "benign multipolarity". In South America, it meant strengthening the bilateral "strategic partnership"[6] with China and mobilizing China's diplomatic, economic, and geopolitical assets to augment Brazilian's role in the region. Brazil–China relations had two different, although not necessarily excluding, dimensions: Pooling efforts to promote economic development and political-diplomatic collaboration searching for a multipolar world. This formation of a diplomatic alliance showed that Brazil could count on "outside options" (Roberts, Armijo and Katada 2016) to accomplish its regional goals of balancing the hegemon. "After two decades of intensifying their engagements [...] Sino-Brazilian relations have become the most comprehensive of all Beijing's engagements with Latin America" (Schenoni and Leiva 2021, 242).

To the extent that Brazil started diversifying its external commercial markets, particularly with the Chinese, friction with the United States has become more frequent but has not resulted in conflict. During Obama's administration (2009–2017), relations between the US and Latin America improved in some ways. Washington suspended the Helms-Burton law against Cuba and resumed diplomatic dialogue with Havana. After the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the US worked with the Brazilian-led United Nations Mission of Stabilization to Haiti to alleviate the dramatic humanitarian crisis in the country. Still, in the 2009 Honduran political crisis involving a *coup d'état* against President Zelaya, the White House's recognition of the election

6 The establishment of the strategic partnership between Brazil and China dates to the 1990s but gained more prominence in recent years due to the strengthening of bilateral relations in the 2000s. In 2012, the relationship evolved into a "global strategic partnership".

of Porfirio Lobo clashed with the Brazilian stance of backing President Manuel Zelaya. The OAS has played a minimal role in these issues. However, this did not impede Brazil and the US from signing a Military Cooperation Agreement in 2010 and launching an Energy and Global Strategic Dialogue.

So, Lula's regional foreign policy focused on institution-building and engagement with Beijing to soft-balance US regional hegemony. The creation of Unasur, the distancing from the US in regional institutions, and the meeting with Beijing were examples of adopting a soft balancing strategy towards the hegemon. These initiatives were formulated to address the goals of reducing the US intervention in political and regional conflicts, creating more institutional room to accommodate the differences and cooperate in security issues, and improving Brazil's regional position vis–à–vis the hegemon. However, none were formulated to impede US participation in regional affairs; instead, they were built to limit Washington's room to take sides in regional conflict management and constrain its eventual unilateral appetites. There was no adoption of a strategy to undermine the regional order; rather, it sought to improve the Brazilian position to negotiate with the hegemon and constrain its unilateral actions. "This was a conscious attempt to counter US hegemony in the region by transforming Brazil's 'near abroad' into a distinctive regional formation where Brazil could exert some degree of international political authority" (Spektor 2016, 28).

The Dilma Rousseff Turn

The soft balancing strategy during Lula's years started to wane when he left the presidency. After the 2010 presidential election, Dilma Rousseff (2011–2016) took office amidst a challenging international scenario marked by the decline of commodity prices on the global market and a domestic economic recession due to the 2008–2009 financial debacle. In Rousseff's mandates, the Brazilian economy suffered from low economic growth rates – in 2015–2016, Brazilian GDP had negative growth of –3.2 percent [7] – and politically had to face corruption scandals and political disputes involving the government that ultimately led to Rousseff's impeachment in 2016. In this context, foreign policy did not occupy a high priority rank in the government's concerns, although some initiatives had been taken.

Along Rousseff's mandate, the president had three different Ministers of Foreign Affairs: Antônio Patriota (2011–August 2013), Luiz Alberto

7 See https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2016&locations=BR&start=2015&view=chart

Figueiredo (August 2013–December 2014), and Mauro Vieira (January 2015–May 2016). Notwithstanding the changes and natural differences in style and profile, all Ministers shared concerns about the United States hegemonic presence in South America and designed a foreign policy aiming to, on the one hand, assure a Brazilian autonomy space in the region and, on the other, to rely on regional institutions and on "outside options" to check the hegemon (Patriota 2013, 2016). Compared with the previous administration, there were no fundamental reorientations in the considerations of how world affairs work, and the challenges posed to Brazil by the regional dynamics (Cervo and Lessa 2014). Patriota (2013) supported strengthening multilateralism by widening Brazilian political-commercial ties with other emerging countries and demanded reforms of global governance institutions. He also sought to contribute to the debates on humanitarian interventions in the UN by proposing the concept of "Responsibility while Protecting" but had no success (Rinaldi and Pecequilo 2021). However, the weakening of the Brazilian place in the regional power distribution due to Brazilian economic crises helps to understand differences in the magnitude of soft balancing implementation between Lula's and Rousseff's periods.

The Foreign Ministers implemented a series of policies aiming to support the initiatives set out previously. The Mercosur–EU talks continued, and the regional trade bloc saw an expansion with the inclusion of Venezuela in 2012. Besides, Bolivia signed an accession protocol in 2015. In 2011, Brazil proposed the creation of the Celac to resolve regional political–and diplomatic issues without US participation, and in 2017 participated in the "Lima Group" launched to deal with Venezuela's democratic problems[8]. Although there were no efforts to institutionalize Unasur, the South American Defense School and the Center for Strategic Defense Studies, created in 2011, had their charter approved by the Council of Heads of State and Government of Unasur.

Regarding the bilateral relationship with the US, there was an attempt to "reset" the relationship (Pecequilo 2022) after the espionage scandals involving the US National Security Agency. Rousseff also strengthened the partnership with China in bilateral economic terms and multilateral political forums – e.g., the BRICS and establishing the New Development Bank in 2014. This period is tentatively called a "wane soft balancing" characterized by a non-confrontational stance against the US. Still, it was also a moment when Brazil could not sustain the regional initiatives elaborated by her predecessor.

After the 2014 Brazilian financial crisis and the beginning of the impeachment process against her in November 2015, Rousseff's attention

8 See: https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/newsroom/news/declaracion-lima-8-agosto-2017.

moved inward. It coincided with when Washington increased its attention toward Latin America due to China's growing presence. As mentioned, Lula's soft balancing strategy required a material commitment to support the regional institutional–building process. However, the fall of commodity prices in the global market and a decline in Brazilian domestic demand led to an average GDP growth of around 2.3 percent in 2011–2014, contrasting with 4.07 percent in 2003–2010. In 2010, Brazilian GDP registered a growth of 7.53%. From 2012 onwards, the growth rates gradually diminished: In 2012, it reached only 1.9% and in 2013 reached a growth of 3% and then 0.5% in 2014. In 2015, Brazilian economy was in recession and saw a negative growth of 3.5%, while in 2016 the situation aggravated with another recession of 3.2%. During Temer's years, GDP growth reached 1% in 2017 and 1.1% in 2018 [9].

Therefore, fundamental structural views remained in how foreign policymakers conceived world affairs. However, Brazil's position in the regional power distribution waned, and it saw an increasing consolidation of China's economic presence on the continent. The lack of conditions to continue to balance the regional hegemon was aggravated by Rousseff's impeachment. Among the many consequences of this political turning point was that foreign policy strategy was directly affected, marking the beginning of a process that would redirect Brazilian regional foreign policy in the following administrations. The soft balancing strategy would be replaced by tactical convergence with Washington with Michel Temer.

Transitional phase: Michel Temer and the tactical convergence towards the US

Under President Temer (March 2016–2018), there was the nomination of two Foreign Ministers with partisan backgrounds and historically in the opposition camp of Lula's and Rousseff's administrations: Senators José Serra (March 2016–February 2017) and Aloysio Nunes Ferreira (March 2017–2019). Despite being short, Temer's mandate represented reorientations in Brazilian foreign policy aims and strategies towards the region. Serra and Ferreira redirected the political–diplomatic compass towards the US, although they did not disregard the importance of China for the Brazilian economy.

In many aspects, Temer's regional foreign policy was a tactical convergence towards the US because it aimed to, on the one hand, not create unnecessary animosity against China and, on the other, to approach Washington to reap potential benefits from getting closer to the hegemon. As

9 See: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=BR.

a candidate for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) – a hallmark of Serra's and Ferreira's diplomatic aims – Brasília sent a message that it supports the idea of democracy and liberal rules on the world order and that meeting the specific interests of the developing countries was no longer a priority.

Temer's foreign policy emphasis on (bilateral)trade and investment has led him to pressure Mercosur's members to reform the bloc towards openness and closer commercial ties with the United States and the liberally oriented Pacific Alliance. In a move in line with Trump's criticism of the inefficiencies of the regional organs to tackle common problems, Brazil suspended indefinitely its participation in the Unasur in April 2018 and replaced it with greater engagement with the Lima Group, also strengthening the role of the OAS for regional conflict resolution (MRE 2018). The decision to suspend Brazilian participation in the Unasur and the redirection focus on OAS represented a discontinuation of previous government efforts to build a regional institutional framework in which Brazil would occupy the center position (Santos, Leão and Rosa 2021). This resulted in more room for the US leadership in the region and implicit support of Washington's options to solve regional crises, particularly regarding Maduro's Venezuela. Serra advocated for the Venezuelan suspension of Mercosur in August 2017 under accusations of the country's non-commitment with the bloc's Ushuaia Protocol democratic clause (Mercosur 2017).

However, one issue that remained the same from the previous period was the presence of China on the Brazilian economic radar. While Serra and Ferreira did not praise Beijing as a crucial political partner in balancing the US preponderance in the region, they regarded China as an inevitable player for Brazilian economic interests. In 2016, China accounted for around 20% of Brazilian exports, while the United States represented only 13% [10]. The status of a bilateral "strategic partnership" between Brasília and Beijing, once regarded in political-diplomatic terms, has now assumed an economic-commercial tone. To celebrate 40 years of the bilateral relationship between Brazil and China, Serra emphasized the growing importance of the Chinese market for Brazilian exports and highlighted the Chinese investments in crucial domestic infrastructure areas (MRE 2016).

Although China was not considered a threat to Brazilian interests in the region, Serra and Ferreira saw Washington as the primary reference for their foreign policy goals, particularly the accession to the OECD and the reorientation of the focus towards the traditional regional institutions,

10 See: https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/BRA/Year/2016/TradeFlow/EXPIMP/Partner/by-country.

focusing on the OAS. In exchange for Trump's support of the Brazilian official candidacy to OECD, in 2017, the two governments started to negotiate a bilateral accord previewing the concession of the Brazilian Alcantara basin to US satellite launching. The Serra–Ferreira foreign policy sought to distance itself from the political dimensions of the region and instead strengthened its commercial ties with China and aligned politically with the United States. Temer's government is considered a transitional period since his successor will further some initiatives started this time and implement a fundamental change in Brazilian regional foreign policy.

Third phase: Jair Bolsonaro and the bandwagoning strategy with the US

Unlike in the first and second phases, during Bolsonaro's administration, Brazil sought to move into the region through an unconditional alliance with the US based on a common perceived threat: China (The White House 2017, 2020). During the 2018 presidential campaign, Bolsonaro and some close politicians visited Taiwan, brokering a Brazilian diplomatic tradition since the 1970s. Instead of using Beijing to balance US hegemony, Brazil worked *with* the hegemon to address its newly conceived goal of sponsoring a Western crusade against the "authoritarian league," which includes China and Venezuela. During this period, it defended the imposition of sanctions on Maduro's Venezuela for its non-democratic record and criticized those who adopted what Araújo considered "alarmist" attitudes on the perils of climate change (which he called "climatism") and on the best practices to fight the COVID-19 pandemic (which he called "covidism") (Araújo 2019). He also questioned the legitimacy of traditional international organizations, particularly the UN and the World Health Organization (WHO), to solve global problems.

The fundamental motto behind Araújo's worldviews, which informed and shaped the Brazilian foreign policy design under Bolsonaro, is that in the post-Cold War period, there has been a kind of civilizational clash opposing the West and the "rest". One of the main criteria dividing these two groups is fundamentally ideological. On one side rests the Western civilization with its Christianity and a liberal philosophical thought profoundly committed to linking the "people" with the "nation." The best representative of this group was US Donald Trump. On the other side rests the non-Christian civilizations with their political authoritarian lean and an atheistic/non-monotheistic society that detaches "people" from their "nations." Communist China ranks first in this group. Araújo argued that once most Brazilian Christians elected

Bolsonaro with conservative values, the foreign policy should represent them accordingly [11]. Besides, as Trump was considered the savior and protector of the cultural West (Araújo 2017) it would be natural for Brazil to align with him and defend its traditional Western heritage.

Before assuming the highest post at Itamaraty, Ernesto Araújo (2019–March 2021) and Carlos Alberto Franco França (April 2021–2022) – the second Bolsonaro's Minister of Foreign Affairs – were two low-ranked, low-profile diplomats. With the leadership of Araújo within Itamaraty, Brazilian foreign policy moved towards an ideological agenda in which the containment of the Chinese presence in South America constituted one of its nuclear features. In this scenario lies a particular perception of a Chinese threat. Araújo's representation of China can be seen in three different but interrelated aspects: First, the country is ideologically Marxist-communist, which means that it embraces a collectivist society that does not put the individual at the center of politics and rejects the role of religion as a critical feature to organize social groups. Second, China is a one-party authoritarian regime, meaning that traditional liberal rights are not respected, and people live under the tight control of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Freedoms as crucial as speech, press, and vote nullify the individual as a free citizen to choose their path. Third, as China continues to rise economically and militarily, it will continue to subvert the current liberal international order and replace it with other underlying communist, "totalitarian" values such as atheism, globalism, and collectivism. Communist China, then, seeks to build a world order that mirrors its society, i.e., without liberty and a "free spirit." This order – the argument goes – would be led by a central agency responsible for "discipline and punish" those contrary to it. So, China is a threat not only to Brazil but also to Western civilization.

The Brazil–US relationship got closer in this context. Since Araújo (2017) praised Trump for being the "first among the Westerners" to defend its civilization, he accordingly pushed Brazilian foreign policy towards an automatic alignment with Washington. On some occasions, however, the relationship between Bolsonaro and Trump seemed more personal than institutional, with the Brazilian President, in a very picturesque episode, saying "I love you" to Trump – which, by the way, did not say it back. In Brazilian foreign policy, the alignment with Washington is not a novelty, but in this case, the level of personalization deserves attention.

Regionally, Araújo's foreign policy is marked by a complete abandonment of the established regional institutional mechanisms. Among

11 Bolsonaro's slogan campaign illustrates its religious-conservative politics: "Brazil above everything, God above all".

other initiatives, its diplomatic moves include the final point on dismantling Unasur and suspending Brazil in the Celac. Araújo articulated the launching of a right-wing initiative called "Progress and Integration of South America," which resulted, in 2019, in the establishment of a loose institution called "Progress for South America" (Prosur), a regional mechanism to gather right-wing South American leaders that aimed to replace Unasur – which Araújo officialized Brazil's left of the organization (MRE 2019). Also, the Minister became a vocal supporter of the OAS's initiatives led by Washington against Maduro's Venezuela and Cuba. The relationship with Argentina, one of the most important countries for Brazilian external trade, deteriorated profoundly, especially after the election of the center-left Argentinian President Alberto Fernández.

Although Brazil emulated Washington several times and established an automatic alignment, even contradicting traditional national interests, the rewards for doing so were remarkably modest (Ribeiro 2023). The triangular relationship between Brazil–the US–and China was one of the most contradictory features of Bolsonaro's foreign policy because China is the main Brazilian economic partner, representing 31% of its external trade[12] – compared with only 11% of the US[13] –, while the ideological importance of the United States for Araújo's worldviews jeopardizes a political-diplomatic strengthening relations with Beijing. Important to mention that players outside Itamaraty played a role in this case, particularly the Armed Forces and the agribusiness lobby in Congress. Although both did not praise the establishment of political ties with China, they had crucial economic and technological interests in maintaining the relationship with China.

For Araújo (2017, 2019), the nature of the threat was existential (in civilizational terms) and not economic or military, which may explain the separation of economic relations from the political dimension of the relationship with China. Brazil continued to trade with China, but for Araújo that was not the central aspect of Bolsonaro's foreign policy. In his famous words (Araújo 2019, n. p.): "We want to sell soy and iron ore [to China], but we are not going to sell our soul" [14]. Accordingly, the ideological "crusade" against

12 World Integrated Trade Solution, WITS, "Brazil Trade Balance, Exports, Imports by Country and Region 2021 | WITS Data," 2021, https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/BRA/Year/2021/TradeFlow/EXPIMP

13 World Integrated Trade Solution, WITS, "Brazil Trade Balance, Exports, Imports by Country and Region 2021 | WITS Data," 2021, https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/BRA/Year/2021/TradeFlow/EXPIMP

14 See: https://antigo.funag.gov.br/index.php/pt-br/politica-externa-brasileira/2912-aula-magna-do-ministro-de-estado-no-rio-branco.

the non-Westerners was his indelible mark. Even with the replacement of Araújo as the Foreign Minister in 2021, Carlos França did not change the adoption of balancing strategy towards China. However, he was much less vocal than his predecessor.

Table 1: Brazilian regional foreign policy strategies (2003–2022)

	Worldview	Brazil in SA	FP Strategy
Lula and Rousseff (2003–2016)	Multipolarity/Global South US as a regional challenge China as a strategic partnership	Regional integration driving force (Mercosur, Unasur, Celac)	Soft balancing
Michel Temer (2016 –2018)	Focus on the Global North (US, EU, OECD) US as a strategic partner China as an economic partner	Reorientation – from politics to economics	Tactical convergence towards the US
Jair Bolsonaro (2019–2022)	West x the "rest" US as a special partner China as a civilizational threat	Complete reorientation – implosion of the regional institutions built previously	Bandwagoning

Source: elaborated by the author.

As Trump lost in the 2019 election, the Brazil–US relationship soured for fundamentally personal reasons. Bolsonaro cheered for Trump's reelection, and after the results, he took over thirty days to recognize Joe Biden's victory, limiting space for further collaboration. The foreign policy priorities of the new US administration were directed to face transnational

challenges, particularly on climate change, the pandemic, and the defense of human rights and democracies. However, there was again China, and since Washington was profoundly worried about its strategic rivalry with Beijing, Brazil under Bolsonaro was one of the most minor concerns on the US international agenda.

Conclusions

In this paper, I tried to demonstrate the fundamental role of an agent's view in designing and implementing foreign policy strategies. I make a case for considering how people with institutional resources can formulate policies that impact foreign policy design. Notably, the Brazilian regional foreign policy from 2003 to 2022 shows that the different strategies adopted by each government responded to the Foreign Ministers' views about how world affairs work and Brazil's relative position in the regional power distribution. While the contexts and circumstances investigated in this paper relate to Brazil and South America, the analyses suggest broader implications for other regional powers' strategies and options in a context of profound changes in the international and regional orders.

The Brazilian adoption of two distinct foreign policy strategies shed light on relatively weaker states' ability to shape regionalism dynamics in the presence of one hegemon. It also highlights the importance of ideas in developing a causal logic to frame foreign policy's goals, as the way each President's foreign ministers see world affairs and Brazil's place in them shaped two different strategies of conceiving the regional order, the role of institutions, and the nature of the relationship with the hegemon.

Investigating the extent and implication of recent transformations in the Brazil–US regional relationship is necessary. In a scenario where the strategic rivalry between China and the United States will continue and possibly escalate, automatic alignments may represent a costly alternative for Brazil. Further analysis into the role of domestic factors, particularly Brazil's political and economic players, that shape foreign policy formulation could also offer valuable insights on this topic.

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ABSTRACT
Using the soft balancing concept and a comparative methodology, I analyze the diplomatic strategies mobilized by Brazil towards the US in South America from 2003 to 2022. The empirical results suggest that in the last two decades, Brazil moved away from the role of "soft balancer" during Lula's and Rousseff's mandates (2003–2016) to a "tactical convergence" in Temer's (2016–2018) to "bandwagoning" in Bolsonaro's (2019–2022). The main drivers for these different strategies are domestic and regional changes. Approaching this thematic contributes to a better understanding of Brazilian regional priorities and abilities to deal with the US in the region.

KEYWORDS
Brazilian foreign policy. United States. Soft balancing. Bandwagoning. South America.

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RUSSIA'S DETERRENCE STRATEGY IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UKRAINE INVASION

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Introduction:

In the 21st century, Russia has entered a period of intense geopolitical expansion, leaving behind the economic crisis produced by the disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the subsequent periods of erratic foreign policy. This has led to not only a reinforcement of Russia's presence in countries such as Syria, Libya, and Mali but also to its involvement in open military conflicts in Georgia and Ukraine (Larson and Shevchenko, 2019: 187). These efforts have been directed at spreading Russia's influence over territories with a shared history in the USSR, which many Russians consider the country's legitimate zone of influence.

According to this view, Russia has historically played a key role as a mediator in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Situated at the intersection of three great powers (Russia, Turkey, and Iran), the South Caucasus is subject to a multitude of political, cultural and religious influences, critically impacting its political and ethnic composition (Yamskov, 1991). Nagorno-Karabakh, for example, is mostly populated by ethnic Armenians, making it an ongoing factor in the region's instability. Although conflicts over its sovereignty have been frequent, the tension dramatically increased in 1988, when the region—legally part of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic—tried to incorporate into the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. In 1992, following the collapse of the USSR, Azerbaijan and Armenia went to war for control of the territory, producing thousands of casualties and hundreds of thousands of displaced people on both sides (Dehdashti, 2000). In that conflict, Russia's support for Armenia—directed to undermine the Azeri government of President Abulfaz

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Elchibey and spread its own influence—was vital to its victory of 1994, which implied control over not only Nagorno-Karabakh but also numerous surrounding territories mostly inhabited by non-Armenians (Krüger, 2010). Although the international community continued to consider this territory Azeri for decades, Armenia was capable of maintaining semiformal control over Nagorno-Karabakh via the legal denomination of the Republic of Artsakh and its resistance to repeated Azeri military efforts to recover the region.

However, the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict completely changed the geopolitical scenario. In six weeks, Azerbaijan launched a military operation that decisively defeated Artsakh and Armenian forces, allowing it to take control of an extensive part of Nagorno-Karabakh (Rubin, 2020). This conflict not only implied a strategic victory for Azerbaijan but also severely weakened Armenia's future capacity to maintain control of Nagorno-Karabakh. This article analyzes the main reasons for Russia stopping its protection of Armenia and allowing extremely unfavorable ceasefire conditions, making the argument that Russia's decision was part of a large-scale strategy designed to increase its deterrence capacity in the region, prevent further advances of the Azeri forces, and stabilize the current borders. However, despite the initial moderate success, this strategy collapsed because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, severely undermining its geopolitical position in the South Caucasus and precipitating an extremely volatile regional conflict.

The paper is organized into three sections. The second section analyzes how Russia understood the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the key reasons why it did not intervene to support its historical ally, examining the strategy of stabilizing the conflict by deploying Russian peacekeeping troops. The third section describes how the Russian failure to obtain a quick victory in Ukraine severely deteriorated its deterrence capacity and increased its dependence on countries with antagonistic agendas concerning Nagorno-Karabakh. The article concludes by summarizing the study's main findings, emphasizing the unwanted consequences of Russia's strategy in Nagorno-Karabakh and its impact on Armenia and the region.

Deterrence Theory

Numerous authors have studied the effectiveness of deterrence in international relations (Wolf 1991; Huth 1998; Rhodes 2000; Haffa 2018). Deterrence has been defined as "the threat of force intended to convince a potential aggressor not to undertake a particular action because the costs will be unacceptable or the probability of success extremely low" (Gerson

2009: 32). On a complementary fashion, Paul summarizes the three premises of deterrence: sufficient capacity, a credible threat, and an effective communication of the threat (2009: 2). In this sense, when a country can communicate a credible threat to another country if it acts in a particular way, this state will tend to behave rationally and restrain itself of acting in unwanted ways to avoid the costs (Haffa, 2018).

Even though it has been historically attached to nuclear dissuasion as part of the conflict between the US and the USSR (Lieber and Press, 2017; Wirtz, 2018; Osinga and Sweijs, 2021), particularly under the Eisenhower' policy of "Massive Retaliation", its efficacy to prevent conflicts started being questioned when the USSR obtained substantial nuclear power[2]. In this sense, other authors analyzed how different countries –both with and without nuclear armament–often employ conventional deterrence to dissuade other countries' pretensions (Knopf, 2010). Even though military power plays a key role in conventional deterrence, this strategy is not only based on military terms: in the calculation of benefits, risks and costs also political and economic factors may play a determinant role. For example, if a State is likely to face intense economic sanctions or a complete political isolation due to a military action, it may choose to restrain its attack.

According to Mearsheimer, who focused on the military sphere, deterrence is not determined by the type of weapons or by the balance of forces, but by the military strategy determining how a nation's armed forces are employed to achieve specific military goals (1983: 18). More concretely, States can develop three main strategies: attrition, aimed at annihilating the enemy; Blitzkrieg, based on quick massive attacks; or limited strategies, directed to obtain partial territory gains. As a result, a successful deterrence strategy necessarily must take into consideration the potential aggressor's interests and establish a context that increases the probable costs of the aggression until the point of preventing it.

However, conventional deterrence differs from nuclear deterrence in its contestability. While deterrent threats based on nuclear weapons cannot be contested, due to the magnitude of the risk, conventional deterrence may not be seen as a credible threat and, therefore, states could decide to ignore it. In Wirtz's words: "The contestability of conventional threats can raise doubts in the minds of those targeted by conventional deterrence concerning the capability of the side issuing deterrent threats to actually succeed" (2018: 58). Rhodes summarizes the reasons why a deterrence strategy can fail in three: the aggressor considers the cost as acceptable; it believes its capacity

2 Knopf (2010) describe this process as four waves of Deterrence Theory..

of avoiding the deterrent strategy or it behaves irrationally—because it does not perceive the deterrence or because it does not weight the threat correctly (Rhodes, 2000: 222).

Therefore, even though conventional deterrence can succeed in preventing unwanted actions from third countries, it requires very persuasive communications aimed at convincing other states of: a) the state's capacity and determination to actively intervene; and b) the consequences of acting inadequately.

Russia's strategy towards Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020

Nagorno-Karabakh was formerly a part of the USSR, as were the mini-states Transnistria, Ossetia, and Abkhazia. As such, Russia has considered the region to pertain to its zone of influence, leading to increasing involvement in the enclave in recent decades (Larson and Shevchenko, 2019: 201). Concretely, Russia became Armenia's closest ally and protector (Sadri, 2003) in the early years after the USSR's disintegration, leading to Armenia's inclusion in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which guaranteed Armenia protection against any military aggression.

During the first Nagorno-Karabakh War, Russia co-chaired the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group —created to promote a stable solution to the conflict—and hosted the 1994 meeting that eventually led to the ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan. From that moment on, Russia acted as an ally of both countries and arbitrator of the conflict, mitigating new escalations in 2010 and 2016. Nonetheless, according to Dalay (2021), Russia benefited from the instability in the region and did not aim to exert pressure on the countries to find a permanent solution.

Distinct from previous conflicts, the 2020 conflict accomplished relevant territorial advances for Azerbaijan, severely undermining the Armenian military forces and compromising Armenia's capacity to maintain control of Nagorno-Karabakh (Rubin, 2020). During this conflict, Russia adopted an extremely passive role: It avoided positioning itself with Armenia and entering any form of confrontation with Azerbaijan. For example, Russia ignored Azeri military actions, such as shooting down a Russian helicopter and bombing Armenia's anti-aircraft defenses (BBC, 2020; Galeotti, 2020).

After that attack against its anti-aircraft infrastructure, Armenia asked for the military mobilization of the CSTO members, insisting that its membership in the organization calls for any attack on its territory to receive

a military response from the other members, including Russia. In this sense, although the protection of the CSTO does not include the Nagorno-Karabakh territory—because the international community rejects Armenia's sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding areas (Dalay, 2021: 19)—any military attack on Armenia's uncontested territory should have activated the collective protection mechanism. Meanwhile, the OSCE Minsk Group, which includes the US and France alongside Russia, also avoided getting involved in the conflict, maintaining a neutral profile by asking for a ceasefire.

Ultimately, Russia did not provide compelling assistance to Armenia, whether military or diplomatic, and enabled the imbalance of the conflict for the benefit of Azerbaijan and its allies. Finally, the 2020 ceasefire saw Armenia lose all its previously controlled territory in Nagorno-Karabakh (Agdam, Kalbacar, and Lachin), which included five cities, four towns, and hundreds of villages. That border reconfiguration meant that only a single corridor (Lachin Corridor) connected Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh via Azeri territory under the surveillance of Russia's peacekeeping forces, enabling any blockade of the corridor by Azeri forces to isolate Nagorno-Karabakh, a region that is fully dependent on Armenia, severely compromising the viability of any further conflict.

There has been intense discussion surrounding the reasons that Russia allowed this imbalance (e.g., Yavuz and Gunter, 2023). According to Minzarari (2021), one factor was the animosity between the Russian government and the Armenian government under Nikol Pashinian, who reached power in 2018 with a campaign critical of the influence of Russian oligarchs in Armenia. Minzarari also suggests that Russia's delay was due to an effort to improve relations with Azerbaijan, a key geopolitical ally, due to its increasing demand for armaments and its gas fields. Elsewhere, Modebadze (2022) argues that Russia wants the conflict to persist in weakening both countries and avoid the consolidation of powerful and autonomous powers in the region.

Meanwhile, different authors (Chupryna, 2020; Khan, 2021; Minzarari, 2020; Modebadze, 2021) have recognized how Russia benefits from the deterioration of Armenia, which has increased the country's dependence on Russia and consolidated the Russian influence in the South Caucasus via the military deployment of peacekeeping troops, stipulated for a period of five years according to the ceasefire agreement (Welt and Bowen, 2021). According to Anggraeni:

> "Russia might have four goals in mind, which are to promote a more positive alliance with Baku to maintain the two countries strategic alliances, put Russian military presence in area of the conflict through the deployment

> of peacekeeping forces, to extend Russia's influence and control over the border zones of Karabakh and Armenia, as well as ensuring that Karabakh will remain Russia's main leverage over Armenia and Azerbaijan" (Anggaeni, 2022: 350).

Specifically, the ceasefire agreement established that the Russian peacekeeping troops would include "1,960 troops armed with firearms, 90 armored vehicles and 380 motor vehicles and units of special equipment"[3] (Президент России, 2020). These troops, part of the 15th Separate Motor Rifle Brigade, started the deployment soon after the ceasefire's entry into force with the purpose of guaranteeing the fulfillment of the agreement, which also included the redeployment of Armenian troops from the Agdam, Kelbajar, and Lachin regions, the establishment and protection of the Lachin Corridor, and the safeguarding of communication between Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. These efforts were aided by a monitoring center created in 2021 in the Agdam region and managed by joint Turkish and Russian troops and supported by existing Russian military bases in the Caucasus: the 102nd Military Base (Gyumri, Armenia), the Erebuni Air Base (Yerevan, Armenia), the 7th Military Base (Guaduta, Abkhazia) and the 4th Military Base (Tskhinvali and Java, South Ossetia).

From this perspective, Russia's military presence could act as a deterrent against further military aggressions from Azerbaijan toward Armenia and as a protector of communication between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. Furthermore, these developments meant that Russia could quickly interpose its military power to resolve any conflict and avoid any escalation that might eventually require more military involvement and potentially undermine Russia's diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey. Meanwhile, Armenia's territorial losses severely weakened its military position and made it even more dependent on Russia due to its desperate need for Russian protection of the Lachin Corridor to remain connected to Nagorno-Karabakh. According to Yildiz (2021: 2): "Russia consolidated its position as the dominant external power over Armenia, with the Nagorno-Karabakh war leaving Pashinyan domestically weakened".

Thus, there were three potential outcomes associated with allowing the conflict to continue until an unbalanced ceasefire benefiting Azerbaijan, apparently at odds with Russian interests: first, an increased Russian military

3 Translation from the original: "Объявляется о полном прекращении огня и всех военных действий в зоне нагорно-карабахского конфликта с 00 часов 00 минут по московскому времени 10 ноября 2020 года. Азербайджанская Республика и Республика Армения, далее именуемые Сторонами, останавливаются на занимаемых ими позициях".

presence in the South Caucasus; second, the deterrence of future military escalation between Armenia and Azerbaijan via interposition forces; third, maintaining good relations with Azerbaijan by weakening Nikol Pashinyan's government and pressing Armenia for an eventual political shift.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine and its effects on the deterrence strategy in Nagorno-Karabakh

As the previous section has explained, Russia severely depleted the strength of its historical ally Armenia to improve its geopolitical position in the South Caucasus. In theory, this regional shift should have made Russia capable of stabilizing the conflict using on-the-ground troops and preventing any military escalation of the conflict.

In fact, since the ceasefire in November 2020, numerous military clashes have taken place, mostly due to the lack of clarification concerning the new borders. For example, on 11 December 2020, a conflict regarding the status of two villages (Hin Taghe and Khtsaberd) on the southeastern border between Nagorno-Karabakh and the territories conquered by Azerbaijan led both Armenia and Azerbaijan to claim gross violations, with at least four casualties reported by Azerbaijan (Eurasianet, 2020; VOA, 2020). On 16 November 2021, conflict began along the eastern section of the border, causing multiple casualties on both sides, with Armenia reporting 15 deaths and 12 prisoners (no public reports made by Azerbaijan), and resulting in Armenia losing 41 square kilometers and requesting Russian military assistance via the CSTO (Eurasianet, 2021; OC Media, 2021; Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia, 2021). In both cases, diplomatic pressure from Russia—including direct communication between the Russian president and his counterparts in Armenia and Azerbaijan—in conjunction with the military deployment of peacekeeping troops deterred an increase in hostilities and quickly brokered ceasefires.

Thus, Russia's military power, associated with its on-the-ground presence in the region and its diplomatic pressure as a big power, proved successful at deterring the escalation of the frequent clashes between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Nagorno-Karabakh. This meant that, during the first two years after the agreement, Russia was moderately capable of playing the role of arbitrator, consolidating its military presence in the region, and legitimating itself as a stabilizing regional factor. However, this situation would dramatically deteriorate after 24 February 2022, when Russia launched its military invasion of Ukraine. Although Russia had planned a quick in-

and-out operation designed to consolidate the independence of Donetsk and Lugansk and overthrow the Ukrainian government, it instead became involved in an exhausting conflict with unexpected consequences in both the national and international spheres. According to some commentators (e.g., Barany, 2023; Gioe et al., 2023; Gould, 2022; Kuzio, 2022), Russia made three key mistakes when it decided to launch the military operation: underestimating Ukraine's army, overestimating its own military capacity, and miscalculating the response from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Internally, Russia has faced increasing domestic opposition to the war, especially as the conflict intensified, requiring the implementation of conscription (Fischer, 2022). This phenomenon was aggravated due to the increase in casualties and the economic impact of the international sanctions implemented against Russia. Internationally, the Ukrainian war severely isolated Russia, with numerous countries opposing the war and even approaching NATO to obtain military protection. This isolation increased when Russia suffered several defeats and had to retreat from territories that it had previously conquered, despite its numerous assertions of the favorable evolution of the conflict. According to Dzhuraev, this deteriorated not only Russia's military power but also Vladimir Putin's image: "Putin is no longer the great invincible leader that everyone wants to meet (...). He has lost his aura" (New York Times, 2022). This image of strong leader was particularly questioned after the Private Military Group Wagner's leader Yevgeny Prigozhin entered in public confrontations with the Russian military leaders and eventually marched with his forces towards Moscow. Even though negotiation avoided a violent scalation of the conflict and Wagner's leaders died recently in a plane clash, this conflict was perceived as a proof of Putin's decreasing power in Russia (Parens, 2023; Strain and Goda, 2023).

In addition, international sanctions––which included embargos, economic blockades, the establishment of maximum prices, and limitations on the use of the SWIFT banking system––considerably impacted the Russian economy and necessitated the search for alternative trade partners outside of the European Union (EU) and the US. This tendency also increased Russia's dependence on countries such as Turkey or China, which became essential economic partners and were critical to mitigating the problems associated with the economic sanctions (Prokopenko, 2022).

Also relevant is that the unexpected development of the conflict required Russia to redeploy critical military hardware and troops from the Middle East, with reports suggesting that around 2,000 soldiers were sent from Tajikistan and between 1,200 and 1,600 were obtained from Syria (New York Times, 2022; Radio Free Europe, 2022). Furthermore, Azerbaijan

claimed that Russia temporarily removed its peacekeeping forces from the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan (JAM News, 2022a). Although this information has been denied by Russia, and its veracity remains disputed, it evidences the ways that the Ukrainian conflict has severely jeopardized Russia's capacity to quickly respond to the ongoing conflicts in Armenia, Syria, and Libya (Qaisrani et al., 2023).

In addition, the stagnation of the conflict with Ukraine also benefited Turkey, a country whose longstanding geopolitical agenda frequently requires it to address both Russian interests and US/EU interests, an agenda that includes the weakening of Armenia and the strengthening of Azerbaijan. In Malsin's words: "The war in Ukraine has thrown up an opportunity for Turkey to advance its growing defense industry while furthering its foreign-policy goals after pursuing a series of proxy wars with Russia in Syria, Libya and the South Caucasus region" (The Wall Street Journal, 2022).

Concerning the Russia-Ukraine conflict, during the year after the invasion, Turkey conducted a diplomatic balancing act, developing good relations with both blocs and, thus, successfully improving its geopolitical and economic position. On the one hand, Turkey refused to implement NATO-supported sanctions against Russia, instead doubling its trading (Cook, 2022). In particular, the agreement to pump more gas through Turkey, due to Russia's desire to reduce its dependence on the Nord Stream Baltic gas pipelines, represented a substantial benefit to Turkey, both economically and geopolitically (Reuters, 2022a). In addition, recent actions in Syria, a close Russian ally, could also be considered a diplomatic gesture favoring Russia (Meinardus, 2023). However, on the other hand, Turkey explicitly rejected the Russian annexation of Ukrainian territories as a violation of international law, supplied Ukraine with military equipment (including mine-resistant vehicles, precision-guided missiles, and *Bayraktar TB2s* drones), and called for an immediate resolution of the conflict (Defense News, 2022; Reuters, 2022b). In addition, Turkey played a key role in negotiating the Black Sea Grain Initiative, an intervention essential to ensuring Russia's return to the deal after its withdrawal in October 2022. Indeed, according to Prokopenko (2022), the speed of Russia's return—only two days after the withdrawal—evidenced Turkey's growing influence over Russia, an influence that is critical to understanding Russia's reluctance to get involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict again, with any action against Azerbaijan likely to deteriorate diplomatic relations with Turkey. In addition, intervening in the conflict would require mobilizing troops that are currently unavailable and imply the possibility of an eventual open conflict in the South Caucasus, requiring Russia to manage two extremely problematic crises simultaneously.

This geopolitical shift—an increasingly strong ally with the potential to avert any participation in a severe crisis—can be useful for understanding Azerbaijan's growing pressure on Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh during 2022 and 2023. During this time, conflicts around the borders have become more frequent, including the occupation of Karaglukh Heights on 24 March 2022 and a full escalation in September of the same year that caused more than two hundred casualties (Asbarez, 2022; Swiss Info, 2022). One particularly controversial issue concerned the development of infrastructure connecting Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, with the ceasefire agreement only determining that Armenia should guarantee the free movement of citizens, vehicles, and goods, delaying to a future agreement the construction of new transport infrastructure (Президент России, 2020). As a result, Azerbaijan's government requested the creation of a new corridor (Zangezur Corridor) through Armenian territory, which would allow Azerbaijan to fulfill one of its foremost geopolitical goals: the establishment of a direct route to Turkey. Armenia rejected this initiative, understanding that no such negotiation could coexist with Azeri military attacks on Armenian borders (Armen Press, 2021). The Azeri government responded to this decision by directing even more aggressive discourse toward Armenia. In President Ilhem Alyvev's words:

> "Over the past year we have shown three times that no one can resist us. We achieve everything we want, and the patrons of Yerevan cannot help them. This is first. Second, the heights on the Azerbaijani-Armenian border provide us with a great strategic advantage. They make it possible to detect any potential danger and stop it in time. I hope that Armenia, which suffered military and political defeat three times in a short time, already understands that a peace treaty is inevitable. The sooner they understand this and find the strength to agree, the better it will be for our region" (JAM News, 2023).

This escalated on 3 December 2022, when Azeri "eco-protesters" blocked the Lachin corridor in response to alleged environmental damage caused by the Karabakh mines, cutting Nagorno-Karabakh off from Armenia. Although this was quickly resolved by the peacekeeping troops, other actions have *de facto* isolated Nagorno-Karabakh since 12 December 2022. This strategy, which has included intermittent cuts in the gas pipelines running through Azerbaijan, has led the region to experience severe shortages in food and medicine, producing what some experts have denounced as a humanitarian emergency. Notably, the peacekeeping troops that supposedly guarantee safe travel through the corridor have reportedly not only failed

to prevent Azeri demonstrators from blocking the road but also dissolved Armenians who prevented Azeri inspectors from visiting Karabakh mines (Krivosheev, 2022). In the words of Michael Zolyan, political analyst: "It looks like the Russian peacekeepers don't control the territory. Either they agreed all this in advance or they don't have the ability to respond harshly to Azerbaijan." (Financial Times, 2023). Finally, Azerbaijan also developed a delegitimization campaign against Russia, which included accusations of conspiring with Armenia to harm Azerbaijan's interests, accusations that intensified after Ruben Vardanyan, a Russian-Armenian millionaire, was appointed State Minister of Artsakh, a move perceived as a Russian effort to intervene in the conflict (Asbarez, 2023). This strategy was generally effective, weakening the Armenian military, increasing animosity between Armenia and its allies, and exerting increasing pressure on Russia and its peacekeeping troops, eventually rendering them powerless to control the conflict. "Defying the Russian presence, Azerbaijanis are testing whether Moscow is still able and determined to impose its will on other, smaller neighbors amid its struggles in Ukraine." (New York Times, 2023).

In response to this increasing pressure, Armenia had few options. Azerbaijan proved its military superiority in 2020 by demonstrating its capacity to completely isolate Nagorno-Karabakh due to the border reconfiguration established by the ceasefire agreement. Furthermore, any military action could unleash a Turkish intervention because Turkey wants to consolidate the Azeri influence in Nagorno-Karabakh and weaken Armenia. Finally, an Armenian military response is not an option because of the difficulties it is experiencing obtaining military supplies because Russia—which, until 2020, provided 94% of Armenian weapons—needs these armaments for the Ukrainian conflict (JAM News, 2022b). This situation led to Armenia's previously discussed unsuccessful attempts to obtain protection from Russia, which saw it call for not only the mobilization of Russian peacekeeping forces but also the activation of the CSTO protection mechanism in response to Azeri attacks across the Armenian border. Not receiving a satisfactory response to its demands, the Armenian government has repeatedly expressed its increasing disappointment with Russia and the CSTO. In Prime Minister Pashinyan's words:

> "The aggression against the sovereign territory of Armenia from May 2021 to September 13, 2022 was doubly painful because our security allies abandoned us, preferring to remain in passive observer status or offering active observer status as an alternative" (Azatutyun, 2023).

This discourse has sometimes taken the form of criticism of Russia's peacekeeping troops, with Armenia even questioning the suitability of maintaining these forces, which have generated animosity from Azerbaijan but failed to prevent Azeri violations of the ceasefire agreement (Armenian Weekly, 2023). Meanwhile, after Armenia's veto of a CSTO resolution that it did not consider to suitably condemn the Azeri attacks, Pashinyan's government refused to host CSTO military exercises, further making apparent its disappointment with the organization. Despite this situation, Russia and the CSTO remain Armenia's best chance at deterring direct Azeri aggression, especially considering Turkey's potential involvement in the conflict and Armenia's substantially weakened geopolitical and military position following the ceasefire.

Concerning other possible allies, Pashinyan explored an approach to the US and to the European Union, but Armenia did not obtain substantial support from them. In fact, during the September military operation started by Azerbaijan, the US and the EU limited its involvement to formal rejections of the use of force but avoided to implement economic or political sanctions. This has been explained by different reasons, including the international recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh as Azeri territory, the low strategic interest of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh or the increasing role of Azerbaijan as gas supplier to Europe (Avedissian, 2023; Ibadoghlu, 2023).

Ironically, even though this approach to the US and to the EU did not imply any direct benefit to Armenia, it did deteriorate the diplomatic relations between Armenia and Russia. The deputy chairman of the Security Council of Russia and former President and Prime Minister of Russia, Dimitri Medvedev, refer to Pashyinian in the following terms:

> "Then he lost the war, but strangely he remained in place. Then he decided to blame Russia for his defeat. Then he gave up part of his country's territory. Then he decided to flirt with NATO, and his wife demonstratively headed to our enemies with cookies. Guess what fate awaits him" (Mediamax, 2023).

Finally, another possible ally could be Islamic Republic of Iran, as this country aims to halt the spreading influence of Turkey in the region. In addition, this conflict created concerns in Iran due to the involvement of Israel in Azerbaijan —mostly in intelligence and weapon supply—, as this country aim to balance the increasing influence of Iran in the region (Seifi and Hasanvand, 2023). As a response to the strengthening of the axis Azerbaijan-Turkey-Israel, Iran approached to Russia as a way of maintaining influence in the Northern-Caucasus. Concerning Armenia, Iran has been an historic trade

partner and energy and weapon supplier (Priego, 2007). However, when the 2020 conflict caused the loss of territory previously controlled by Nagorno-Karabakh, Iran lost direct communication with this region and could not avoid the blockade established by Azerbaijan in 2022.

This geopolitical context explains why in September 19, when the Azeri army started a military operation to regain control of Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia decided to adopt a neutral position. Facing a stronger army—both in numbers and in technology—, with a potential foreign threat (Turkey) and with reluctant allies, Armenia could not afford another direct confrontation with Azerbaijan. Resulting of that, the Nagorno-Karabakh's forces faced an extremely unbalanced conflict and were forced to accept an unconditional surrender that implied the *de facto* loss of autonomy and its incorporation to Azerbaijan (Reuters, 2023).

Ultimately, this discussion reveals a tendency toward a weakening of Russia's geopolitical deterrent capacity, especially in the Middle East, and toward increasing dependence on Turkey, a country with antagonistic interests regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This implies that Russia's deterrence strategy generated an effect opposite to that intended: Because Russia's strategy to contain the conflict and deter further escalation required an active and permanent intervention in the region, its absence permitted a Turkish-backed Azerbaijan to increase pressure on Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. In addition, in 2020, Russia enabled a weakening of Armenia to increase its presence in the region, putting the country in an extremely precarious situation, especially concerning its connection with Nagorno-Karabakh. In this context, the invasion of Ukraine turned Russia's deterrence strategy into the mechanism enabling the accomplishment of Turkish-Azeri ambitions in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Conclusion

This article's main intention was to analyze Russia's strategy concerning the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. In 2020, Russia was in a period of geopolitical expansion and sacrificed Armenia's geopolitical position to amplify its presence in the South Caucasus. Despite weakening Armenia's military capacity to defend Nagorno-Karabakh, this strategy allowed Russia to deploy a deterrence campaign sustained via a military presence on the borders between Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Azerbaijan. Between 2020 and 2021, Russia's geopolitical influence and the interposition of its military forces prevented any escalation of the conflict, consolidating the

borders established by the ceasefire agreement. This meant that, provided Russia was capable of interposing its on-the-ground troops and applying its influence to constrain Turkish and Azeri ambitions, Armenia's weakness was compensated, generally limiting the conflict.

Nonetheless, Russia's failure in Ukraine implied the total breakdown of this strategy. The unexpected Ukrainian resistance led to severe military losses to Russia and required the mobilization of Russian troops from the Middle East, decreasing its capacity to respond to ceasefire violations associated with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In addition, Russia's deteriorated image as a substantial military power and dependence on Turkey, a country with longstanding support for Azerbaijan and antagonistic interests regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, signaled the loss of crucial resources for deterring Azerbaijan. Because Russia could not afford to confront Turkey or mobilize its military power—currently needed in Ukraine—to dissuade the growing Azeri pressure over Nagorno-Karabakh, a weakened Nagorno-Karabakh was abandoned in a precarious position: virtually isolated from Armenia and without Russian military support or CSTO protection. However, the achievement of this historical claim on September 2023 not necessarily means the ending of the hostilities, as Azerbaijan is aware of the current favorable context and has other claims concerning Armenia (e.g., the establishment of a corridor to join both parts of Azerbaijan) which could try to obtain. In fact, Azerbaijan may be encouraged by Turkey to increase the pressure over the Zangezur Corridor, as it would imply a direct connection between Azerbaijan and Turkey, a necessary step in the economic relations among Turkey, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan (Eldem 2022: 5).

As previously explained, deterrence relies on a sufficient capacity, a credible threat and a good communication. Concerning deterring capacity, Russia put itself in a very precarious military position when it decided to get involved in the Ukrainian war, severely diminishing its military resources and its armed presence in Caucasus. In addition, its 2020 strategy also severely restrained the Armenian capacity to oppose the increasing Azeri pressure, as it tolerated Armenia's military weakening and the complete separation between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. In addition, the context of Azerbaijan's increasing influence, Russia's military and geopolitical weakening, an explicit animosity between Russia and Armenia and its growing dependance of Turkey—a close Azeri ally—, made less credible any possible Russian intervention in favor of Armenia.

Thus, Russia's deterrence strategy in Nagorno-Karabakh failed because it implied a very active guarantor role that Russia could not perform after the invasion of Ukraine. In this sense, it weakened Armenia's position

and indirectly encouraged Azeri aggressive behaviors towards Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh: this country is aware that, during a limited period of time, it will face less systemic opposition if it decides to achieve its historic territorial claims. Therefore, as long as Russia's military forces are stuck in Ukraine, and its influence deteriorates in the region, growing Azeri pressure over Armenia—particularly over the Zangezur Corridor separating the two parts of Azerbaijan— should be expected.

Future research should consider the impact of the weakening of Russia's geopolitical position on other situations where the country has had a historical presence, both inside and outside the Caucasus.

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the two-part strategy Russia developed to address the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 2020. First, the country helped to weaken Armenia's position in Nagorno-Karabakh and consolidate Azerbaijan's. Second, the Russian military deployed peacekeeping troops to the border of the two countries to stabilize the conflict, deter any new Azeri military advance in the region and improve the Russian influence in the Caucasus. Although this strategy was initially successful, as it increased Russia's military capacity in the region, the unexpected complications Russia experienced during the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 severely weakened its role as peacekeeper and deterrence power. Russia's involvement in a highly demanding conflict has led to considerable suffering, increased international pressure, and a deteriorated perception of its military power, precluding it from deterring the expansion of a Turkish-backed Azerbaijan. As a result, Russia's deterring capacity failed as it was uncapable of sending a credible threat to Azerbaijan and this country could achieve historic goals in the region. Consequently, Russia severely compromised its own position in the Caucasus, and increasing pressure over Armenia should be expected.

KEYWORDS

Russia. Nagorno-Karabakh. Deterring. 2020 ceasefire. Caucasus.

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THE OPTIONS OF JORDAN FOREIGN POLICY IN LIGHT OF THE "DEAL OF THE CENTURY" REGIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

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Introduction

The Jordan Foreign Policy is based on the same pillars provided by the United Nations and of international legitimacy, international conventions, and principles of humanitarian law, as they are advocating for truth, justice and peace, mutual respect, resolving disputes by peaceful ways, to spare peoples the scourge of war and not to resort to force, not to interfere in the internal affairs of others, and extending bridges of friendship and cooperation with everyone. These pillars in respect of Jordan foreign policy are fundamentals based on commitment and respect. Through them, it seeks to preserve the independence, security and stability of Jordan and to preserve its national identity, and achieve its position at the regional and international levels (Mahafzah, 1998: 80).

In light of the international and regional changes towards the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and Jordan's confrontation with many internal and external challenges, the announcement of the US administration headed by Donald Trump (2017-2020) for the draft deal of the century posed a new challenge to Jordan foreign policy on the political, economic and social levels, as well as having an impact on the formation of Jordanian foreign policy. It puts pressure on the decision maker in terms of balancing between preserving the supreme national interests and the historical entitlement of Jordan in Palestine, by virtue of the historical and geographical relationship that connects Jordan

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3 Editorial Note: This record has been updated to include Mr. Mahmoud Mubarak Al-Brezat as a contributing author, ensuring the comprehensive recognition of authorship for the original work.

with Palestine, and its role in preserving Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem as it is under the Hashemite guardianship. The "Deal of the Century" draft considered stripping Jordan of these commitments. So, this study examines the deal of the century and its impact on Jordan foreign policy, and its political options towards it.

Research Problem and Questions

The research problem focuses on the analysis of the "Deal of the Century" project for the Israeli– Palestinian conflict, eliminating Jordan's political role toward the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. It also addresses Jordan´s policy options through this deal and the following study questions will be answered:

1. What are the impacts of the deal of the century on Jordan and its foreign policy?

2. What are the options of the Jordan foreign policy regionally and internationally to consider regarding the deal of the century?

Research Hypothesis

The research proceeds from the validation hypothesis that the deal of the century has an impact on the security and stability of Jordan, as it ends its historical role towards the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, and affects the future of the Hashemite Custodianship over Holy Sites in Jerusalem. Also, it verifies which are Jordan´s foreign policy political options through which it can take an appropriate position towards the deal of the century.

Research Significance

This research aims to identify the impacts and options of the deal of the century on Jordan's foreign policy

Research Objectives

As its research objectives, the study aims to have a significant impact on Jordan's attitude toward the deal of the century.

Previous Studies

The issue presented in this paper has been the subject of other studies, that go as mentioned: first, q seminar titled, Application of "The Deal of The Century", was held in Amman on 25/02/2020 by the Middle

East Studies Center (MESC). At its end, the seminar presented a series of recommendations: a call for strengthening and coordination between Jordan and Palestine, the need for an agreed strategic vision and practical road map that deals with every impact for this project, and the relevance to constitute a joint Arab project to face the deal. Also, it searched for enhancing a Jordanian national approach and project to manage "The Deal of the Century".

Another study by MESC was titled " Israeli Annexation Plan of Vast Areas Occupied In West Bank And Its Implications " 2020. It presented the nature of the Israeli plan, its history and background, its political and economic risks to Palestine and Jordan, its implications to security and stability of the Arab region. The report includes the rights of Palestinian people and the right of self-determination. One more study is the one by Jamal Zahalqah "How Israel Considers the Deal of the Century", published in Israeli issues Journal No. 77. It discussed the Deal of the Century and Israel´s view regarding the Palestinian state, the annexation of the valley and settlements, refugees, and international legitimacy. It acknowledged that Israel is a Jewish state, and that the political settlement project intends to increase Israel's legitimacy of its regime.

Jordan Foreign Policy and "The Deal of The Century"

The geographical location of Jordan constitutes a security challenge for the making of Jordan´s foreign policy. As Jordan is located in a region full of conflicts and political disputes, it is also facing the Israeli threat; as it is along the border with occupied Palestine, with a length of 650 Km, which makes it vulnerable to a direct and constant threat from Israel. (Hassan109;1983)

Decades ago, over the last century, the Arab region had witnessed wars and conflicts with Israel, namely the wars of 1948, 1967, 1973. Through these wars, Israel was able to occupy all of the Palestinian territories, and displace large numbers of Palestinian refugees to Jordan. Israel continued in its expansionist ambitions waging war against Jordan in 1968. However, Jordan was able to defend its lands and the Israeli army left all Jordanian lands by force.

In spite of everything that the Arab region had witnessed in general and Jordan in particular regarding conflicts with Israel, the Arab have responded to American political propositions to reduce this conflict. Therefore, the Arab have entered into peace with Israel, in Madrid in 1991, with the participation of Jordan and Palestine in the negotiations with a joint delegation. The result was a Treaty of Peace (Wadi Araba) in 1994, ending the war and peace-

building between them. In this Treaty, Jordan maintained Israel's recognition of the Hashemite custodianship over the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem (Melhem, 2002, 621).

Although peace has been built between the two parties, Jordan foreign policy has not abandoned its historical, religious and national commitment toward the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the right of return of Palestinian refugees, and their legitimate rights for the establishment of the State of Palestine and its capital East Jerusalem. Also, it recognizes that there is no true security and stability in the region unless it achieves a just and comprehensive peace between the Arab and Israel.

But Israel is continuing its settlement policy in Palestine, depending on their historical beliefs about Palestine as it is the promised land, which led them to occupy Palestine, taking advantage of the weakness of the Arab countries and the support of the American administration for its policy in Palestine. These actions led to the threat of a violent policy against the Palestinian people, the search to settle the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and to eliminate all the rights of the Palestinian people.

During the first Donald Trump US presidency, there was a strong preference for Israel, and it rejected all international resolutions on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. He also presented his policy towards the Israeli–Palestinian conflict through his known peace plan "The Deal of The Century" (Fadily, 2020, 44).

The term of " The Deal of The Century" is not new, as it was previously mentioned in 2006, by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert (Jarar, 2019:7), as referred by Israeli National Security Advisor (Giora Eiland) in two studies; the first one published on 2008 titled " Rethinking the Two- State Solution", the second one published on 2010 titled "Regional Alternatives to the Two-State Solution", provided a detailed description for the Deal, as Giora Eiland has emphasized the field of the Two-State Solution, and the lack of adequate access to a settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He considers that the solution will not be reached unless the Arab countries are included as guarantors and beneficiary partners of the settlement (Abdul Munaiem, 2018: 5)

Then President Donald Trump presented the project of "The Deal of the Century" again in 2017. He sought to provide the regional and international environment supporting his project. He even announced the plan in an official ceremony in Washington on Jan 29, 2020, in the presence of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, in addition to a group of ambassadors including Three Arab Ambassadors (United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Oman). It can be said that the announcement of the contents of the deal of the century

undermine the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the UN General Assembly, and it does not hold them accountable for failing to reach a fair solution for the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the Israeli-Arab conflict (Fadely, 2020, 44).

Its main goal was to settle the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, settle the Palestinians in an alternative homeland outside the occupied Palestinian territories, and end the refugee status for Palestinian refugees. It also aimed to bring more than 30% of the West Bank area, under Israeli sovereignty, except for East Jerusalem (Report of Middle East Studies Center, 2020: 5)

This deal is considered a victory for the Israeli right-wing party policy and its directions, which, according to its historical and legal claims, considers the West Bank as part of the historical homeland of the Jewish people, and the recognition of an united Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel, especially in light of the American administration's repudiation of its obligations to sponsor the two-state solution, and the interruption of its financial support to Palestinian institutions. In addition, it also stopped supporting UNRWA (United Nations relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees) as targeting the right of return, and supports Israel by establishing settlements on Palestinian land. Therefore, the deal of the century is a shift in the policy of the American administration and its alliance with the Israeli right-wing party and an embodiment of the logic of force and the imposition of its will (Ismail, 2020, P. 23-24).

The political conditions in Palestine, such as the internal Palestinian division, the economic situation that the Palestinians suffer from due to the scarcity of foreign aid, the interruption of financial support from America and the Arab countries, and the Israeli blockade against Gaza Strip, have also contributed to some Arab countries' repudiation of their obligations towards the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Several Arab states are in a condition of political instability such as Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Lebanon and others, which leads to disunity. Moreover, there is the difficult economic situation in Jordan. All of these circumstances hastened and prompted the American president to announce the Deal of the Century (Hamami, 2018: 10-13).

The Substance of The Deal of The Century

The most prominent contents of the deal of the century are: the presence of a Palestinian political entity in isolated areas that are not connected except by the name of the country, and most of these lands will be in Israel and the building of a new Jerusalem located in Abo Deas for Palestinians.

Israel also set conditions for recognizing this entity including: the no- return of refugees to Palestine and no compensation for them, as they will be considered immigrants who left their lands. In addition, the Palestinians must recognize full Israeli sovereignty over the area west of the Jordan Valley, keep Jerusalem united under Israeli sovereignty and the eternal capital of Israel, consider prayer at Al-Aqsa Mosque to all religions, the continuity of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the legalization of the existing settlements, the recognition of Israeli sovereignty over large areas of the West Bank, the shifting of its lands under self-rule to be governed by Israel, the elimination of all previously signed agreements regarding the occupied territories in 1967, and Jerusalem, whether with Jordan and Egypt and the Palestine Liberation Organization, and consider that the normalization with Israel is an Arab and Palestinian duty to achieve peace and stability and protect Israel

Perhaps the most prominent disadvantages of this draft lay in it's a one-sided plan only through which Israel can annex the Israeli settlements located in the West Bank unilaterally, as the proposed State of Palestine has no geographical boundaries, and is surrounded by the State of Israel from all sides. Therefore, security is controlled by Israel (Ismail, 2020, 27).

The "Manama Workshop" was held in Bahrain, to discuss the topic of the Deal of the Century with Arab Countries. It dealt with the political part of the Middle East peace plan, and some Arab countries publicly participated in the workshop. In the workshop, Jared Kushner, son-in-law and advisor to the US President, and the US envoy to the Middle East peace process, provided proposals that included investments and infrastructure projects in Palestine of $ 50 billion, and the draft referred that the Jerusalem is the united capital of Israel, in addition to create a demilitarized state in Gaza Strip and about to two thirds of west bank lands. (Abdulaziz, 2020, Sawalhah, 2020)

It seems that lately we are witnessing a rush of Arab countries such as UAE, the State of Kuwait, the State of Bahrein, the Kingdom of Morocco, and Sudan to sign peace treaties with Israel. The adoption of these policies may have as an indicator, the reduction of Egypt´s and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia political capacity, and the deal of the century puts pressure on Jordan foreign policy due to its historical and national commitment in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, and in mobilizing Arabic, regional and international views not to approve this deal. So, Jordan has two choices: either reject it or accept it and adapt to its content (Al-Ali, 2020).

The impact of the deal of the century on Jordan and its attitude towards it

Perhaps the most significant aspect facing Jordan in this deal is the statements of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to annex more than 30% of the area of the West Bank, and this percentage is distributed over areas of the Jordan Valley and the northern Dead Sea, which constitute 23% of the area of the West Bank. All settlements in the West Bank occupied in 1967, and East Jerusalem settlements, as Israel has set the way for this since 1967, and it has transferred around 700,000 Jewish settlers to these lands. This is considered a violation of international law and contravenes Article No. 49 of the IV. Geneva Convention, which prohibits occupying power mass forcible transfer and deportation of protected persons from occupied lands to the lands of the occupying country or to the lands of any other occupied or non-occupied country, regardless of their motives.

Jordanian policy considers that this step threatens its security and stability, as these lands are bordering the Jordan River from the West Bank, where the Jordan Valley extends along the course of the Jordan Valley to the north of the Dead Sea along the Jordanian border, and is inhabited by approximately 65,000 Palestinian citizens, where the number of Palestinian residents in the annexation areas is about 400,000 citizens. The annexation plan may be that Israel will displace them to Jordan, and it will increase Jordan's suffering by increasing the number of refugees, and this means restricting the Palestinians and depriving them of their rights, and transforming Jordan into an alternative homeland for the Palestinians. It is the idea of a Palestinian state, and its resolution at the expense of Jordan, and the annexation process will cut off any geographical contact direct linkage between Jordan and Palestine by land and sea. Therefore, it will end in the future the legitimate guardianship of the Hashemites over Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem (Al-Ali, 2020), (Center for Middle East Studies, 2020: 5-11).

It is worth noting that Jordan foreign policy is aware that what was mentioned in the draft deal of the century is changing US status in Palestinian case from a partner to an implementation party only. Therefore, the Jordanian policy sees itself outside this traditional equation, as Trump does not believe in partnership except through the logic of deals. And the Israeli right party is practically not convinced of the two-state solution. In this way, it does not need another party to share it, therefore does not need a mediator to communicate with it, especially since the US administration and Israel have won the support of some Arab countries for the deal of the century, in order to get them out of responsibility before the international community.

Once the deal of the century was announced, the Jordanian leadership and people quickly unanimously agreed to reject the American peace plan, and not to accept it altogether. The Jordanian people described it as a

shameful and illogical deal, proposed to terminate the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Jordanian people also expressed their rejection of the deal through protests and demonstrations in Jordanian cities, and it played a major role in supporting the Jordanian political decision-maker who rejected this deal. It also supported all the decisions to not approve the project, and this is what made King Abdullah II did regarding the deal (Jarar, 2019: 12-16) (Alzaytoona Consultations & Studies, Strategic Assessment 108, 2018:10)

King Abdullah II has maintained Jordan´s consistent positions towards the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, upholding the initiative of a two-State solution, and that the only option to achieve security and stability in the region is by establishing a Palestinian state on its national land. Also, he has emphasized the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and the need for a solution for the Palestinian refugee issue by committing to the right of return (Alzaytoona Consultations & Studies, Strategic Assessment 108, 2020: 4).

Nevertheless, the deal of the century was a hit on Jordan´s foreign policy as it represents a threat to its sovereignty, security, and stability, and economic rights in the areas of the Jordan Valley. It could lead to the loss of trade exchange with the Palestinian side in the event of the annexation of the Jordan Valley and the West Bank. In addition to preventing the continuation of the Hashemite guardianship over the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, which can lead to endless conflict in the Arab region (Qtishat, 2016:77), (Center for Middle East Studies, 2020, 12).

As a result of the announcement of the Deal of the Century, the Jordanian foreign policy was subjected to political pressures pursued by the American administration and Israel through the involvement of some Arab countries in the settlement. Also, there was the establishment of open relations by some of them with the American administration and Israel, which would increase pressure on Jordan and Palestine to accept the deal, if not officially, then virtually (Al-Junidi, 2020), (Al-Majali, 2020: 82).

The US administration's decision to move the US embassy to Jerusalem, to close the Palestinian refugee file, to close UNRWA offices, the pressure on Arab countries to settle refugees, and the revocation of the refugee status for two million Palestinian refugees who hold Jordanian passports need to be mentioned. These decisions put clear pressure on Jordan, in order to weaken its rejection of the Deal of the Century. Jordanian foreign policy affirmed its rejection of the Deal of the Century despite all these pressures, as King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein emphasized during his meeting with US President Donald Trump more than once. He also stressed the importance of the US administration's commitment to achieve a just peace in the Middle East according to the two-state solution. (Alzaytoona Consultations & Studies,

2018: 6-7). (Jarrar, 2019: 10-11).

The Jordanian policy has expressed its disapproval of the American administration's move of the American embassy to Jerusalem, and its official recognition of Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem, and considered this step as withdrawing the Hashemite guardianship over Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem from it. However, Jordan's participation in the Islamic Conference in Turkey, on December 13, 2017, which was very important to Jordan, emphasized in its final statement the Hashemites' guardianship of Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. King Abdullah II said at the conference: "The United States' recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel is a dangerous decision, whose implications threaten security and stability. It undermines efforts to resume the peace process." (Hejazin, 2020: 89).

It can be said that the confirmation of the final statement of the conference on the Hashemite guardianship is an important step for the Jordanian foreign policy in preserving it, and moving forward in obtaining a position for Islamic countries to reject the deal of the century, and reaching political and economic support for Jordan in continuing its political role towards the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (Al-Zaytouna Studies and Consultations, 2020:9-10).

Jordan was subjected to economic pressures during the announcement of the deal of the century, in light of its weak economic potential, that presents two possible decisions: either accept it and guarantee the continuity of US grants and aid to Jordan, or reject, and consequently this will affect the Jordanian-American relations. However, the Jordanian foreign policy worked to separate between the peace plan and economic relations, and sustained US partnership in the fight against terrorism and security cooperation. This was possible due to Jordan´s balanced and moderate approach in dealing with the American administration, and it also remained committed to its decision rejecting the deal of the century despite pressures. (Al-Zaytouna Studies and Consultations, 2020: 9-10), (Swalha, 2020).

Jordanian foreign policy options regionally and internationally in light of the deal of the century

Jordan's foreign policy has many options through which it can confront the project of the deal of the century, avoid political conflict with the parties concerned with this project, and ensure its security and stability, including at the regional level: strengthening joint work with the Palestinian side in the face of the annexation plan and the draft of the deal of the century, and coordination

It can also present the demand to sanction Israel internationally as its plan is a violation of international law, and to show the true racist and settlement face of Israel to the international community, so that the Jordanian and Palestinian sides can move politically at the regional and international levels to mobilize Arab, Islamic and international positions that support and strengthen Jordan and Palestine regarding the rejection of the deal of the century and the Israeli annexation plan, (Al-Zaytouna Studies and Consultations, 2020: 8) (Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 2020: 15).

Jordan's foreign policy, through its relations with Arab countries, can also exercise its political role by activating the role of the Arab League and highlighting the gravity of the deal of the century to the Arab region and its national security, especially in light of the danger of terrorist organizations that some Arab countries suffer from. The deal of the century will create a fertile environment for these organizations, by increasing its terrorist activity against these countries. Recently, we have noticed the Jordanian political activity with many Arab countries such as Iraq, Egypt and Qatar and the affirmation of the Jordanian political role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the emergence of positions in support of Jordan's political vision in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Jordan's foreign policy can also, through the Arab attitude, reach an Islamic and international attitude that rejects the deal of the century, as it is illegitimate and in breach of international law in Article 49 of the IV Geneva Convention, as mentioned. The international community and the United Nations General Assembly are concerned with adopting resolutions on this subject, which stems from Resolution 242, which stipulates Israel's complete withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967, with what this constitutes for maintaining regional and international security and stability (Center for Middle East Studies, 2020).

One of the Jordanian foreign policy options that could put pressure and challenge Israel is to reconsider the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty signed in 1994, eliminate all political, security and economic commitments contained in the treaty, and terminate the gas supply agreement. This would constitute a security burden on Israel in terms of security. The freezing of Jordanian security cooperation and coordination with Israel makes it a challenge in securing the borders, which requires it to employ all infantry brigades in the Israeli army (Al-Hamd, 2020: 112).

The Jordanian foreign policy decision was to terminate the annex to the agreement on Al-Baqoura and Al-Ghamr on October 21, 2018, and to impose Jordanian sovereignty on it was an expression of Jordan's rejection of the draft deal of the century, and that options were open to it to reconsider all

the terms of the peace agreement with Israel (Al-Dada, 2019: 18) (Barq for Studies and Consultations, 2020).

On the international level, some of the Jordanian foreign policy options are to strengthen relations with the European Union, open an important source of economic and military support, and establish balanced relations with Russia and China, being an important ally of these countries in the field of security and combating terrorism. This is what we note in the recent times of the Jordanian foreign policy activity with these countries, to build its international relations system economically and politically and to strengthen its role towards the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (Center of Middle East Studies, 2020). It seems that the recent visits of King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein to Russia have strengthened the relations between them, and aimed at empowering Jordan economically, politically, militarily and security and supporting its role towards the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.

It seems clear that the American elections, the Israeli political conditions, and the Corona pandemic that swept around the world have contributed to reduce the political support of the Deal of the Century, as President Trump's concern with the 2020 elections, the Israeli political crisis, the repetition of elections and the instability of the political system, all contributed to reduce the pressure on Jordan as a result of the Deal of the Century.

The Republicans' loss of the American elections, Trump's exit from the White House, and Joe Biden's Democratic victory were an important and decisive factor in determining the future of the plan. The views of Jordanian foreign policy were directed to the new American administration to find a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, which became more complicated during Donald Trump's presidency. President Joe Biden has revealed his policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that he supports solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the establishment of two states, imposing the achievement of Palestinian-Israeli peace, reopening an office representing the Palestine Liberation Organization in Washington, and resuming security and economic aid to the Palestinians that the Trump administration has suspended, and this is what was discussed, during the recent interview between King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein and US President Joe Biden (Arab News, 2020), (Al-Jazeera, 2020).

Walid Hosni refers in an Article published on "Al-Quds Al-Arabi website" to Jordan and King Abdullah II bin Al- Hussein's relief from President Joe Biden's statements about his support for the two-state solution, which is the Jordanian initiative to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This was demonstrated in a phone call between the King and Joe Biden (Alquds

Al-Arabi, 2020).

The results of the Israeli elections and the exit of Benjamin Netanyahu from the Prime Ministry were an important factor in aborting the deal of the century, which provides an opportunity for the Arab countries to rethink the Palestinian issue, unite the Arab ranks, develop a strong, coherent and united Arab position, support Jordanian efforts, and adopt the initiative to establish a Palestinian state on the Fourth Lines June 1967, especially in light of the new American administration and its position on the Palestinian issue. Moreover, it can intensify Arab efforts with the European Union and international organizations and converge in support of the adoption of the two-state solution. The Jordanian leadership realizes that its relations with friendly countries in Europe can be explored to pressure the Israeli side in renegotiations to establish a just peace, and for Israel to abide by international treaties and covenants that guarantee the right of self-determination for the Palestinian people (Strategic Fikr Center for Studies, 2020) (Center for Middle East Studies, 2020).

Conclusion

At the conclusion of this study, the researcher believes that the draft of the deal of the century was a blow to the peace process in the Middle East, and the previous US administration passed the foundations and rules of international peace, and ignored all United Nations resolutions related to the Israeli - Palestinian conflict. With this project it has increased the pace of the Arab-Israeli conflict and sees the solution from a unilateral view, based on mutual interests between it and the Israeli side.

From what was discussed, it follows that any project or initiative to settle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot take place without going back to the negotiating table, in order to reach political understandings, and developing decisions that guarantee all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Palestinians and Jordan are a major party to it, as they are major parties in the conflict with Israel , and other than that, failure is the title of any initiative or project that does not achieve a just and comprehensive peace for the Palestinian cause, and the best example is the fate of the deal of the century, which is now archive.

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to highlight on the options of Jordan foreign policy and its political behavior in light of the deal of the century regionally and internationally. In addition, it examines the political conditions that prompted the US administration to propose this project. Also, it clarifies its terms and the Jordanian popular and official position on it, as well as future features of the deal of the century, in particular after the American President Donald Trump defeat in 2020, and an eventual departure of Benjamin Netanyahu from the post of Israeli Prime Minister. The study concluded that Jordan's foreign policy has come under pressure from America and Israel, and from some Arab countries supporting the project, in order to change Jordan's position rejecting the deal of the century. And these countries have taken advantage of the economic conditions which Jordan suffers from. However, Jordan remained committed to its decision, armed with various options that it used in brokering this deal. In light of Israel´s pressures on Jordan, the country needs to consider a deal that serves its economic and political interests as a guarantee of stability and security, with issues such as the reconsideration of the Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty, the built of Arab-Arab relationships based on cooperation and the achievement of Arab solidarity and effective political coordination.

KEYWORDS

Options of Jordan Foreign Policy. Deal of the Century.

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SECURITY SECTOR REFORM AND PEACEBUILDING: ANALYZING YEMENI CIVIL CONFLICT DEADLOCKS

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Introduction

In recently democratized countries, their current intelligence and internal security bodies are often heirs or mere continuations of those that operated during dictatorships, formed closely linked to the imperatives of political repression and the contingencies of the Cold War; on the contrary, in more traditional democracies, their intelligence and public security services developed primarily under the strong influence of diplomacy and war (Cepik, 2003).

Thus, the amalgam between public security and national security, as well as between external and internal enemies, permeated the initial steps of institutionalizing intelligence services and maintaining internal order in most recently democratized countries, often with deleterious effects on civil liberties.

In the post-Cold War international context, UN *peacekeeping* operations moved from a phase focused strictly on containing conflicting parties in a relatively impartial manner to promoting structural reforms seen as necessary both to undermine the recurrence of internal conflict and to enable the transition to a situation of peace and stability. In these new *peacebuilding* operations, state reconstruction processes now deal with crucial issues that involve the formation or transformation of the so-called security sector.

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The great powers and the main international organizations began to resort to Security Sector Reform (SSR) as a set of policies that aim to readjust the structures and actors that deal with the exercise of violence in these contexts.

We seek to answer, therefore, to what extent the current Yemeni regime tries to resolve these dilemmas and tensions between security and freedom? What is the degree of democratic political control over intelligence and security organizations? What is the contradiction present in the skeleton of the ongoing Yemeni civil conflict and the current tribal role? How has structural violence, especially the cultural violence that legitimizes the latter, been perpetuated in recent years in the Republic of Yemen?

Our main hypothesis is that the main explanatory variables for the configuration and recent evolution of intelligence and security systems in the country are: the characteristics of dictatorships, the mode of political transition, the initial institutional design of these bodies, the interaction between the various actors involved, especially political elites, and their strategic choices, as well as relations between civil and military. In addition to these strictly domestic variables, external variables such as the regional political situation in the Arabian Peninsula, transnational threats (terrorism, etc.) and pressure from other countries and various multilateral bodies influence the topic.

Therefore, the efforts of this work will focus on two fronts. The Security Sector Reform (RSS) processes will be analyzed with regard to (i) the contexts immediately preceding the proposal of the reforms, seeking to identify the main political actors; (ii) proposed reform policies; (iii) observable results; (iv) the external actors (donors) involved. At the same time, the security environment must be analyzed at the time of proposal and implementation.

Furthermore, this study will seek to suggest that there is a contradiction in the ongoing civil conflict in Yemen, and in order to transcend it, we will propose overcoming the incompatibility - between two coalitions formed by state and non-state actors, with the objectives of establishing power of influence in the Arabian peninsula - using as a device the theory of development and integration (Galtung, 2000) achieving them through the deepest possible form of approach in the name of peace in the context of violent conflicts: peacebuilding (Galtung, 1976, 1996; Dudouet, 2008, 2015), that is, to look more deeply at the sources of structural violence and seek to overcome them through the construction of positive peace.

We will suggest studying the methods and concepts of transforming conflict through non-violent and creative actions (Sharp, 1973, 2013, 2014; Nepstad, 2015) with the aim of instrumentalizing a peace structure and an associative mechanism capable of transforming the contradiction that lies at the foundation of the conflict, in accordance with the concept of local

appropriation (Keane, 2012) delimited by the scope of the Security Sector Reform processes.

In addition, we will analyze how through Galtungian concepts we can direct the conflict towards a positive peace, so that the literature on the processes of Security Sector Reform can also be applied after overcoming the contradiction present in the framework of the Yemeni conflict.

Securing states and societies through Security Sector Reform

The concept of Security Sector Reform (SSR) that we will use emerged in 1999, after being used in a speech by the British Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short[3]. This concept, relatively ambiguous, normative, but quite ambitious, concerns the reform of public sector institutions responsible for providing internal and external security, in a context of intended democratic governance.

Thus, Security Sector Reform innovates by proposing a holistic approach, in which peace and security are seen as public goods, so that its objective is to reduce not only security deficits, resulting from inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the sector's action, but possible deficits in the democratic governance model, if the sector lacks supervision and transparency and if it acts not for the well-being of the population, but for its own benefit or that of the regime.

In this way, Security Sector Reform integrates several partial reforms, in the Armed Forces, in the Police, in the control bodies, with national appropriation of the projects being a precondition. Although external donors (external donors are third countries, not included in the immediate context of the RSS, which provide resources to promote reforms, establish their own criteria for granting resources. In general, these are developed countries, with great prominence for the United States, although they are important actors, their direct engagement is rare, their action – at times – appears inadequately ambitious and their assessments inaccurate regarding the political realities of the partners (Hänggi, 2004; Hill, 2010; Wulf, 2004).

According to Keane (2012), it is important to point out that the

3 SHORT, Clare. Security Sector Reform and the Elimination of Poverty (Discurso). Londres: Centre For Defence Studies, King's College, 1999. See: <http://www.clareshort.co.uk/speeches/DFID/9 March 1999.pdf>

international community must be careful not to be drawn into a situation where equipment and training support are provided only with a vague, long-term promise of better governance.

The balance between the two must be sequenced to produce tangible improvements in security and access to justice at the local level, in the case of Yemen. In essence, support for security sector capacity must be linked to support for oversight and accountability. Efforts focused on building state institutions and structures, without paying sufficient attention to developing relations between the state and its people, as in the Yemeni case, will not, it is argued (Gordon, 2014), benefit long-term peacebuilding.

Limiting involvement in RSS decisions to external and responsive actors, local security and political elites can have serious consequences for the responsiveness, legitimacy and accountability of security sector institutions and weakens the principle of democratic governance that underpins the RSS (Caparini, 2010). Exclusive focus on political elites and state authorities can undermine RSS processes that are largely locally controlled (assuming power is rarely voluntarily relinquished).

It can thus impede the improvement of security and justice at the community level, public support and trust in state security institutions and, consequently, the success or otherwise of RSS programs, and broader peacebuilding efforts. (Cubitt, 2013; Donais, 2009; Hendrickson, 2010; Oosterveld and Galand, 2012; Samuels, 2010; Scheye, 2008). These are some consequences of preventing the inclusion of local actors, thus aiming for greater integration and cooperation, to participate in the RSS process.

This is particularly the case in places where RSS programs are being implemented, where governments may not be broadly representative of the people they represent (Martin and Wilson, 2008). This is the case of Yemen, according to some interviewed in a report carried out by the Open Society Foundations and led by Marta Mendes (2021), to listen to Yemenis and the respective social problems they face, from the perspective of transitional justice and the construction of sustainable peace in the Arab country.

Almost all suggestions made by interviewees pointed to the need to make peace talks more inclusive, as well as awareness of possible transitional justice and respect for human rights. For several interviewees, supporting Yemeni civil society to articulate its vision of justice and accountability was an essential first step in ensuring that justice gained more ground in Yemen's political landscape, including in peace negotiations.

For example, for eleven respondents, the work led by the Office of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen (OSESGY), headed by Hans

Grundberg, should be more inclusive with regards to accountability and other forms of transitional justice. Some proposed measures were: the victims must be reflected in the discussions held at the negotiating table between the parties to the conflict; human rights, the rule of law and democracy must be part of the peace agreement; and transitional justice must be part of a peace agreement. One interviewee suggested "putting responsibility on the table so that the parties can discuss it" (Mendes, 2021, p. 42).

In other words, victims must play a central role in designing and establishing future accountability and reparation mechanisms for Yemen. Peace and justice should not be sequenced as one result that temporally follows another, but rather as two objectives to be pursued simultaneously. As one interviewee said: "Peace and justice. Not peace or justice" (Mendes, 2021, p. 41).

As one interviewee observed (Mendes, 2021, p. 20), "society needs to be prepared for transitional justice and, for that, we need public support. Much of this support will be achieved through learning about transitional justice". There is a need to create an atmosphere of popular awareness about what transitional justice is and to achieve this, the concepts of Security Sector Reform must be applied in a progressive manner.

The agenda for a policy of overcoming incompatibility through dialogue and debate, and not through bellicose means or the threat of sanctions, is important as we consider the transformation of the conflict with an emphasis on the core of its contradictory basis. Pointing out where this contradiction lies is crucial for policies to implement peacebuilding concepts. Furthermore, through inclusive methods, from a democracy that leads dialogues to pragmatic results and integrative policies between conflicting parties (from the inside out), the path to achieving positive peace – absence of structural violence – (Galtung, 1969) and, therefore, drastically reducing social injustice arising from the conflict, becomes tangible.

Conflict transformation restores peace by achieving empathy, nonviolence, and creativity (Fischer, 2013). The main path to peace is conflict transformation, where conflict is uprooted along with contradicting goals and the triangle of conflict - attitude, behavior and contradiction. Peace dwells in social formations based on positive sanctions, violence in formations based on negative sanctions; and violence deprives people of basic needs due to elite politics (Fischer, 2013). Therefore, peace policy is about promoting creativity and reducing violence.

It is important to conceive the world and encompass the understanding of the differences between actors with regard to interpersonal harmony, heterogeneous nation, different and similar cultural-structural nations,

minimum and maximum interdependence, polarized, depolarized and mixed nations, class division, balance of power and monopoly, arms control and disarmament, negative and positive non-violence, treaty and convention, negative and positive sanctions, NGO and IGO, supranational thinking about peace and superstate and state, in order to be able to construct an associative narrative to in order to transfigure the course of the conflict in question, making it possible to build structural peace.

Galtung defines peace as a relationship between two or more parties, and the parties are within or between people, groups, states or nations, and regions or civilizations. And the relationship is challenging in negative and disharmonious, indifferent and positive and harmonious dimensions. The relationship further focuses on negative peace which is the absence of violence, like a ceasefire, like keeping them apart, no longer negative but indifferent relationships and positive peace depends on the presence of harmony, intended or not (Fischer, 2013). And this is where the association that is characterized by structural peace, encompassing equity, reciprocity and integration, must be established.

Understanding the term "*peacebuilding*" and developing nonviolent ways of addressing violence

The conflict resolution approach is as essential as it is problematic. "Ideally, the general world level of conflict awareness should be raised through a better distribution of perceptions about conflict, above all through the autonomous creation of perceptions through active participation in the conflict" (Galtung, 1976, p 296).

But its use must be above all in horizontal conflict. This is not only because their role may bias them, with or against their will, in favor of the stronger party, but because active participation in conflict is one of the most important ways in which a dominated periphery can become autonomous (Galtung, 1976). That is, taking active conflict participation away from participants in a horizontal conflict can only lead to a new and weak dominance structure with the "third party" at the top. And taking conflict participation away from participants in a vertical conflict may be a way of maintaining underlying dominance, in effect a new technique of dominance.

The search for the method of transcending and transforming conflict requires much more than simply the search for the reduction of direct violence, what Galtung (1969) calls negative peace. More than a palliative resource, the path must be to overcome the incompatibility and contradiction

that is the basis of the conflict. This requires an associative rather than a dissociative approach. Knowing how to live with opposing ideals within a given society once we think about a future aggregation between two conflicting parties (or more) is fundamental to differentiating the concepts of enemies and adversaries, once we consider Hobbesian thinking about conflicts being inherent to individuals.

The concept of *peacebuilding* is defined by association and dialogue. This associative approach aims to bring the parties together within a peace structure that replaces the structure of violence that is the basis of the conflict.

And through resolving the incompatibility, the goal is to transcend the contradiction that led to the conflict in question. In this sense, *peacebuilding* requires that the structure that produces violence be identified and replaced by an alternative structure of peace, more egalitarian, fair and free from domination, repression and exploitation - which leads to a more radical concern with social development measures (Galtung, 1976).

Going beyond the dissociative approach offered by *peacekeeping* and *ad hoc* diplomatic efforts to try to end the superficial manifestations of the conflict that characterize *peacemaking*, the concept in question will involve a social structure that is less vertical and more horizontal, therefore less hierarchical, where disparities in development among individuals, classes, groups, nations and regions is reduced. In the case of the Yemeni civil conflict, ethnological differences also apply.

In this way, the circumstances for positive peace (absence of structural violence or social justice) can be achieved. "Just as a healthy body can produce its own antibodies without the need for ad hoc administration of medications" (Galtung, 1976, p. 297). A "healthy global body" is capable of producing its own "antibodies" against violence. "It is necessary to find structures that remove the causes of war and offer alternatives to wars in situations where they may arise" (Ibid., p. 297-298).

The theoretical basis that derives from development theory (Galtung, 1996) is association. War and conflicts become an obsession capable of leading man to block his creative thinking and take him in other directions. "Equity, entropy and symbiosis are simply the denial of the anti-human conditions of exploitation, elitism and isolation" (Ibid., 1976, p. 299-300).

Therefore, it must be stated that only the structural transformations and social justice promoted by *peacebuilding* are capable of producing "antibodies" against the violence arising from the ongoing civil conflict in Yemen. It is interesting to note that such reflections would only be incorporated into the international lexicon more than a decade later, after the end of the Cold War,

with the revitalization of the UN's role in building a more peaceful world order.

The concept, which suggests an idea of self-sustainable peace, is the theoretical basis on which this work will be based. Such a contribution is capable of changing institutional and individual attitudes, belief systems, psychological understandings and lifestyle behaviors through the application of the transcendent technique of conflict transformation.

Peace transformation also presupposes a peaceful context provided by peace education, continuation of work after violence, and readiness to reopen peace agreements. Peace dwells in social formations based on positive sanctions, violence in formations based on negative sanctions; and violence deprives people of basic needs due to elite politics. Therefore, peace policy is about promoting creativity and reducing violence.

Conflict transformation, in principle, occurs at all levels of conflict: global, regional, national, social, interpersonal and intra-personal. Peace transformation also presupposes a peaceful context, as provided by peace education, peace journalism, and human security studies that are achieved through work during and after violence in different dialogues for peaceful solutions. Transformation, in general, changes attitude, behavior and contradictions creatively.

Peace studies aim to understand violence and its denial through the transformation of conflict (negative peace), and the construction of peace through cooperation and harmony (positive peace). To achieve such an objective, transforming the conflict through non-violent means becomes a resource capable of totalizing the entire effort of not postponing or allowing the status quo ante. For instance, a common assumption in psychology is that achieving "peace equals healing from trauma".

The implications of conflict cycles in the Yemeni context

Since the outbreak of the Houthi insurgent movement[4] in 2004 and after the rise of the Arab Spring, Yemen has been facing strong political instability in the country, leading to the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, according to the UN[5].

4 Houthi (formerly "Shabab al Moumineen") is the most common denomination of the political-religious movement Ansar Allah, mostly Shiite Zaidites from northwestern Yemen. It is a separatist group that has been waging an insurgency against the Yemeni government since 2004.

5 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner's Report on Yemen. See:

Currently, the country is experiencing an escalation of internal conflicts and tensions, led by two coalitions in order to establish strategic power and influence in the Arabian peninsula.

The first has as its main figure Saudi Arabia and five other Arab countries that are members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)[6], with support from the United States of America, France and the United Kingdom, in addition to the Yemeni government itself, with the aim of reestablishing the Hadi government, president of Yemen democratically elected in 2012, who was later deposed as a result of popular uprisings in 2011. The antagonistic group is made up of Iran, with support for the Zaidite Shiite political-religious movement Ansar Allah, the Houthis.

The civil conflict in Yemen has its roots in the 2011 Arab Spring, when a popular uprising forced the president at the time, Ali Abdullah Salleh, to leave power in the hands of his deputy, Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, who would be deposed from power shortly after due to the Houthis' territorial advance. Strategically, Yemen is important for its location in the Bab Al-Mandab Strait, which connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden, through which most of the world's oil tankers pass.

In the wake of the conflict, the supply and transfer of weapons and cyber intelligence to both groups of coalitions by supporting countries has been seen as devastating for Yemen. At the heart of the Yemen reports is the involvement of countries such as the UK and the US in inadvertently causing a percentage of the bloodshed through the supply of weapons and technology to Saudi Arabia (Musa, 2017).

On the antagonist side of the conflict, in turn, there is evidence that Iran has provided financial and military aid to the Houthis, although in small amounts. However, several experts suggest that Iranian support for the Houthis is limited to rhetorical support and claims about Iranian military support for Houthi forces are exaggerated and unfounded (Karakir, 2018). For example, Cockburn (2017) suggests that there is little evidence that the Houthis receive more than rhetorical support from Iran and that it is primarily Saudi propaganda that is shaping the view that the Houthis are supported by Iran.

For Shavana Musa (2017), it seems that the context in Yemen points

https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/07/1069161

6 Also known as the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf), it is an economic integration organization that brings together six states in the Persian Gulf: Oman, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait. It is worth noting that not all countries surrounding the Persian Gulf are members of the council, specifically Iran and Iraq.

to the existence of a non-international armed conflict (NIAC) due to the organizational capacity maintained by the Houthi forces and, consequently, the ability to observe international law, as well as the nature of the conflict between countries (Musa, 2017). However, Saudi authorities regularly blame Iran for the protracted Yemeni conflict, pointing to Iran's broad support for the Houthis (Sharp, 2018).

The Saudi-led coalition, the Hadi government, and the US have also condemned Iran for violating the UN arms embargo on the Houthis, but Iran has continually denied this accusation (Broder, 2017). In an interview, the president of an independent Yemeni human rights group called Mwatana for Human Rights, recognized by international awards such as Human Rights First, told CNN and the New York Times that the US had a legal and moral responsibility for the sale of arms to the Saudi-led coalition, worsening the situation in Yemen[7].

Based on the assumption that current tensions between the Yemeni government and the Houthis are the result of political divisions, lack of integration and cooperation on both sides over recent years, Irem Karakir (2018) says that it would be misleading to call the crisis current situation in Yemen as a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. In recent years, more precisely after the Arab Spring and the political clashes between the Yemeni government and the Houthis, there has been a tendency to explain the ongoing conflict from the perspective of a religious struggle between Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran, in order for both countries to reinforce their control over the Arabian peninsula.

For the author, the tension did not emerge as a result of the clash of interests of these two countries. It would be fair to suggest that the involvement of Saudi Arabia and Iran in Yemen's civil war has triggered and further complicated already existing tensions in the country (Karakir 2018). However, it would be a mistake to vehemently assert Saudi Arabia's lack of interest in the intranational conflict in Yemen. Saudi leaders have always drawn special attention to Yemen, and if their national interests required it, they intervened in Yemen directly or indirectly.

The Yemeni conflict reflects the failure of the Yemeni government to meet the common needs of its citizens, the uprising of the politically marginalized Houthis, and the corrupt state leading the country into civil war. There is evidence of how structural violence, through its mechanism of inequality and social injustice, ended up contributing to direct violence,

7 "How the war in Yemen became a bloody stalemate" See: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/10/31/magazine/yemen-war-saudi-arabia.html?smid=tw-nytimes&smtyp=cur.

both of which are legitimized by cultural violence (Galtung, 1990; 1996), that is, aspects of Yemeni culture such as religion and ideology have greatly contributed to the continuation of the conflict.

As Dresch (2000) identifies, Yemeni society is very multidimensional and there is also a sectarian dimension that played an important role in the conflict. Karakir (2018) takes a deeper look by stating that although religious differences play a role in the expansion of the conflict, the underlying causes of the crisis in Yemen are deeper than those of Sunni-Shia sectarian tension. The involvement of external actors in the Yemen crisis, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, has only further complicated an already multifaceted crisis. On the contrary, the conflict did not simply arise from religious sectarianism (Karakir, 2018).

Yemen is described as a failed state, with its weak state institutions, economic decay, poor infrastructure and high levels of drug addiction. Now in its ninth year, the war in Yemen shows no signs of abating. The war has killed thousands of Yemenis, including civilians and combatants, and significantly damaged the country's infrastructure.

In an attempt to explain the efforts of the Yemeni government in the face of the demands of the insurgent movement Ansar Allah (Houthi), Salmoni, Loidolt and Wells (2010) classify the imbroglio in Yemen into four dimensions, trying analytically to explain the clash that follows: in more than five Years of combat operations, the Yemeni government has failed in its efforts to eradicate the Houthi opposition.

This is because the Houthi family emerges from a much richer and evolving socio-cultural fabric than the government appears to have appreciated. It is this complex fabric that provides the multiple dimensions in which the Houthi regime's conflict can be fully understood. The first dimension is that of context - the dual context of the regime's governance techniques and local conditions in a geographic, socioeconomic, political and ideological periphery.

The second dimension involves the roots of discord, visible as early as the 1970s, but fully emerging in the late 1990s. The post-September 11, 2001 conjuncture provides the third dimension. At this stage, the regime's calculations and Houthi actions resulted in mutual provocation, providing the immediate causes of the armed conflict north of Sanaa.

In attempting to subdue the Houthis, however, the Yemeni government has undertaken measures that have an effect far beyond Houthi strongholds, thus prolonging a growing resistance that shares many characteristics with the insurgency and over time may evolve into one. An insurgency-provoking Yemeni government campaign, therefore, is the fourth dimension that

illuminates the enduring nature of the Houthi issue in Yemen (Salmoni; Loidolt; Wells, 2010).

Thoroughly analyzing the four dimensions described by Salmoni, Loidolt and Wells (2010) from a Galtungian perspective, we can infer that what actually sustains the confrontation that circumscribes present-day Yemen is what Galtung (1996) defines as conflict formations. Not only conflict as a creator, but as a destroyer of possible reductions or suppression of levels of violence. More than the conflict that is rooted at the base of the entire dissociative structure, the life cycles of conflict are essential for understanding every contradiction in which they are present. "Deep at the bottom of every conflict there is a contradiction, something that stands in the way of something else" (Galtung, 1996, p. 70).

Illustrating the Yemeni civil conflict between the government and the separatist Houthi movement, two directions are placed in opposition and have different objectives between the two state and non-state actors. The first Galtung (1996) defines it as a dispute, that is, two people, or actors, pursuing the same scarce objective; and the second he calls a dilemma or "a person, or actor, pursuing two incompatible goals" (Ibid., p.70).

Conceiving conflict as an intrinsic part of the human being is not something new. Conflict satisfies so many needs that a social system poor in some conflicts will have to introduce others to stay alive. And the same seems to apply to internal conflicts within any human being. A state of conflict lessness is essentially a state of death: only death brings a complete consonance between need and satisfaction.

It seems that some frustration is necessary for individuals to mature. Hobbes (1651) says that man, due to his competitive, controlling (and even utilitarian) stance, tends to come into conflict with other individuals, which generates a constant war between humanity. The war of all against all is where the main debate that underlies Hobbes' work begins.

From "*Bellum omnium contra omnes*"[8] to "*Lupus est homo homini lupus*"[9], the conflict is present with the "state of human nature" being put into practice (intra) and internationally within the scope of politics at a global level.

The Yemeni government, instead of dialogue and negotiation towards peace, opted for non-integration and an attempt to eradicate its own people, the Houthis, fearing a non-stop insurrection due to the group's respective

8 "The war of all against all". Free translation..

9 "Man is a wolf to man". Expression created by Plautus (254-184 BC) in his work Asinaria, later being popularized by Thomas Hobbes, an English philosopher of the 17th century, in his work "On the Citizen"..

religious and ideological ideals, which in fact occurred, as Salmoni, Loidolt and Wells (2010) point out. There was also the most refined and democratic way of isolation - allowing the Houthis to organize themselves as a political party[10], but at the same time relegating it to a constant minority position, so that it is culturally eliminated by being outvoted.

Political marginalization in the face of the Houthis also led the movement to no longer want to engage in dialogue and led to the entire revolt. Feeling betrayed, the movement opted for direct violence, the result of all the structural and cultural violence in the region.

The Houthis are a marginalized section in Yemeni politics, not getting adequate help from the government and also feeling the fear of "Sunnization" in their Shia Zaydi heartland, which is why they declared revolution in Yemen under the support of Iran (Ahmed, 2019). Insurgency is one of the main causes of the civil war in Yemen. The Shia group has been marginalized in Yemeni politics and society since it lost the Imamate system of government in 1970[11]. The current civil war in Yemen is "the continuation of a long-standing conflict between the Yemeni government and politically marginalized groups" (Orkaby, 2017).

There are intra-party aspects to most inter-party conflicts (Galtung, 1996). To summarize this conflicting cycle inherent to social relations, as Foucault (1979) also referred to when saying that every social relationship is a relationship of power, Galtung (1969) conceives the introduction to the debate about structural violence and the articulation of the concepts of peace positive and negative peace.

Established as an indirect form of violence, whose roots are in the unequal distribution of power and resources within societies or between societies, structural violence draws attention to a type of violence that is almost always latent, invisible or disguised that results from social inequalities, injustice, poverty, exploitation and oppression. Thus, if the concept of negative peace is defined by the absence of direct (physical) violence, the concept of

10 Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi was the political leader and fundamental figure for the emergence of the Houthi in Yemen's political environment. He was a former member of the Yemeni parliament for the Islamic party Al-Haqq between 1993 and 1997. Al-Houthi was a rising political aspirant in Yemen and had broad religious and tribal support in the mountainous regions of northern Yemen. He was also a key figure in the Houthi insurgency against the Yemeni government, which began in 2004. The movement took its name after his death in September 2004 by Yemeni army forces.

11 The Imams of Yemen, and later the Kings of Yemen, were religiously established leaders belonging to the Zaidiyyah branch of Shia Islam. They established a mixture of religious and secular government in parts of Yemen from 897 onwards. Their imamah held out under various circumstances until the republican revolution in 1962.

positive peace becomes defined as the absence of structural violence and is articulated by Galtung through the notion of social justice.

Conflict resolution should not only be seen as a means of avoiding wars, but also a means for the progress of humanity to transcend incompatibilities or contradictions that stifle progress and channel attention away from the achievement of the world's fundamental goals (Galtung, 1976). For instance, even if the conflict is resolved, or to be resolved, there may still be war – out of hatred or as a projection of conflict.

Contributions to the consolidation of peace in Yemen from the perspective of the Security Sector Reform processes and Peace Studies

We will begin to think about building peace in the Republic of Yemen from the perspective of *statebuilding*. Through the transformation of the conflict through non-violent and creative means, using cooperation, integration and social justice to overcome the incongruity present in the axes of dissent, this is where the argument will be based.

Several questions arise here: who are the real parties to the conflict? What are your goals? Where and how do these goals collide? And what are the proposals for solutions, from people at all levels of the social system, based on diverse experiences both within the conflict situation and outside it? Many are convinced that "economic and social development will lead to peace".

If development includes capacity building for non-violent conflict transformation, then peace will be a result. However, if development only intensifies the desire for more wealth and material resources, then the consequence may be more war than peace.

This is the case of the conflict in Yemen, where through a *proxy war* it has been dictating a true massacre in the social, economic, political spheres, etc., at alarming levels. Véronique Dudouet (2008) suggests through pacifist approaches the need to investigate opportunities and favorable conditions for combining non-violent action with other traditional forms of intervention in asymmetric and prolonged conflicts. The researcher considers non-violent resistance to be a necessary component for transforming conflicts in situations where asymmetrical power relations are observed, especially in the initial phases of latent conflicts rooted in structural violence.

Galtung (1969) lists his theories of symmetrical and egalitarian organization in general, considering the expanding theory of vertical

development (as a negative point), participation, decentralization, co-decision, while proposing to resolve these gaps of inequality seeking the equal distribution of power and resources.

One of several approaches is made possible through arms control and disarmament issues. The trafficking of weapons and intelligence mechanisms provided by countries belonging to the military coalition led by Saudi Arabia, such as the USA and the United Kingdom, which creates great tension vis-à-vis the military forces of Iran – which in turn supports the Houthis – and causes A major crisis and social upheaval directly attacking human rights in Yemen could be gradually ended through stricter regulation of arms transfer and trade. Arms transfer has been on the States' agenda for a long time.

However, while they remain objects of defense, security, and economic affection, the spiraling consequences of poorly regulated arms transfers can be devastating. Indeed, the lack of a rigorously enforced legal framework can not only lead to illicit arms trafficking, but can also have more serious humanitarian and developmental consequences (Musa, 2017). Nothing can mean what is meant by devastating, like the conflict situation in Yemen.

Consequently, there is also an indirect socioeconomic impact affected by armed conflicts and international crimes – fueled by poorly regulated weapons – including famine, family segregation, disease, lack of education, refugee levels and even a decline in foreign investment (Musa, 2017).

As a result, even British national courts have been brought into the equation to assess UK practices on arms transfers, according to a judicial review case brought by the Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) against the UK government. The Saudi-Yemen case strikes at the core of the effects that poorly regulated and law-abiding state practices on arms transfers can have on innocent populations (Musa, 2017).

The use of UK weapons in the Yemen war is not a rumour. A cruise missile in the United Kingdom was found under the wreckage of a civilian factory targeted by air strikes, for example[12]. A UN report also stated that the coalition had carried out airstrikes against civilians and civilian objects in violation of international humanitarian law, including camps for internally displaced people and refugees; civil gatherings, including weddings; civil vehicles, including buses; civil residential areas; medical facilities; schools; mosques; markets, factories and food warehouses; and other essential civil infrastructure such as Sanaa airport, Hudaydah port and domestic transit

12 Human Rights Watch, 'Bombing Businesses: Saudi Coalition Airstrikes on Yemen's Civilian Economic Structures' 10 July 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/07/10/bombing-businesses/saudi-coalition-airstrikes-yemens-civilian-economic-structures>.

routes[13].

Although the United Kingdom was not directly participating in hostilities, it was providing technical assistance as well as authorizing arms transfers to Saudi Arabia. Weapons transferred by the UK and US to Saudi Arabia were later used by the Saudi-led Coalition in Yemen (Musa, 2017).

It should also be noted that the United Kingdom was not the only country found to supply weapons to the Saudi-led coalition. Investigators from organizations including Human Rights Watch also found a US bomb delivered to Saudi Arabia during the war, as well as remains of weapons supplied by the US in 23 illegal coalition airstrikes. Human Rights Watch proved that about 12 attacks involved American cluster munitions[14].

Despite the financing of these resources by the USA and the United Kingdom towards Saudi Arabia in the face of the bombing in Yemen, a new actor, at least unusual to say the least, emerged in the field of conflict. Houthis captured a batch of weapons coming from São Paulo, Brazil[15]. The Brazilian arms industry is trying to return to international markets, after decades of lack of resources and contracts.

Avibrás Indústria Aeroespacial S.A. produces cluster bombs used by the Saudis in the conflict. In this batch, found in an abandoned Saudi post in Yemen, there were containers with parts for Astros SS-30 multiple rocket launchers, produced by Avibrás in Brazil. This reinforces Brazil's supply to Saudi Arabia. The attack, targeting the al-Dhubat neighborhood in Saada's Old City[16], killed two civilians and injured at least six, including a child.

It is a fact that cluster bombs are weapons, like others, that should be eradicated due to the high damage they can inflict on civilians, as is the case in Yemen. Furthermore, Brazil must commit to ending the production and export of these ammunition. In terms of using non-violent or pacifist means to overcome the conflict and the political, economic and, above all, social instability that it entails, the channels of dialogue between the main parties to the conflict must return to functioning through negotiation. Appealing to actors outside the preambular conflict does not seem like a good option,

13 The Guardian, 'UN Report into Saudi-led Strikes in Yemen Raises Questions over UK Role', 27 January 2016 https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/27/unreport-into-saudi-led-strikes-in-yemen-raises-questions-over-uk-role4.

14 Human Rights Watch, 'Yemen: US-Made Bombs Used in Unlawful Airstrikes, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/12/08/yemen-us-made-bombs-used-unlawful-air Strikes>.

15 Human Rights Watch, Yemen: Brazil-Made Cluster Munitions Harm Civilians. https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/12/23/yemen-brazil-made-cluster-munitions-harm-civilians..

16 Province of Yemen, located in the north of the country, on the border with Saudi Arabia..

and can escalate the antagonisms until they become more aggravating, as a possible unwanted layer of tension.

Considering the capacity of non-violent action to transform power relations and transform identities through persuasion, Dudouet (2008) suggests a combination of principles and pragmatic concerns that can make non-violent action an important tool of political action capable of act through a double process of dialogue and resistance: dialogue with the more powerful opponent (with the aim of persuading him about the justice and legitimacy of the causes defended by the weaker parties) and resistance to unjust structures of power (with the aim to press for social and political changes).

Sharp (2005) classifies non-violent action as a technique that can be applied through a set of protest, non-cooperation and intervention methods. Cady (2010) believes that the pragmatic concern for nonviolent action is one pole of the pacifist spectrum that offers valuable guidance for pacifist activism when it loses something: a clear vision of peace. Atack (2012) observes that non-violent action acts as a collective political action led by ordinary citizens and organized directly through civil society groups or social movements.

From this perspective, non-violent action is characterized as occurring outside the conventional political organizations and structures of the state (Randle, 1994), as nonmilitary or nonviolent in character, and as centered on civil society in the coordination and conduct of actions (Stephan and Chenoweth, 2008; Roberts and Ash, 2009).

Howes (2013), when trying to punctuate the debate about non-violence and pacifism (which are different in terms of action), presents a similar argument that considers the current success of the debate on non-violence rather than breaking with pacifism, offering an important way of reformulating the pragmatic aspects of pacifism in a way that takes into account a realistic understanding of the historical record of cases of violent non-action as an alternative to the use of military force and war.

Atack (2012), when exploring non-violence in political theory, points out that the main icons of pacifism in the 20th century, such as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, conducted their non-violent campaigns through pragmatic choices, even though they were strongly influenced by their spiritual and ethical traditions. McCarthy and Sharp (2010) state that the most traditional and institutionalized conflict resolution techniques, such as negotiation, mediation, third-party intervention, as well as the methods that contribute to the effective functioning of these techniques, tend to avoid confrontations, sanctions, pressures and direct action that characterize the activism of non-violent action, ultimately in line with what Galtung (1976) points out about the three approaches to intervention in the name of peace.

The repression of non-violent movements through the use of force often backfires because it leads to the loss of popular support, as well as internal and external condemnation of those who resort to violence. This repression leads to changes in power relations, as it increases internal support and solidarity for the cause of non-violent actors, creates dissension against violent opponents and increases external support for non-violent actors, as indeed happened in the Arab Spring from 2010.

And it has been continuously occurring in Yemen, due to various sanctions[17], such as economic embargoes, which are being imposed on Yemen due to Houthi control, causing an unparalleled crisis in Yemeni society. Based on comprehensive historical analysis Sharp (2005) notes that this technique of non-violent methods is not limited to internal conflicts and democratic contexts, and that its effectiveness does not depend on the "kindness" or "moderation" of opponents, who have already been widely used against powerful governments, despotic regimes, foreign occupations, empires, dictatorships and totalitarian regimes.

The agenda for a policy of overcoming incompatibility through dialogue and debate, and not through bellicose means or the threat of sanctions, is important as we consider the transformation of the conflict with an emphasis on the core of its contradictory basis. Pointing out where this contradiction lies is crucial for policies to implement *peacebuilding* concepts.

Furthermore, through inclusive methods, from a democracy that leads dialogues to pragmatic results and integrative policies between conflicting parties (from the inside out), the path to achieving "positive peace" (absence of structural violence) and, therefore, drastically reducing social injustice arising from the conflict, becomes tangible.

Conflict transformation restores peace by achieving empathy, non-violence and creativity (Galtung, 2013). The main path to peace is conflict transformation, where conflict is uprooted along with contradicting goals and the triangle of conflict - attitude, behavior and contradiction. Peace dwells in social formations based on positive sanctions, violence in formations based on negative sanctions; and violence deprives people of basic needs due to elite politics.

Galtung (2013) defines peace as a relationship between two or more parties, and the parties are within or between people, groups, states or nations, and regions or civilizations. And the relationship is challenging in negative

17 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TEASURY. Yemen-related Sanctions. https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/financial-sanctions/sanctions-programs-and-country-information/yemen-related-sanctions>.

and disharmonious, indifferent and positive and harmonious dimensions.

The relationship further focuses on negative peace which is the absence of violence, like a ceasefire, like keeping them apart, no longer negative but indifferent relationships and positive peace depends on the presence of harmony, intended or not. And this is where the association that is characterized by structural peace, encompassing equity, reciprocity and integration, must be established.

Conclusion

Since its existence as a unified state in the early 1990s, Yemen has seen tensions, crises, clashes and civil wars, which have been exacerbated by the involvement of external powers. Approximately 27 million Yemenis belonging to various ethnic groups competed for limited resources in the country, according to Karakir (2018).

In addition to socioeconomic grievances, resentment over the ruling regime's corrupt policies led Yemenis to fill the streets chanting anti-regime slogans in early 2011. It took another four years for these grievances and fragmentation to escalate into violent civil war in the country.

Nine years have passed since the most recent civil war began in Yemen in 2015, leading to a serious humanitarian crisis. Divergent internal and external actors became involved in the war with their own interests and agendas, contributing to the complexity of violence in the country.

In academic circles, there has been a tendency to describe the ongoing conflict in Yemen as a consequence of the Sunni-Shia rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, as the Saudis have engaged in an operation against the Houthis, who are allegedly supported by Iran. Similarly, there has been much speculation about whether a proxy war is taking place between Riyadh and Tehran in Yemen.

However, these assumptions still fail to understand the origins of the war and why Saudi Arabia intervened. The conflict in Yemen is primarily a complicated local struggle over access to power, which is further complicated by the involvement of external actors. Although the conflict in Yemen has been a priority issue for Saudi Arabia's ruling elites, Saudi intervention in Yemen has largely occurred to secure its southern borders. On the other hand, the Yemeni conflict has not been a prioritized issue for Iran, which prefers to focus its attention on Syria, Lebanon and Iraq.

The Houthis, another component of the complex equation, are not

mere Iran's lackeys to pursue its policies without question. Therefore, Iran's influence in Yemen remains limited compared to that of Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia, Houthis and Iran are not the only actors involved in the ongoing conflict in Yemen. President Hadi's bloc, President Saleh's former supporters, AQAP, the GCC states and the US are other actors involved in the conflict.

Overall, Yemen is going through a very critical time. The civil war in Yemen seems unlikely to end unless a combination of trust-building and nation-building occurs between the different local sides involved in the conflict. The stalemate in the Yemeni civil war only serves the interests of radical terrorist organizations in the country, offering fertile ground for jihadism. Meanwhile, the Yemeni people continue to suffer the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.

Yemen's transition is fragile and therefore vulnerable to renewed violence through multiple pathways. The Yemeni uprising exemplifies the need to pay attention to pre-existing patterns of distribution of political power if we are to understand what is happening.

Yemen is unlikely to succeed in breaking this decades-long cycle of violence until there is a national consensus on the need to establish the structures that enable the implementation of agreed reforms: capable local government institutions, equal access to basic social services, including health and education and an end to extractive political and economic systems that have allowed a small northern tribal elite to dominate the country, exploit its resources for their own narrow interests, and block access to the political and economic arena for the vast majority of Yemeni citizens.

The central focus of this work was to develop reflections and solutions regarding the conflict between the Yemeni government and the Houthis through this discipline and area of academic research that incorporates the clearest and most explicit commitment to non-violence and the peaceful organization of social relations in the local, national, regional and international levels.

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ABSTRACT

The roots of the ongoing civil conflict in Yemen lie in the inability of Yemeni society to address and resolve the frustration arising from political marginalization, economic deprivation and the effects of an extractive, corrupt and rent-seeking state. By definition, such systems are characterized by the concentration of power in the hands of a restricted elite and impose few restrictions on their exercise of power. This systemic failure has produced a cycle of violence, political upheaval, and institutional collapse since the creation of the modern Yemeni state in the 1960s, of which the current conflict appears to be only the latest eruption. We propose, as a way of accessing potential possible results for resolving the contradiction, a proposal based on the combination of policies based on Peace Studies, understanding that the mechanisms of the Security Sector Reform processes and transitional justice are crucial for the construction and peacebuilding in the Republic of Yemen. This work analyzes how structural violence has perpetuated in recent years in Yemen and how we can direct the conflict towards positive peace.

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Security Sector Reform. Peace Studies. Conflict Resolution. Violence. Republic of Yemen.

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ASEAN PEOPLE-CENTERED REGIONALISM AND STRATEGY TO BUILD ITS PEOPLE'S IDENTITY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA DISCOURSE

Sugito Sugito[1]

Introduction

Since its inception in 1967, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has undergone substantial institutional reforms. A pivotal change in the organization's cooperative direction took place between 1998 and 2007, specifically in 2003, during a period of transition and recovery. The ninth ASEAN Summit, held in Bali in 2003, led to the promulgation of the "ASEAN Concord II" (commonly referred to as Bali II). One of the key outcomes of this agreement was the establishment of an ASEAN Community. The declaration articulates:

> "The ASEAN Community will be constituted by three interwoven and mutually reinforcing pillars: political and security cooperation, economic cooperation, and socio-cultural cooperation. These pillars aim to ensure enduring peace, stability, and shared prosperity in the region" (ASEAN Concord II Declaration).

In the wake of the Bali Concord II declaration, the concept of a "people-centered ASEAN" has gained prominence within the region. This term has consistently featured in the themes, reports, and vision statements of subsequent high-level ASEAN meetings, including the annual leaders' summits (Morada, 2008).

Institutional reforms persisted with the endorsement of the Vientiane

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Action Plan in 2004. This plan deepens the understanding of community development in ASEAN by identifying critical norms, principles, and programs designed to operationalize the three foundational pillars. Further strengthening occurred with the adoption of the ASEAN Charter at the eleventh ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, from December 12 to 14, 2005. This charter aspires to serve as a constitutional document, outlining the basic principles, goals, objectives, and organizational structure requisite for effective ASEAN cooperation. Importantly, the new ASEAN Charter legalizes the organization as a formal entity.

Within the framework of the ASEAN Community's pillars, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) plays a strategic role. Its objective is to cultivate a socially responsible, community-oriented populace that fosters enduring solidarity and unity among both the people and member states of ASEAN (ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, 2017). The ASCC seeks to encourage interactions among ASEAN citizens that are mindful of their historical connections and cultural heritage, aiming for a shared regional identity. To attain this, the ASCC developed an action plan targeted at bolstering the foundations of regional social cohesion, with the goal of realizing a cohesive ASEAN Community by 2020. The community, expected to materialize through regional integration by 2020, will consist of people who, despite diverse historical and cultural backgrounds, share a common regional identity. This sense of shared identity and solidarity is projected to evolve over time, facilitated by ongoing interactions across various social, economic, and political sectors, as well as at the community, governmental, and civil society levels (The ASCC Plan of Action, 2012).

Building on its community framework, ASEAN has evolved into a model of identity-based regional cooperation. In this model, the region is conceptualized as possessing a collective and intersubjective identity (Elliott, 2003). Establishing such a regional identity is not only of specific interest to ASEAN but also crucial in sspite the critical importance of forming this identity, awareness of an ASEAN identity remains relatively low in member countries, even among the elite and in countries with long-standing membership (Narine, 200haping how its member states envision their collective future (E. Jones, 2004). However, de9).

In this context, ASEAN serves as a significant force capable of shaping both identities and norms that guide and regulate the conduct of its constituent nations and their citizenry (Eaton & Stubbs, 2006). Consequently, this study posits that ASEAN should proactively take on the role of an agent in fostering a shared identity among its member nations and their populations. Seen through the lens of new regionalism, ASEAN is not merely an alliance

of countries; it is also an imagined community where citizens are expected to develop an understanding of one another's social, cultural, economic, and political contexts. In this constructed social landscape, ASEAN could serve as an instrumental agent, mainstreaming the ASEAN identity through an ongoing discourse facilitated by various media channels.

This study examines the role of the ASEAN Secretariat in utilizing social media—particularly Facebook—to cultivate a sense of ASEAN community and identity. It further investigates the efficacy of these efforts in heightening awareness about ASEAN identity. The rationale behind focusing on Facebook emanates from the platform's inherently interactive and participatory nature, as well as its capability to facilitate many-to-many text flows (KhosraviNik & Zia, 2014). Such interactive communication features make social media a potent instrument for establishing consensual perspectives among its users on specific topics, such as the ASEAN identity in this context.

Social networking platforms, often referred to as social media, have emerged as pivotal agents in shaping collective identities. Research by KhosraviNik and Zia (2014) demonstrated how Iran's national identity is both reconstructed and represented through Facebook pages that Iranians refer to as the "Persian Gulf." Similarly, Kulyk (2018) work highlights the significance of the Russian language in demarcating social identity among Ukrainian Facebook users, setting them apart from native Ukrainians. Additionally, Facebook has been identified as an impactful medium for both fostering immigrant identities and facilitating the proliferation of xenophobia in Europe (Ekman, 2019).

Based on previous studies, social media—particularly Facebook—plays a crucial role in shaping a community's identity. For instance, a study conducted by Al-Dheleai & Tasir, (2017) indicates that students view Facebook as a valuable platform for academic interaction. Therefore, these same mechanisms can also be effective for fostering regional identity. For example, the "types of student interaction" identified in the study, such as direct questions, information sharing, commenting, and initiating discussions, are also methods through which young people might engage with content related to regional identity. Consequently, based on this evidence, Facebook presents a significant opportunity for ASEAN to cultivate public awareness of its regional identity. This opportunity is particularly noteworthy given that ASEAN represents the largest collective of internet users globally. Data sourced from ASEAN UP in January 2017 revealed that out of ASEAN's population of more than 338.79 million, 305.47 million were active social media users..

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach to examine how ASEAN utilizes Facebook to shape public awareness of its collective identity. The research methodology adopted was netnography, a form of anthropological inquiry conducted online, using publicly accessible data where individuals are free to express themselves on social media platforms. The primary data source for this study was the official ASEAN Facebook page, accessible at the ASEAN Secretariat's Facebook page. The rich content generated by Facebook users provided invaluable qualitative data for this research. User-generated materials such as videos, images, reactions, and text posts serve as robust qualitative data sources on Facebook.

For the objectives of this study, the focus was on specific categories of user-generated textual data, including texts written and published by Facebook users, responses to posts or other comments on the platform, indicators of user approval or emotional engagement with a post, and instances where users not only approve of a post but also demonstrate a deeper level of engagement by redistributing it to their network. These data were subsequently extracted and analyzed using NVIVO 12 Plus software and are presented in a descriptive narrative format.

Literature Review

Looking at the theoretical foundations for the concepts of regionalism and regional integration reveals that over the last five decades, academics of international relations have made significant attempts to explain the role and importance of regional integration in international politics (Khani, 2018). There are two approaches in the regionalism study, old and new regionalism; both are distinguished by reference to the wave or generation of emergence (Hettne & Söderbaum, 2007). The first wave is rooted in the experience of destroying interwar and World War II nationalism that emerged in Western Europe in the late 1940s and ended in the early 1970s. Early theories or approaches to regionalism, at that time, were always concerned with peace and tended to see the state as a problem rather than a solution. The most relevant theories are federalism, functionalism, and neo-functionalism (Hettne & Söderbaum, 2007). The second wave began to emerge in the mid-1980s in Western Europe with the White Paper and the Single European Act. In contrast to "old", the new regionalism considers new aspects, primarily those that emphasize globalization. Regionalism is closely related to globalization, although there are differences in the relationship between the two.

The different approaches to regionalism are similar when scientists have different views between "regionalism/regional cooperation" and "regionalization/regional integration" (Söderbaum, 2007). Regional cooperation refers to an open process in which individual countries (or perhaps other actors) within a particular geographic area act together for mutual benefit to accomplish common tasks in certain areas, regardless of conflicts of interest in other areas of activity. Meanwhile, regional integration refers to a more profound process in which previously autonomous units are merged into a single unit. Thus, regional integration refers more to the process of cooperation, integration, cohesion, and identity, which creates regional space for a specific or general affair.

In this article, the authors tend to use the perspective of regional integration to understand how ASEAN builds its regional cohesion and identity. As a process, regional integration can be shaped by actors from within the region and external forces. There are four stages in this regional integration process, consisting of regional formation (the creation of "soft/hard" boundaries), symbolic formation (names/other symbols), institutional formation (institutions that produce/reproduce other forms), and regional formation as part of a regional system and social awareness, namely a region with an "identity" (Paasi, 2011, 2017). Identity covers two elements: regional identity and regional identity or awareness of the people living in or outside the area (Paasi, 2011). These forms are produced and reproduced continuously by individual and institutional practices and economic, political, governmental, cultural/media, and educational discourses. Therefore, to understand regional production, reproduction, and de-institutionalization (i.e., merger or dissolution), one must look at how actors promote new regional identities to their societies and member states.

Furthermore, ASEAN, which is engaged in the ongoing endeavor of regional integration, necessitates the cultivation of a distinct regional identity. This is particularly pertinent as ASEAN interacts with its member countries, each of which is concurrently navigating its own nation-building process. The challenge for ASEAN lies in harmonizing the historical, cultural, ideological, political, and economic diversities across its member states. Its tact in this regard is manifested through the "Narrative of ASEAN Identity," adopted at the 37th ASEAN Summit in 2020. According to this narrative, the ASEAN identity is anchored in two core values: constructed and inherited (https://asean.org/narrative-asean-identity/, 2020). 'Constructed values' refer to the collective virtues that emerge from a deliberate and conscious endeavor to engender loyalty and achieve communal objectives. In contrast, 'inherited values' stem from the cultural and societal norms passed down through

generations, culminating in the diverse yet interconnected communities of Southeast Asia.

ASEAN leaders have reached a consensus that the identity of ASEAN, as articulated in Article 2 of the ASEAN Charter, is founded on values including respect, peace and security, prosperity, non-interference, consultation/dialogue, adherence to international law and trade norms, democracy, freedom, human rights promotion and protection, unity in diversity, inclusivity, and ASEAN centrality in external relations—collectively termed as 'the ASEAN Way.' This term encapsulates cultural elements that share commonalities across member countries, thus distinguishing ASEAN from Western paradigms of multilateralism (Nguyen, 2018). ASEAN's identity is further framed by the principles of hybridization and social complexity (Noor, 2015). Therefore, the regional identity of ASEAN is constructed through cultural acculturation that spans traditions, beliefs, religions, arts, food, sports, and languages, all while embracing and respecting such diversity (https://asean.org/narrative-asean-identity/, 2020).

Additionally, the formulation and dissemination of the ASEAN identity can be executed via multiple avenues, such as direct contact, education, art, mass media, and notably, social media. Social media has emerged as a potent tool for fostering discourse among its users and offers significant potential as an instrumental vehicle for crafting and propagating the ASEAN identity. It signifies a paradigm shift in the manner in which people discover, consume, and share information. It embodies a confluence of sociology and technology, transforming traditional one-to-many monologues into many-to-many dialogues and democratizing the flow of information by evolving users from mere content consumers to content creators (Burita, 2019).

As a form of technology-based mass media, social media wields significant influence over human life (Habermas, 2006). While platforms like Facebook, Skype, Twitter, and YouTube may be relatively recent entrants to the market, their impact is comparable to traditional gatherings that have the power to delineate racial, class, and ethnic lines (Shabir et al., 2017). Importantly, the potency of social media is rooted in information and communication technology, offering a digital space where people can engage in discussions on a myriad of topics—ranging from economic and social to political issues. Such platforms enable users to both perceive and catalyze social movements aimed at articulating their interests (Shirazi, 2013).

The discourse process on social media commences with communities framing their social realities. Subsequently, these framed realities are shared through the platforms, inviting further discussion and engagement. Responses from netizens can vary significantly, ranging from passive engagement—

such as merely reading or viewing a post—to active involvement, which may manifest as commenting with diverse viewpoints or showing agreement through comments, images, or actions like sharing the post. Ultimately, this discourse process leads to a collective understanding or agreement concerning the social reality under discussion (Shirazi, 2013). Within the context of this study, this process is examined in relation to ASEAN's initiatives aimed at forging and ingraining a distinctive ASEAN identity among its populace, particularly focusing on how such discourse unfolds within the ASEAN community on Facebook.

Findings and Discussion

Over the past five decades, ASEAN has made significant strides in maintaining peace and stability, enhancing regional cooperation, establishing a common set of norms, and developing the regional economy. According to the 2020 Global Peace Index, Southeast Asia was ranked as the fourth-most peaceful region and categorized as having medium to moderate levels of peace (Global Peace Index 2020: Measuring Peace in a Complex World, 2020).

Graph 1: The Level of Peace Index in Southeast Asia 2020



Source: Processed from (Global Peace Index 2020: Measuring Peace In A Complex World, 2020)

In addition, the 2019 ASEAN Integration Report highlighted ASEAN as the fifth-largest global economic power with a GDP of USD 3 trillion. The report also indicated that the total trade volume within the ASEAN region reached USD 2.8 trillion in 2018, which was a 23.9% increase compared to 2015 figures (The ASEAN Secretariat, 2019).

Despite these economic accomplishments, it's imperative to note that such interactions tend to primarily benefit capital owners and the workforce while not sufficiently encouraging community-level ties. For example, economic activities have sometimes led to social conflicts and tensions between ASEAN nations, illustrated by issues such as the treatment of Indonesian foreign workers in Malaysia and Singapore. Likewise, political and security cooperation often gets complicated by national interests, evident in the South China Sea territorial disputes and Myanmar's political issues. These challenges highlight the importance for ASEAN to establish long-term solidarity and unity, not just among member states but also at the community level, through the creation of a shared identity (Nguyen, 2018).

To address the need for a cohesive regional identity, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) was founded based on the ASEAN Concorde II in 2003. The ASCC Plan of Action, adopted in 2012, aimed to instil a sense of collective identity among ASEAN member states. The objectives of this plan were multifaceted. They included mainstreaming the promotion of ASEAN awareness, regional identity, and values into national communication strategies, educational curricula, and interpersonal interactions. These interactions focus particularly on the realms of culture, arts, and sports, especially among the youth. The plan also aimed at preserving and promoting ASEAN's cultural heritage and living traditions. These traditions not only serve to deepen the understanding of the interrelationship between culture and development but also act as a source of inspiration for future initiatives. Further, the plan encouraged fostering dialogue among civilizations, cultures, and religions as a means to enhance mutual understanding,

Previously, heads of state and government from ASEAN nations committed to building a people-oriented, people-centered, and rules-based ASEAN community during the 25th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur in 2015. They resolved to foster a community in which all individuals and stakeholders can contribute to, and benefit from, an increasingly integrated and connected society. This would include enhanced collaboration across political-security, economic, and socio-cultural spheres to promote sustainable, equitable, and inclusive development (The ASEAN Secretariat, 2016).

According to the ASCC Blueprint 2025, which was also adopted at the 25th ASEAN Summit, the essence of community building lies in the

inclusion of all sectors and stakeholders within ASEAN. The Blueprint places an emphasis on elevating and sustaining awareness of the ASEAN community while deepening a sense of ASEAN identity. It calls for multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagements. This includes dialogues and partnerships with sub-regional organizations, academia, local governments at various levels, public-private partnerships, and community and tripartite engagement with the labor sector. It also involves interactions with social enterprises, government organizations, non-governmental organizations, and civil society organizations (GO-NGO/CSO). In addition, it highlights the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR), inter-faith, and inter-cultural dialogues in enhancing awareness and fostering caring societies within ASEAN (The ASEAN Secretariat, 2016).

Subsequently, during the 27th ASEAN Summit in Manila in 2017, ASEAN leaders assigned a more significant role to the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information (AMRI) to bolster ASEAN awareness. They tasked them with educating the public about the benefits and opportunities arising from ASEAN integration. The AMRI was also responsible for countering the dissemination of fake news within the region. Their efforts in utilizing information media to raise ASEAN awareness have been well-received across various information and media sectors in the ASEAN community. As a testament to this commitment, they adopted the ASEAN Strategic Plan for Information and Media 2016-2025. This strategic plan aims to advance cooperation in providing accessible information about ASEAN, promoting a sense of regional identity, leveraging the use of information and communication technology to reach broader audiences, and developing multimedia content that is relevant to ASEAN (ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information, 2024).

The third strategy outlined in the ASEAN Strategic Plan for Information and Media 2016-2025, specifically the leveraging of information and communication technology to engage a broader audience, is particularly relevant for ASEAN in today's social media age. Social media platforms are known for initiating and organizing social activities and revolutions, thereby challenging or even toppling established regimes (Shirky, 2011). Additionally, social media has the potential to bolster civil society and the public sphere, leading to long-term transformative change.

The strength of social media resides in its democratization of information: it offers equal opportunities for all users to access, respond to, or become a source of information. This opens up avenues for discursive communication, where posted information elicits a range of responses from passive to active engagement. A passive response might entail merely reading

or viewing a post, while active engagement could involve commenting on the post, sharing different viewpoints, or endorsing it through comments, images, or shareable actions. Ultimately, this discourse process leads to a consensus about the social reality under discussion. The effectiveness of the message sender in propagating ideas through social media is primarily dictated by the manner in which the message is conveyed and the level of community involvement in the social discourse process (Shirky, 2011).

Furthermore, ASEAN has shown responsiveness in acknowledging the growing significance of new media in the region, making the role of social media crucial for nurturing the ASEAN community. According to the Digital 2017 report by We Are Social, the number of active social media users in Southeast Asia surged by 31% within a single year, amounting to an addition of 72 million new users in the 12 months following January 2016.

Table 1: ASEAN Digital Society

No	State	Population	Internet Users	Social Media Users	Mobile Connections	Mobile Social Media Users
1	Indonesia	262.0 million	132.7 million	106.0 million	374.4 million	92.0 million
2	Thailand	68.22 million	46.0 million	46.0 million	90.94 million	42.0 million
3	Malaysia	30.96 million	22.00 million	22.00 million	42.93 million	20.0 million
4	Singapore	5.74 million	4.71 million	4.40 million	8.44 million	4.00 million
5	Philippines	103.0 million	60.0 million	60.0 million	129.4 million	54.0 million
6	Vietnam	94.93 million	50.05 million	46.00 million	124.7 million	41.0 million
7	Brunei	0.431 million	0.37 million	0.37 million	0.515 million	0.33 million
8	Cambodia	15.95 million	7.16 million	4.90 million	27.60 million	4.40 million
9	Myanmar	54.60 million	14.00 million	14.00 million	50.56 million	13.0 million
10	Laos	6.98 million	1.80 million	1.80 million	5.95 million	1.50 million
Total		**642.76 million**	**338.79 million**	**305.47 million**	**855.44 million**	**272.23 million**

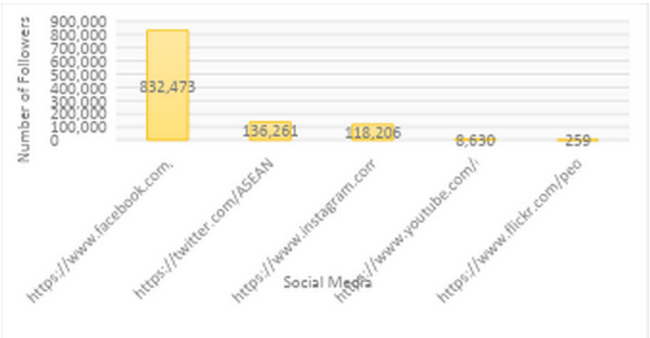
Source: https://aseanup.com/southeast-asia-digital-social-mobile/, 2017.

In response to the burgeoning role of social media, the ASEAN Secretariat has been assigned the task of developing comprehensive strategies and programs to enhance ASEAN's visibility online. The organization has increased its activity on major social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to amplify public awareness across the region. Official accounts for ASEAN on these platforms were launched in the 2010s. Between 2012 and 2013, the ASEAN Secretariat collaborated with MC Digital Services, a digital consultancy firm, to address its lack of international visibility and engagement on social media platforms.

Several initiatives were undertaken in this collaboration. First, a strategic framework was developed to foster citizen engagement with ASEAN's activities while effectively promoting the organization as a body committed to regional development. Second, comprehensive revisions were made to ASEAN's style guide, including its existing logo, offering a unified framework for message colors and language styles. Third, a detailed strategic document was prepared that set out editorial activities and guidelines for ASEAN. This resulted in a threefold increase in media engagement concerning ASEAN-related news and press releases, as well as a rapid growth in the number of followers on both Facebook and Twitter. Fourth, extensive training was provided to Secretariat staff, incorporating insights from key stakeholders and social media experts, to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills for effective social media engagement. (Source:MC Digital's Campaign on ASEAN Social Media Strategy).

In addition to this, ASEAN has expanded its presence to almost all popular social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flicker, and Instagram. Among these, Facebook enjoys the most extensive following, followed by Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Flicker, as indicated in the graph below.

Graph 2: Followers of Social Media in ASEAN 2017



Source: https://aseanup.com/southeast-asia-digital-social-mobile/, 2017

The large following of the official ASEAN Facebook account, www.facebook.com/aseansecretariat, is reflective of the substantial number of Facebook users in the ASEAN region. In 2017, Facebook users in this area totalled 305.47 million, a figure that escalated to 430.35 million by 2019 (Source: Southeast Asia Digital, Social, Mobile Report, 2019). The substantial base of followers and Facebook users within ASEAN underscores the pivotal role of social media in shaping and disseminating a collective ASEAN identity.

ASEAN utilizes its official Facebook fan page, www.facebook.com/aseansecretariat, to promote a variety of its agendas and initiatives to the online community. The content posted on this Facebook account largely mirrors the posts found on ASEAN's official website, www.asean.org, thereby making the Facebook page a comprehensive source for official institutional information regarding ASEAN. As of May 2021, the page boasted 831,885 followers and received 815,312 likes (ASEAN Secretariat Facebook Page, 2021), with a daily fan addition rate of 404.83 individuals (Socialbakers Analytics, 2021).

However, the relatively limited growth in the number of fans and followers indicates that the ASEAN Facebook page is not fully capturing the interest of internet users within the ASEAN region. An analysis conducted using Likealyzer in 2018 yielded the following results:

Table 2: Analysis results of the ASEAN Facebook fan page

Aspect	Score	Description
Frontpage	100%	Give visitors a great first impression
About	79%	Do a good job of providing visitors with context and information
Activity	57%	Post per day: 2.5, with 76% photos, 18% notes, 5 % videos
Response	0%	The responsiveness of this page is not good at all. • No users can post, while Facebook is a remarkable channel for fans to interact with their favorite brands. Allowing users to post to a page is the first step in increasing engagement.
Engagement	N/A	• Cannot score engagement based on public profiles • 18,417 people talking about this (PTAT), measuring how many people have interacted with a page or its content, in any way, over the last seven days • 646,262 total page likes • The engagement rate of 3% was calculated by dividing the page's PTAT by the total number of likes.

Source: https://likealyzer.com/, 2018

The results of the analysis indicate that in 2018, the ASEAN account had a low daily posting activity of 2.5, earning a score of 57%. Additionally, the account showed a lack of responsiveness to its fan base, as evidenced by a 0% score on the responsiveness indicator, revealing the nature of ASEAN's communication with visitors. Fan engagement, measured in terms of shares, likes, and comments, was also minimal, at only 3%. A subsequent analysis conducted in 2021 using Socialbakers revealed only marginal improvements. Daily posting activity on the ASEAN Facebook page decreased to 1.63 posts per day, with content primarily comprising 87.76% photos and 12.24% videos. Meanwhile, user involvement showed significant activity, as detailed in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Most Engaging Post Type per Post Type

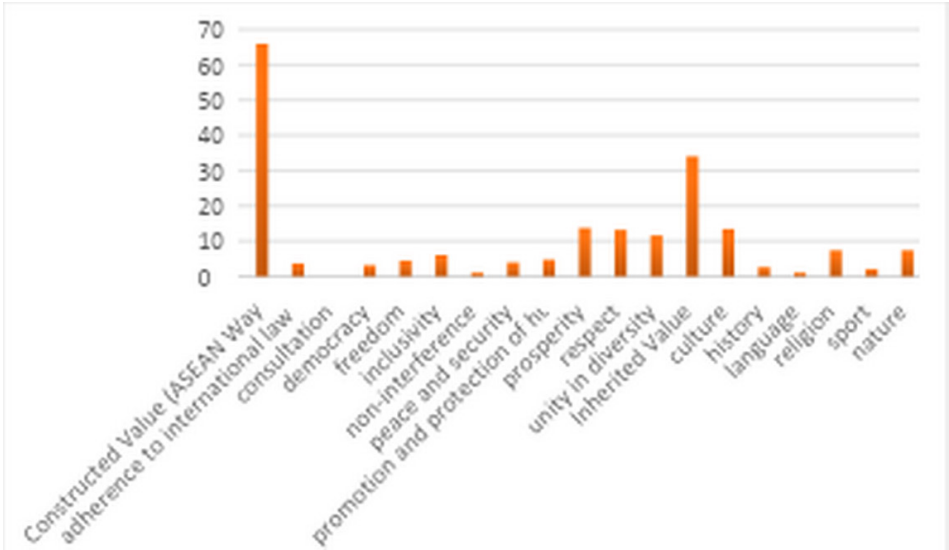
Type	Distribution	Reaction	Comment	Share
Photo	86.37%	28,082	45,820	5,642
		35.30%	57.60%	7.09%
Video	13.63%	1,148	430	174
		65.53%	24.54%	9.93%
Total		29,230	46,250	5,816
Average engagement per day: 2,709.87				

Source: Processed from https://suite.socialbakers.com/, 2021

Although user activity on ASEAN's Facebook page increased from February to May 2021, the majority of this interaction centered on concerns about the coup in Myanmar.

On a different note, ASEAN has effectively leveraged Facebook for identity construction. A content analysis conducted using NVIVO 12 Plus revealed that 66% of posts related to ASEAN identity were categorized under constructed values, while 34% fell under inherited values. Posts associated with constructed values predominantly featured themes such as prosperity, accounting for 14%, mutual respect at 13%, and unity and diversity at 12%. In contrast, posts dealing with inherited values largely focused on culture, constituting 13%, and both religion and natural beauty, each making up 7% of the content.

Graph 3: Number of Facebook Posts related to ASEAN identity



Source : Data analysis utilizing NVIVO 12 Plus

In this context, welfare serves as a crucial tool for ASEAN to foster a sense of community or "we-ness" among its members. Through the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) initiative, the organization has made significant strides in deepening economic cooperation with the aim of enhancing the well-being of its citizens. As outlined in the AEC Blueprint 2025, ASEAN aspires to create an economic region that is highly integrated and cohesive, competitive, innovative, and dynamic. The plan also emphasizes the importance of enhanced connectivity and sectoral cooperation while aiming to build communities that are resilient, inclusive, and people-oriented, as well as integrated into the global economy (The ASEAN Secretariat, 2015).

However, while ASEAN has achieved notable success in economic cooperation—rising to become the world's fifth-largest economic power with an average GDP of USD 3 million—it still faces challenges in the equitable distribution of welfare among its member countries. This disparity is evident in the Legatum Prosperity Index™ 2020, which evaluates the welfare of a country based on nine specific indicators.

Table 4: Welfare Index of ASEAN Countries

Ranking	State	Score
1	Singapore	79.51
2	Malaysia	67.49
3	Indonesia	61.1
4	Thailand	60.41
5	Vietnam	58.28
6	Philippines	56.9
7	Laos	49.92
8	Cambodia	48.55
9	Myanmar	46.78

Note: Brunei Darussalam was not found in the Legatum Prosperity Index™ 2020.
Source: Processed from https://www.prosperity.com/rankings?pinned=&filter= , 2021.

Issues related to welfare have also been highlighted in the Economic Freedom Index published by the Heritage Foundation in 2021. The index revealed a significant disparity among ASEAN countries concerning economic freedom. Economic freedom, defined as the fundamental right of every individual to control their own labor and property, serves as a crucial metric for assessing welfare. In a society that values economic freedom, individuals have the autonomy to work, produce, consume, and invest as they see fit. Such a society also ensures that the government allows for the free movement of labor, capital, and goods, and refrains from imposing coercive measures or restrictions on freedoms beyond what is necessary to protect and maintain freedom itself. This level of economic freedom, in turn, fosters greater prosperity (Heritage Foundation, 2021).

Table 5: Welfare Index of ASEAN Countries

Ranking	State	Score	Category
1	Singapore	89.7	Free
2	Malaysia	74.4	Mostly Free
3	Thailand	69.7	Moderately Free
4	Indonesia	66.9	Moderately Free
5	Brunei Darussalam	66.6	Moderately Free
6	Philippines	64.1	Moderately Free
7	Vietnam	61.7	Moderately Free

Ranking	State	Score	Category
8	Cambodia	57.3	Mostly unfree
9	Myanmar	55.2	Mostly unfree
10	Laos	53.9	Mostly unfree

Source: Processed from https://www.heritage.org/index/ranking, 2021.

Economically, the disparity among ASEAN countries is evident in the GDP per capita of each member state. Singapore boasts the highest GDP per capita, followed by Brunei Darussalam, which has approximately half of Singapore's GDP per capita. This disparity becomes glaringly apparent when comparing Singapore with CVLM (Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar) countries, which have a GDP per capita of just USD 2,075.3. This gap has been highlighted by Gugler and Vanoli in 2017, who argue that the differences in GDP among ASEAN members primarily stem from productivity asymmetry and variations in labor employment (Gugler & Vanoli, 2017). Consequently, as stated by the Asian Development Bank, "narrowing the development gap within and across ASEAN economies is an essential step toward deepening economic integration" (ADB, 2014 apud Gugler and Vanoli, 2017).

Table 6: GDP of ASEAN Countries

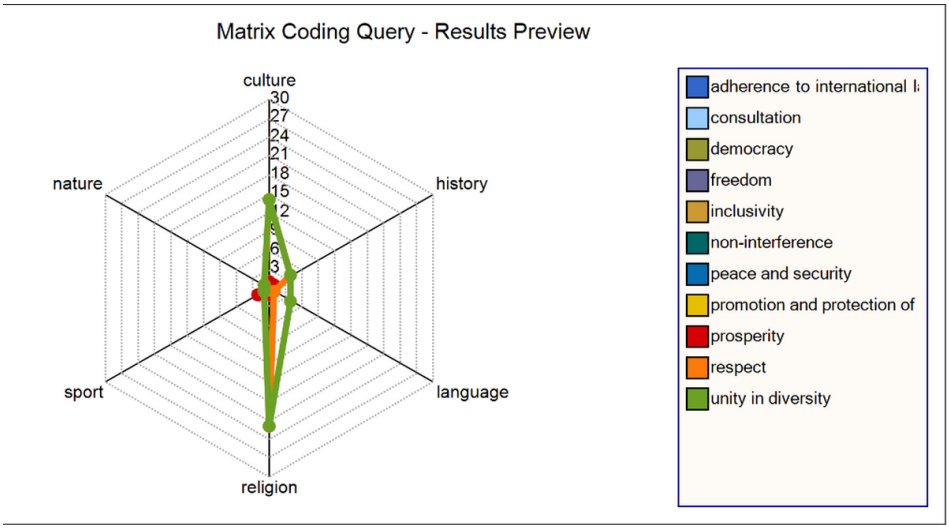
Country Name	GDP per capita (USD)
Singapore	65,233.3
Brunei Darussalam	31,086.8
Malaysia	11,414.2
Thailand	7,806.7
Indonesia	4,135.6
Philippines	3,485.1
Vietnam	2,715.3
Laos PDR	2,534.9
Cambodia	1,643.1
Myanmar	1,407.8

Source: Processed from World Bank, 2021

ASEAN's strategy of promoting "unity in diversity" serves as a cornerstone for regional identity formation. This phrase encapsulates the recognition of the ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity among its member countries. According to a detailed NVIVO 12 Plus analysis (Grapgh 4), the

concept of "unity in diversity" correlates strongly with key inherited values such as respect, culture, religion, history, language, sport, and natural landscapes.

Graph 4:The Relationship Between Unity in Diversity with Inherited Values



Source: Data analysis utilizing NVIVO 12 Plus

ASEAN has strategically adopted this "unity in diversity" ethos to circumvent potential conflicts arising from nation-building initiatives within its member states (Jönsson, 2010). This approach acts as a mediator between the twin processes of national and regional identity formation, particularly crucial when both are evolving in parallel.

The ASEAN identity is disseminated through strategic communication, predominantly via its official Facebook page. An NVIVO 12 Plus analysis reveals the words "community," "development," "stability," and "prosperity" as frequent vocabulary choices. The prominence of the term "community" underscores ASEAN's commitment to fostering a sense of collective identity built upon cultural diversity.

Graph 5: "Community" as Dominant Word in ASEAN Campaign



Source: Data analysis utilizing NVIVO 12 Plus

However, data analytics indicate that ASEAN's social media outreach has yet to reach its full potential. On average, each post on ASEAN's official Facebook page garners only 2.14 interactions (likes, comments, or shares) per 1,000 fans. Further breakdown shows that "share" activities—the most potent indicator of audience engagement—account for only 7.10% and 9.90% for photo and video posts, respectively. With just 832,473 followers out of the 430.35 million total Facebook users in the ASEAN region, the ASEAN Secretariat's social media penetration stands at a meagre 0.19%. This low engagement rate suggests that while ASEAN has been somewhat effective in conveying its strategic focus, there is significant room for improvement in leveraging social media platforms for community involvement in identity formation and dissemination.

Conclusion:

In concluding this research, it's important to highlight that the primary

objective was to explore the role of social media, specifically Facebook, in the identity formation of the ASEAN community. The study integrated insights from prior research, notably the work of Al-Dheleai and Tasir (2017) and employed the lens of "unity in diversity" as a theoretical framework. Utilizing NVIVO 12 Plus for data analysis provided quantifiable metrics to assess ASEAN's social media strategies and their efficacy. These findings reveal that while ASEAN has been effective in propagating its core values and messages, there is a significant disconnect in its outreach to its online community, calling for an immediate reassessment of its social media strategies.

The study's results have substantial implications. They suggest that despite ASEAN being one of the largest internet-using communities in the world, its efforts in identity formation through social media platforms have room for significant improvement. These findings are not merely academic but have practical applications, signalling an urgency for ASEAN to reconsider its online communication tactics.

Looking forward, future research can extend the scope of this study in several ways. This could include investigating the causes of low social media engagement among the ASEAN populace, despite high internet usage rates. Subsequent studies could also explore the roles of other social media platforms in shaping regional identity and might utilize machine learning techniques for more nuanced user engagement and sentiment analysis.

In summary, this research underscores the complexities of identity formation in the digital age, particularly for a region as diverse as ASEAN. The study reveals both missed opportunities and significant challenges, highlighting the need for a more nuanced and effective approach to online community engagement for ASEAN. This final consideration aims to encapsulate the core arguments, implications, and potential future directions, in line with the reviewer's suggestions.

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ABSTRACT

The ASEAN community is deeply invested in cultivating a regional identity as part of its commitment to people-centered regionalism. Despite the importance of this endeavor, there remains a significant gap in the public's awareness of what constitutes an 'ASEAN identity,' even among influential elites and member states with a long-standing relationship with the organization. Leveraging the influence of ASEAN as a norm-setting entity, this study aims to explore the organization's strategies for shaping a collective identity via its Facebook presence. Utilizing a qualitative research design supported by NVIVO 12 Plus for data analysis, this paper argues that social media platforms like Facebook, known for their interactive, participatory, and democratic features, offer ASEAN a valuable channel for fostering a shared understanding of its identity. Our findings indicate that ASEAN prioritizes the creation of shared values over the exploration of the diverse cultural heritage of its member nations. Moreover, the organization emphasizes the importance of prosperity, mutual respect, and 'unity in diversity' as key tenets of its collective identity.

KEYWORDS

ASEAN. Regionalism. Facebook. Identity. People-centered.

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FIORI, José Luís
Uma Teoria do Poder Global

Reviewed by Helio Caetano Farias[1]

José Luís Fiori is one of the most outstanding Brazilian intellectuals, whose academic contribution transcends disciplinary barriers and establishes dialogues with economics, history, philosophy, geopolitics and political science. His latest book, *A theory of global power*, published by the Vozes publishing house in 2024, brings together a set of texts representing four decades of research, demonstrating the evolution and consistency of his work.

In the first part of the book, entitled "*Time and Method*", Fiori retraces the paths taken to consolidate one of his main academic characteristics: the political analysis of conjunctural time. Unlike economic science, where the study of the conjuncture had the status of scientific rigor with the theories of cycles, in the social and political sciences, the term still evokes perceptions close to common sense. In the aim of filling this gap, Fiori carries out a rich debate with classic authors. One of his methodological starting points is the examination of Louis Bonaparte's 18 Brumaire, a work in which Karl Marx makes a historical-structural reading of the conjuncture, instead of the factual and journalistic survey and description of the events that led to the coup d'état in France in 1851. Aside from Marx himself, Fiori revisits the contributions of Engels, Weber, Lenin, Gramsci and Poulantzas in search of a more precise conceptualization of conjuncture, capable of capturing the temporality that singularizes events and, at the same time, transpose the limits of dichotomous views of politics and economics, generally anchored in the notions of class interests.

In this effort, Fiori proposes a unique method that combines insights from different intellectual traditions. Inspired by Clausewitz, he incorporates the issue of "strategic time" and the idea of "war as a limit situation" (p. 52) in power disputes between social groups. He also explores the theoretical

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framework of economists, who use the "market as a fictitious ideal type" (p. 57) to develop their analysis of economic cycles. From Fernand Braudel, Fiori brings the formulations about "history as a simultaneity of 'times'" (p. 63). And lastly, from Marxist-inspired analyses, he takes up the question of "politics as class interest and will" (p. 67). By combining these elements, Fiori proposes an approach that articulates the conjuncture and long-term structures, providing the basis for understanding the dynamics, contradictions and trends that characterize social relations.

The second part of the book, "State and Development", brings together texts and interviews that address, from a comparative perspective, the exhaustion of the experience of the Brazilian developmentalist state. Through a critical analysis, Fiori unveils the structural nature of the crisis of capitalism and states on the periphery of the international system. With perspicacity, Fiori did not limit himself to identifying the causes of the crises in internal factors. The texts "2.3 Notes for a new research program", "2.4 Back to the issue of the wealth of nations" and "2.5 States, currencies and development" reflect an agenda that takes up the classics of political economy in order to conceptually rework the relations between state, economy and development in the periphery. Fiori shifts the focus of analysis from the political and economic crisis of the 1970s to examining the origins and the expansive and unequal dynamics of the international system itself.

The third part, "Hegemony and Empire", presents four texts that draw up a diagnosis of the geopolitical and economic transformations of the international system. In this context, debates about the economic development of the periphery ceded space to a systematic investigation of hegemonic power. In contrast to the vague concepts and triumphant political expectations that emerged with the so-called "end of history", Fiori interprets the globalization of the 1990s as a liberal economic manifestation of a geopolitical strategy to reaffirm American hegemony, sustained by military force and the centrality of the dollar. Fiori evidences the inseparability between the "globalization of markets" and American power, clearly showing how the new "imperial system" disciplined markets and created "forced" consensuses, of which Latin America was well aware with the "Washington Consensus".

In this section, Fiori presents the results of reflections and research in the field of international political economy. His approach dialogues with academic traditions consolidated in the North, especially in the United States and England, but is rooted in the historical-structuralist tradition of Latin American critical thinking. Since Maria da Conceição Tavares' seminal article, "The Resumption of North American Hegemony" (1985), which challenged the dominant thesis of a terminal crisis of US hegemony, Fiori and other

collaborators have begun international field research, mapping theoretically and analytically how states have adjusted to changes in US economic policy following the end of the Bretton Woods System and the opening up and deregulation of national financial markets, led and sponsored by the hegemonic power itself. From this wide-ranging academic research came the research group that gave rise to the Postgraduate Program in International Political Economy, based at the Institute of Economics of UFRJ.

In the fourth part, "Global Power and Wealth", the five texts condense Fiori's reflections on an original theory of the dynamics of the international system, which he coherently calls the capitalist interstate system. Fiori clearly develops a new research program, centered on global power and the geopolitics of capitalism. In the text "4.1 Formation, expansion and limits of global power", he outlines the main elements of his thesis. The analytical reconstruction of the history of the international system is one of the foundations for understanding how states that assume positions of hegemony appear and function, without thereby ceasing to compete with others to expand their power and wealth. According to the author, the formation and expansion of the capitalist system was not the work of "capital in general", but a conquest of the "world of power", of the constitution of territorial states which are, at the same time, "national states-economies". In his interpretation, power has a logical and historical precedence over capital.

Revisiting the debates on global powers and hegemonic transitions, Fiori shows how different theories of international political economy have converged on the idea that the presence of a state with global power is indispensable to ensure order and peace in the world system, as well as to guarantee the technical and political conditions for the functioning of the international economy. Fiori's thesis, however, transcends these formulations and demonstrates that the central theoretical problem lay in a paradox: the main crises in the international system were provoked by the hegemonic power itself, precisely the one that was supposed to act as the great pacifying and stabilizing power. This paradox, ignored or underestimated by other theories, is at the heart of Fiori's research and original contributions, positioning his theory of global power as a reference in the analysis of the dynamics of the international system.

The fifth and final part, "War and Peace", comprises three texts that deepen the reflections on global power, centering the theme of war and world order. He highlights, with the Gulf War, the first after the Cold War, the dimension of ethics in war and peace, especially the specific relationship between war, hegemonic power and the establishment of "international ethics". The text on the Ukrainian War (p. 589) reverberates one of the great

observations of the theory of global power, that wars, conflicts and crises were not the result of the absence of a hegemonic power, but part of the exercise of its power. Fiori argues that the Ukrainian War goes beyond the meaning of a localized and asymmetrical war. Its occurrence expresses disputes between powers, in this case the US and Russia, which brings it closer to a hegemonic war, the outcome of which has the potential to impact on the distribution of power and the set of rules and principles that operate in the international system. Fiori's conclusions on the current "world disorder" point to the logical impossibility, within the current international system, of a situation of "perpetual peace", since the energy that drives the system is war itself. Finally, Fiori devotes the final part of the book to the theoretical and ethical reflections underlying peace.

A theory of global power is a work that synthesizes an intellectual trajectory, marked by the perspicacity, erudition and originality of a restless academic. Fiori is averse to parochialism and dialogues with *mainstream* international theories without abandoning the best of the critical tradition of Latin American thought. His book demonstrates the permanent and certain presence of reflections on power, the guiding thread of a research agenda that is always renewed by the theoretical challenges inherent in social, political and economic transformations. Like someone who undoes the "Gordian knots" of conjunctural analysis, Fiori traverses the temporalities of history and hierarchizes the key issues for understanding, in time and space, the structural crisis of the developmentalist state, the expansive dynamics of the capitalist interstate system and the contradictory nature of global power.

Finally, the analytical rigor and thematic coherence give Fiori's new book a sense of unity. Read in its entirety, the work echoes the words of Italo Calvino, for whom a classic is a book that you always say: "I'm rereading". They are those great works that the more they are read and known, the more they reveal themselves to be "new, unexpected and unseen".

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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 PPGEEI 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, PPGEEI 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). PPGEEI 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 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 memoires, 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".

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11. Contributions must be accompanied of: three keywords in Portuguese or Spanish and three keywords in English; title in English and in Portuguese or Spanish; abstract in English and in Portuguese or Spanish, both with up to 100 words.
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