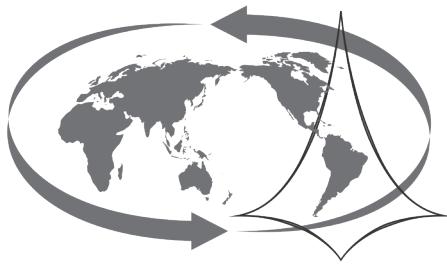


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About the Journal

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 Strategic Studies and International Relations, with special interest in issues related to developing countries and South-South Cooperation – their 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 seeks to 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

2025 was *the* year of truly impactful events! The actions of President Donald Trump, in his new term, have shaken certainties, political narratives and certain academic theories within the field of International Relations. This has been particularly the case with those theories that constituted a *mental map*, devised in the Anglo-Saxon world to legitimise a hegemonic system, as noted by Williams Gonçalves.

The deafening noise of events — considered by many to be unpredictable — has advanced in parallel with the silence of interpretative analysis. Francis Fukuyama's notion of the End of History, proclaiming the triumph of political and economic liberalism and of globalisation, shaped the thinking of an entire generation. Even the less optimistic Clash of Civilizations, by Samuel Huntington, argued that Western Civilisation would be anchored on the two shores of the North Atlantic, with NATO as its foundational element. Where has this idealised world gone?

All of this has evaporated abruptly, generating a situation of profound strategic insecurity that converges with the concept of *Unstable Multipolarity*, which we formulated following the outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian War. The first to be affected were the United States' own allies, such as NATO, the European countries and Ukraine. The narrative that Trump acts on impulse, is unpredictable and lacks strategy overlooks the fact that he is a businessman, skilled in bold moves aimed at reversing the systemic decline of the United States. He seeks to dismantle the existing multilateral system and acts with a focus on geoeconomics, aiming to destabilise competing nations and subordinate allied ones. He is constrained by the midterm election timetable, and whether his policy will succeed or not, only time will tell.

Many statesmen and scholars believe this to be an impossible mission, yet what they all reveal is a strategic confusion, marked by improvised actions and alliances that evolve continuously. This is the *Unstable* side of the new Multipolarity. Understanding the underlying reality—and its possibilities—is a complex and urgent task in a world where everyone fears calling things by their proper names. As a starting point, it is necessary to abandon the illusions and narratives generated by the end of the Cold War and to analyse political-military relations, the technological revolution and its social impact, ongoing demographic transformations and climate change, and, above all, the

new decision-making patterns in the political, military and economic spheres, as it was observed in Venezuela, in which the strategy of *Regime Change* was replaced by *Change inside the Regime*.

In this context, we present a set of articles on Brazil's international position, on Japan and East Asia, on West Africa, as well as a theoretical contribution, giving voice to authors from the Geopolitical South (the Third World). The contributors are scholar-researchers from leading universities in Brazil, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Japan, Indonesia, India, Nigeria and Cameroon, offering a broad range of approaches and themes.

The perspective of authors from the Geopolitical South helps to enrich academic and strategic perceptions of the issues analysed, giving concrete form to the enduring objectives of *AUSTRAL: Brazilian Journal of Strategy and International Relations*. This is crucial at a moment when the global landscape is evolving towards an accumulation of conflicts that are already taking the form of military tensions, within a context of profound unpredictability. Brazil, in turn, has been significantly affected by the changes underway, in a world where geoeconomic scenarios constitute the new reality. Therefore, more than ever, it is essential that the scholarly community urgently produce critical-realist analyses that consider the dynamics of the new global situation, with a view to generating the tools required by decision-makers and by society at large.

In this issue, we are delighted to inform the scholarly community that *AUSTRAL: Brazilian Journal of Strategy and International Relations* has been reclassified by CAPES as an A2-level journal, retroactively for the period 2021–2024. Another noteworthy development is the appointment of Professor Érico Esteves Duarte as Associate Editor, following Professor Marco Cepik's transfer to the University of Brasília; Professor Cepik nevertheless remains a member of the journal's Editorial Board.

We thank the UFRGS Research Office for its support through the Programme for the Support of Journal Publishing (PAEP), as well as the entire team involved in editing and translation, particularly the Editorial Assistants Cássio Donato Monteiro D'Ávila and Igor Estima Sardo, with the collaboration of Felipe Werner Samuel. We also thank our qualified reviewers and Professor Cristina Soreanu Pecequilo for revising the translations. The teamwork of the researchers at NERINT/UFRGS has enabled us to maintain the regularity and quality of *AUSTRAL*.

Paulo Visentini

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

BRAZIL-CHINA RELATIONS UNDER LULA AND BOLSONARO: RAPPROCHEMENT AND DISTANCING THROUGH DISCOURSE

Paulo Afonso Brardo Duarte¹

Lucas Braga Dutra²

1. Introduction

Since the 1960s, Brazil has sought to diversify its trading partners and find new allies, with the aim of increasing its bargaining power. This quest is known as the “Independent Foreign Policy” (Amorim and Ferreira-Pereira 2021). President Lula already showed his interest in maintaining this trend during his first term in office, as will be seen later in the analysis of his speeches. According to de Oliveira (2004), at the beginning of Lula’s first term, the “Brazilian government, albeit with possible different emphases, maintains the perspective of diversification”. The president himself mentions Brazil’s characteristic as a “global country” and refers to China, in particular, as a “decisive” country for Brazil’s integration into the world stage (De Oliveira 2004).

However, his opponent was elected in 2018 with, among many other promises, the promise to change Brazil’s international relations, turning them towards the countries of the North, especially the United States of America, a country with which his electorate most identifies politically and culturally.

According to Gonçalves and Teixeira (2020, 192), “Jair Bolsonaro’s Brazilian government inaugurated an unprecedented foreign policy direction,

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never before seen in any part of the world: a foreign policy driven exclusively by ideological motivations, without commitment to any conception of national interests.” In this foreign policy direction, the Brazilian government sought automatic alignment with the then US government of Donald Trump, in such a way that national interests in Brazil’s relationship with the United States were not taken into account, which proved to be true when the US government did not treat Brazil with the same priority, as exemplified by the United States’ lack of reciprocity with regard to authorising US citizens to enter Brazil without a visa (Medeiros 2022). What existed was merely a simple ideological alignment due to President Bolsonaro’s admiration for Trump’s ideas and persona. Costa and Bernardi (2020) observe Bolsonaro’s relationship with Trump, which is corroborated by the adoption of the same *modus operandi* used on Twitter when dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, a crisis that was politicised by both presidents, who used it as a pretext to adopt an anti-China discourse.

Thus, the Bolsonaro administration represented a break with the tradition of Brazilian foreign policy (Gomes Saraiva and Costa Silva 2019), impacting Sino-Brazilian relations as the Brazilian government sought greater alignment with countries that rivaled China, with President Bolsonaro showing little interest in relations with the Asian country, as can be seen in attitudes such as his indecision regarding Brazil’s participation in the auction of 5G technology from the Chinese company Huawei and Bolsonaro’s alignment with anti-China rhetoric (Amorim and Ferreira-Pereira 2021), including an accusation by the Brazilian president that China was waging a “chemical and bacteriological war” during the COVID-19 pandemic and the refusal to purchase vaccines from the Chinese company Sinovac Biotech.

The literature reviewed presents comparisons between Sino-Brazilian relations during the Workers’ Party (PT) era and under the Bolsonaro government (Damacena 2021; Bueno 2023; Soares 2023). Comparative analyses were also found between the PT and Bolsonaro administrations with regard to multilateralism (Mota 2023) and also with a discursive approach, albeit in relation to the BRICS context (Silva and Holleben 2022) and not exclusively on Sino-Brazilian relations. On the other hand, the literature analysed shows that the history of the relationship between Brazil and China has gone through several phases. According to Becard (2011), between 1949 and 1974, Brazil aimed to increase its list of economic partners, and China needed to rebuild the country after going through a civil war. In 1993, a strategic partnership was established between the two countries, culminating between 2003 and 2011 in a more mature relationship between Beijing and Brasilia (Duarte et al 2024). Grassi (2020) sought to define what is meant by

“strategic partnership” in Brazil, bringing together concepts and contributions from various authors. Amorim and Ferreira-Pereira (2021) present aspects of the strategic partnership between the two countries and point out the changes undergone by this partnership between the governments of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Jair Bolsonaro.

De Oliveira (2004) addresses Lula’s foreign policy, arguing that it is more focused on cooperation with countries in the Global South, and González García (2020) addresses the trade war between China and the United States, explaining the rivalry between the two countries and how this rivalry impacts not only the American and Chinese economies, but also the dynamics of the global economy. These studies demonstrate the complex and dynamic trajectory of Sino-Brazilian relations, which go beyond a simple commercial relationship. They highlight historical aspects, political changes, economic challenges, and the growing importance of this partnership on the global stage, providing a basis for exploring the current state of Sino-Brazilian bilateral relations. The strategic partnership between the countries, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2023, is often recognised in the literature as a model of South-South cooperation (Cardoso 2013; Ferreira-Pereira and Duarte 2023). Indeed, not only is the economy crucial in the Brazil-China relationship (Jenkins 2012; Hiratuka and Sarti 2016), but also a shared sense that global institutions have become obsolete, thus needing to be reformulated to better accommodate the interests of developing countries (Abdenur 2014; Hopewell 2014). The literature offers insightful analyses of the different relationships between Brazilian governments and China (Santoro 2020; Vasquez 2022) and the main investments in the country over the years (Garcia 2020; Silva 2022).

However, taking into account the literature reviewed, no comparative analysis has yet been found that uses discourse as a way of understanding the differences between Sino-Brazilian relations between the heads of state in question, thus revealing a gap in the literature. In view of the above, it is believed that this article can contribute to understanding how leaders with different ideological positions can change the course of the strategic partnership between Brazil and China, observing the role that discourse can play in a bilateral relationship that is so important for both countries.

This article thus proceeds to a comparative analysis between Brazil’s foreign policies towards the People’s Republic of China during the governments of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Jair Messias Bolsonaro, using the French tradition of Discourse Analysis (DA) as a theoretical basis. The aim is to understand how the governments, with their different foreign policies, behaved in relation to the People’s Republic of China through the statements

made by the heads of state during their respective terms of office. Using the analysis of statements by both heads of state through categories of French DA, this article will seek to answer the following question: How did Lula and Bolsonaro influence Sino-Brazilian relations through their governments' foreign policies?

The time frame for this analysis will be during Lula da Silva's first two terms, between 2003 and 2010, and the Bolsonaro administration, from 2019 to 2022. It was thus decided to leave out Lula's third term, as it is still ongoing, although it is foreseeable that the President's stance towards China will remain unchanged. It was therefore decided to analyse complete terms of office rather than partial ones. The article will use a qualitative methodology, based on official speeches by Brazilian leaders from the Library of the Presidency of the Republic, news from the newspaper *O Globo* and *Agência Brasil*, videos from the BBC News Brasil and *Estadão* channels on YouTube, and posts from Jair Bolsonaro's official Instagram profile as primary sources, and articles and books as secondary sources. The methodology allows us to observe the meanings behind the statements through the analysis of different categories of French AD.

This methodology was chosen because it allows meanings to be extracted from discourses with regard to ideologies. As will be discussed in the theoretical framework section, ideology plays an important role in discourse in French DA, especially when it comes to political discourse. Thus, it is necessary to consider that all political discourse is necessarily ideological. Additionally, ideology is one of the categories of analysis in the French tradition of Discourse Analysis that will be used in this article, which also justifies the choice of French DA as a methodology.

Gregolin argues that “undertaking discourse analysis means trying to understand and explain how the meaning of a text is constructed and how that text articulates with the history and society that produced it” (1995, 20). The author also states that discourse analysis can be used to perform an internal analysis, i.e., to analyse what the text says and how it says it, and an external analysis, i.e., why it says what it says (Gregolin 1995). In this way, the methodology can be useful for understanding the meaning constructed in the texts produced by Brazilian presidents in their speeches, in order to understand what each of them says and why they say what they say.

Although Bolsonaro's statements expressed in more informal ways – such as on social media, but also in more impulsive statements to the media – point to a more assertive rhetoric towards China, the truth is that official speeches do not necessarily reflect the same rhetoric. On the contrary, they indicate a much more conciliatory tone than one would expect from Bolsonaro

towards China. Our hypothesis for the fact that, curiously, Bolsonaro's formal statements do not corroborate the distancing from China produced in his informal statements has to do above all with Itamaraty's relatively constant and long-term foreign policy. After all, China is a long-term partner with whom Brazil has a unique relationship in the economic sphere, but also in the field of geopolitics, particularly in the defence of the Global South together with China. On the other hand, we share Santoro's (2022) that the determination of Brazilian subnational actors and lobbies (such as a faction of the Bolsonaro government's Ministries of Agriculture and Economy) to maintain good ties with China, albeit challenging Bolsonaro's own agenda and views, was fundamental in maintaining the relatively conciliatory tone of Bolsonaro's official speeches regarding China.

With this caveat in mind, we can thus find two distinct ethos on the part of Bolsonaro, which he uses depending on the formality of the situation, so that it can be said that Bolsonaro has a fluctuating ethos. In this article, these distinct ethos will be called Aggressive Ethos and Democratic Ethos.

The Aggressive Ethos is used in media outlets, such as in interviews with reporters, press conferences, and social media posts. This ethos is characterised by the use of more aggressive language, with harsh criticism, often in a disrespectful manner, and is intended to disqualify a political opponent or the interlocutor himself. Democratic Ethos, on the other hand, is used in more formal situations, such as official speeches, and is characterised by a more conciliatory tone, emphasising the positive aspects of relations between Brazil and other countries. When it comes to Lula, the president does not display such fluctuations in his ethos, so it can be said that Lula has a more consistent ethos, as he presents himself in a conciliatory tone both in formal situations and in interviews with the media, at least with regard to Brazil's relations with other countries.

The analysis will be divided into a theoretical foundation based on categories of discourse analysis according to Charaudeau and Maingueneau's (2004) AD dictionary, a contextual analysis, a refined analysis of the statements, and a conclusion. This study is based on the hypothesis that Lula, who has a more Marxist ideological inclination and a tendency to prioritise relations between countries in the Global South, sought to bring Brazil and China closer together, intensifying trade and cooperation between the two countries, while Bolsonaro, with ideological leanings more oriented towards economic liberalism and a greater identification with American identity, sought a distancing from the Asian country, leading to a cooling of Sino-Brazilian relations during his government, although maintaining, at the official level, the continuum of Itamaraty's foreign policy. This cooling can

be justified by Bolsonaro's intention to be a political leader considered "right-wing" and "conservative," which implies an identification with American culture and identity, especially with the ideas of former President Donald Trump's agenda. In this way, Bolsonaro attempts to please his electorate by distancing himself from China.

2. Theoretical Basis

To understand how both presidents positioned themselves regarding Brazil's relationship with China, the following categories will be analysed: **ethos**, **context**, and **ideology**.

The first category to be used in this analysis will be **ethos**. According to Patrick Charaudeau and Dominique Maingueneau's Dictionary of Discourse Analysis (2004), "*ethos*" is a term from ancient rhetoric and "designates the image of oneself that the speaker constructs in their speech to exert influence over their audience. This notion has been taken up in language sciences and, in particular, in discourse analysis, where it refers to the verbal modalities of self-presentation in verbal interaction" (Charaudeau and Maingueneau 2004).

For French Discourse Analysis, *ethos* represents the image constructed and desired by the speaker about themselves during discourse, addressing a specific predetermined target audience. It is important to consider that this category "refers to the image of oneself that the speaker produces in their discourse, and not their real person" (Ibidem).

It should be remembered that all discourse is inserted into a **context**, with defined time and space. According to Charaudeau and Maingueneau (2004), "the context of any element X is, in principle, everything that surrounds that element" and "when X is a linguistic unit (of variable nature and dimensions: phoneme, morpheme, word, sentence, utterance), the environment of X is both linguistic (verbal environment) and non-linguistic (situational, social, cultural context) in nature." Thus, context will be the second category to be analysed in this article.

Another category to be analysed will be **ideology**, considering that for French-style DA, all discourse carries with it an ideology, this category is extremely important, especially when it comes to discourse in a political context, such as that which will be analysed in this article.

In the context of the French school, there was a consensus in the 1960s and 1970s to define ideology as "a global system of interpretation of the social world" (Aron 1968, 375 quoted in Charaudeau and Maingueneau

2004) that is endowed with “a historical existence and role within a given society” (Althusser 1965, 238 quoted in Charaudeau and Maingueneau 2004). It is important to consider that “ideology as a system of representations differs from science in that its practical-social function predominates over its theoretical (or knowledge) function” (Althusser 1965, 238 quoted in Charaudeau and Maingueneau 2004).

Also according to Charaudeau and Maingueneau’s Dictionary of Discourse Analysis (2004), the **utterance** “is a unique event, open to repetition, transformation and reactivation”. However, an utterance is always an event that neither language nor meaning can entirely exhaust, because it is linked to the situation that provokes it and the consequences caused by the utterance. Thus, every utterance presupposes others, since it is inserted into a set to play a role among others (Ibidem). This concept should not be confused with the concept of **enunciation**. In fact, according to Beneviste (1974, 80), “Enunciation is singular and unrepeatable, the event has a specific date and place” (quoted in Charaudeau and Maingueneau 2004). Specifically, enunciation consists of “putting language into operation through an individual act of use”, which the author contrasts with utterance, “the act being distinguished from its product” (Charaudeau and Maingueneau 2004).

Thus, the analysis, through the observation of **statements** in different **utterances**, will aim to understand: 1) the images presented by the presidents of themselves with **ethos**; 2) the situation surrounding the discourse using **context**; and 3) the intentions of governments regarding their relationship with China through **ideology**.

3. Analysis

The analysis will be divided into two parts: the General Analysis, which will comment on the statements to be interpreted and how they corroborate the established hypothesis, and the Refined Analysis, which will highlight the statements in the speeches in which the aforementioned statements and ideas are found. The corpus of the analysis will be divided into lines to facilitate the location of the statements and will be found in its entirety in the appendix at the end of this article.

3.1. Contextual Analysis

In his speeches, Lula often emphasizes the strategic nature of the partnership between Brazil and China, in order to reinforce the interest in

strengthening ties with the Asian country. Therefore, an important concept to pay attention to is that of **strategic partnership**, which is commonly used in international relations in an imprecise manner, without a very clear understanding of what a strategic partnership means. Grassi (2020) highlights the recurrent use of the expression by Brazilian diplomacy and the criticism made due to the lack of criteria for using the term, noting that “not everyone can be a priority” (Lessa and De Oliveira 2013 quoted in Grassi 2020).

According to Grassi (2020, 634), strategic partnerships for Brazilian international relations can be considered those that fit the following definition: “Priority bilateral relations, established with key regional or global partners, [which may] have broader agendas, covering a wide spectrum of areas (political-institutional, diplomatic, economic-commercial, military, technological, social and/or cultural)” and which “are formed on the basis of common interests in various areas and are distinguished by historical, geopolitical, geographical and/or identity factors; do not generate binding obligations; depend on the recognition of the other as an essential partner, on a reciprocal feeling of friendship and trust, on common identities that strengthen relations, on shared interests and/or challenges, and on increased dialogue” (Grassi 2020, 643).

By emphasising the Sino-Brazilian partnership as strategic, Lula presents, at the same time, a friendly ethos towards China and the ideology of his discourse. Lula’s ethos is friendly when he refers to the Chinese using the word “friends” and values the diversification of trade relations and the search for allies in the so-called Global South, without having the countries of the North as his main focus, which is also ideological, as it presents his government’s desire not to be dependent on the countries of the North and to have closer relations with the countries of the South.

Lula’s statements also occur in a context which, in the case of the statements analysed, is the context of his first two terms (2003-2010), when Brazil was growing closer to Asian countries, especially China, a trend observed since the previous decade, when the Itamar Franco government defined Asia as one of the priorities of Brazilian diplomacy, a perspective that the Fernando Henrique Cardoso government continued (De Oliveira 2004). In this context, Brazil also established agreements with different countries in the Global South. According to Amorim and Ferreira-Pereira (2021), the search for more South-South relations was stimulated by the absence of direct competition and the presence of common goals, which facilitated political partnerships. Access to new technological knowledge and capital and the diversity of strategic partnerships cultivated by Brazil at the beginning of the century were intended to promote a balance in relation to the major powers in order to reform the international order and increase the country’s

influence worldwide (Ibidem). Thus, Lula's speeches are part of a context of diversification of partnerships and rapprochement with Asian countries, especially China, the main emerging economy in the region, with which Brazil has a strategic partnership.

With regard to Bolsonaro's statements, it is important to remember the new foreign policy direction mentioned above, in which Bolsonaro's ideological affinity with then-US President Donald Trump led to an alignment with the United States, China's main rival, with Bolsonaro adopting a pro-US and, consequently, anti-China discourse (Almeida 2023). Bolsonaro has presented an ethos of closeness to the Americans in order to please his electorate since the beginning of his administration, when, after meeting President Trump on a visit to the United States, he said he was "in love" with Donald Trump (Maia, 2019). This statement presents an ideology in that it brings the Brazilian government closer to the American identity and the ideas defended by Trump, which are considered "conservative" and belonging to the culture of the United States. Furthermore, this statement fits into the context of political polarisation experienced both in the United States, where Trump rivaled the Democratic Party, and in Brazil, where Bolsonaro rivaled Lula and his party, the Workers' Party.

Among Bolsonaro's actions that caused a rift with the Chinese, the episodes in which the Brazilian president made the statements observed in this analysis stand out. These are: 1) The statement that negotiations on Chinese Huawei's 5G technology were "off the radar" (BBC News Brasil 2019), which suggested the Brazilian government's indecision about Brazilian participation in the auction for the implementation of Huawei's technology in Brazil; 2) Bolsonaro's veiled accusation against China that the Asian country was waging a bacteriological war by creating the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which caused the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020; and 3) The refusal to purchase the CoronaVac vaccine from the Chinese company Sinovac Biotech.

These three episodes, analysed from the perspective of French Discourse Analysis categories, reveal a hostile ethos of mistrust towards China's intentions towards Brazil, as well as revealing Bolsonaro's ideology, which is opposed to closer relations with countries in the South and more identified with Brazil's relationship with the United States and with American identity.

However, the context of the statement about negotiations with Huawei being "off the radar" differs from the context of the other two. This is because this first episode occurred before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, during Bolsonaro's trip to China in 2019. The context in which this statement was made is that of the trade war between Donald Trump's United States and China, which, according to González García (2020), disrupted the dynamics of

the world economy as a whole and was related to the technological ambitions of both countries. Thus, the implementation of Chinese technology in Brazil, being contrary to US interests, also became contrary to the interests of the Brazilian government.

As for the other two statements, both are part of the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the SARS-CoV-2 virus, first detected in Wuhan province, China, spread around the world, causing a global health and economic crisis in 2020. When Bolsonaro veiledly accuses China, the country with the highest GDP growth in 2020 (Paraguassu 2021), of using the virus as a weapon to promote a “bacteriological war” (Estadão 2021) without any evidence, he presents an aggressive ethos of accusation and distrust towards China and also reveals an anti-China ideology, representing the Asian country as a global threat, aligning himself with Donald Trump’s “Chinese virus” discourse (Rogers, Jake and Swanson 2020).

The same can be said about the refusal to purchase Chinese vaccines from SinoVac (Verdélío 2020), referred to by Bolsonaro as the “João Dória vaccine”, named after one of his political opponents, as this tacitly reveals a preference for competing vaccines, in this context, vaccines developed and produced by American and European companies. Thus, we see once again an ethos of mistrust towards China, which reinforces the anti-China ideology mentioned above, as it seeks to distance itself from the Asian country in order to portray it as a threat, since the Chinese vaccine is not welcome because it is the target of mistrust, even at a time when Brazilian citizens were losing their lives precisely because of the lack of a vaccine that could combat the disease causing the health crisis in question.

However, when it comes to more formal situations, such as presidential meetings, Bolsonaro chooses to use the Democratic Ethos, respecting the consistency of Itamaraty’s policy. The use of Democratic Ethos can be seen at the opening of the “Brazil-China Business Seminar: 45 years building bilateral ties,” held in Beijing in 2019 (Bolsonaro 2019a), and at the meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Itamaraty Palace, also in 2019 (Bolsonaro 2019b), occasions on which the Brazilian President used a more moderate and even friendly tone due to the presence of members of the Chinese government and President Xi Jinping.

As a matter of formality, Bolsonaro says he feels honoured and happy for the opportunity to meet with Xi Jinping and the Chinese delegation. Bolsonaro also thanks the Chinese President for his position in defence of Brazilian sovereignty in the Amazon (Bolsonaro 2019a; Bolsonaro 2019b). These attitudes, in addition to respecting the formality of the situation, are in line with Brazil’s foreign policy, which has cultivated a friendly relationship with China for decades.

It is important to note that when using the Democratic Ethos, Bolsonaro does not present his own ideology, but rather that of Itamaraty, which is more focused on collaboration with China, compared to Bolsonaro's ideological orientation. With regard to the context, during his administration, Bolsonaro showed interest in the exploration of niobium and graphene in Brazil (Gov.br 2021). Thus, the president said he viewed "with enthusiasm" the cooperation between Brazil and China for the exploration and development of the use of these resources during a speech during the Chinese president's visit to Brazil in 2019 (Bolsonaro 2019b). In addition, the Brazilian president came into conflict with French President Emmanuel Macron after the latter relativised Brazil's sovereignty in the Amazon (Soares and Gullino 2019). In this conflict, China demonstrated a position in favour of respecting Brazilian sovereignty, a gesture that led Bolsonaro to thank the Chinese in the two formal speeches analysed.

3.2. Refined Analysis

In this section, the statements made by the two presidents will be indicated through the transcription of their speeches. We chose to keep the transcription faithful to the speakers' words, thus indicating words that deviate from the standard Portuguese language, as well as words that were mispronounced or contracted, using single quotation marks and italics, as follows: '*word*'. The complete transcription of the speeches used in this analysis will be included in the appendices at the end of the article.

The first category to be analysed will be ethos. Lula's ethos will be analysed first, in chronological order of the governments, with Bolsonaro's coming next. As mentioned earlier, Lula's ethos is friendly towards China and values closer relations between the two countries through cooperation and intensified trade between Brazil and China.

Lula's friendly ethos, used to show his desire for closer ties with China, can be seen in the following statements:

- (1) "...I am convinced that closer ties with Asia, and in particular with China, will be decisive for Brazil to achieve this greater destiny." (Corpus 4, line 8)
- (2) "My friends from China..." (Corpus 5, line 1)
- (3) "I believe that today we are experiencing another auspicious moment in China-Brazil relations." (Corpus 5, line 6)

- (4) “I would like to begin by expressing my satisfaction at seeing so many Chinese and Brazilian businesspeople gathered in this vibrant and dynamic city of Shanghai.” (Corpus 5, line 10)
- (5) “It is meetings like this that will make our strategic partnership more than just a political or diplomatic reality and also give it commercial and economic substance.” (Corpus 5, line 12)
- (6) “China is a country with a millennial history; Brazil is a comparatively young nation; geographically, we are distant. But we are united by the same desires for development and social justice.” (Corpus 5, line 15)
- (7) “We are two large developing countries seeking to integrate into international trade and investment flows without giving up the autonomy of our decision-making processes.” (Corpus 5, line 18)
- (8) “I have just returned from Beijing, where I had an extremely fruitful meeting with President Hu Jintao.” (Corpus 5, line 42)
- (9) “I repeat here what I said to the President of this great nation: China and Brazil have no disputes of any kind, either political or economic. Together, we can join forces and work for our development in absolute freedom.” (Corpus 5, line 57)
- (10) “I would like to congratulate the Chinese government, Chinese businesspeople and Brazilian businesspeople on the agreements we are going to sign today.” (Corpus 7, line 54)
- (11) “We want to become two major economies. And for that to happen, we need to have the courage to renew and strengthen our partnership every day.” (Corpus 7, line 68)
- (12) “This is an opportune moment to share with you some reflections on the strategic partnership between China and Brazil, analysing the challenges we face in these times of international transformation.” (Corpus 8, line 4)
- (13) “China and Brazil are two giants united by a permanent desire to improve the living conditions of our populations. Due to our interests and size, we are destined to find ourselves united on various international stages and in various coalitions.” (Corpus 8, line 41)

With regard to ideology, Lula’s represents non-submission to developed countries, the so-called “North,” in order to value cooperation between countries of the South, as can be seen in the following statements:

(14) “This is how, in my opinion, Brazil needs to proceed. We have South America, we have China, we have the whole of Asia, we have the Middle East, we have India and we have Africa, and it is our political, moral and historical obligation to strengthen our relationship with the African continent; we cannot forget that.” (Corpus 4, line 1)

(15) “...I am convinced that closer ties with Asia, and China in particular, will be decisive for Brazil to achieve this greater destiny.” (Corpus 4, line 8)

(16) “It is meetings like this that will make our strategic partnership more than just a political or diplomatic reality and also give it commercial and economic substance.” (Corpus 5, line 12)

(17) “Hence the importance of our strategic alliance – not only to intensify our mutual relationship, but also to change the unfair rules that currently govern international trade.” (Corpus 5, line 20)

(18) “Today, the agenda is beginning to diversify. We are exporting steel, vehicles, auto parts, cellulose, soybean oil, orange juice and other products with higher added value.” (Corpus 5, line 24)

(19) “In addition to its economic importance, tourism is especially valuable as a tool for bringing peoples and cultures closer together. Mutual understanding will allow our relations to deepen and diversify.” (Corpus 5, line 36)

(20) “We agree, in particular, on the importance of basing our relations on a set of four principles and objectives: strengthening political trust on an equal footing; increasing trade on a mutually advantageous basis; intensifying cooperation in international forums and multilateral negotiations; and deepening knowledge and exchange between civil societies.” (Corpus 5, line 45)

(21) “The national and international press is watching this new chapter in the relationship between the two largest developing countries in the East and West with attention and expectation.” (Corpus 5, line 53)

(22) “As we celebrate 30 years of diplomatic relations, the Chinese and Brazilians are rediscovering each other with their eyes turned towards a future of growing cooperation.” (Corpus 5, line 55)

(23) “I repeat here what I said to the President of this great nation: China and Brazil have no disputes of any kind, whether political or economic. Together, we can join forces and work for our development in absolute freedom.” (Corpus 5, line 57)

(24) “...you are making an invaluable contribution so that we can build, in this 21st century, another history of Humanity. A history in which

China and Brazil will never again be forgotten in the conversation among rich countries...” (Corpus 7, line 56)

(25) “The multipolar world emerging in the 21st century will find us acting at the centre of global decision-making with a multilateral perspective.” (Corpus 8, line 38)

In relation to the context, it can be said that the growing cooperation between Brazil and China at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century was conducive to the holding of the seminars “Brazil-China: A Necessary Leap” in Rio de Janeiro in 2003, “Brazil-China: A Successful Partnership” in Shanghai in 2004, and later, the “Brazil-China Seminar: New Opportunities for Strategic Partnership” (Da Silva 2009a) in Beijing in 2009 and the inauguration of the Centre for Brazilian Studies in Beijing, also in 2009 (Da Silva 2009b), occasions on which Lula’s statements analysed here were made. In addition, the search for diversity in partnerships during the same period is noteworthy. This context can be seen in:

(26) “We have South America, we have China, we have the whole of Asia, we have the Middle East, we have India and we have Africa, and it is our political, moral and historical obligation to strengthen our relationship with the African continent, we cannot forget that.” (Corpus 4, line 1)

(27) “I believe that today we are experiencing another auspicious moment in China-Brazil relations.” (Corpus 5, line 6)

(28) “Last year, China was the third largest destination for Brazilian exports. Soybeans and iron ore have been the traditional products in our sales to this country. Today, the list is beginning to diversify. We are exporting steel, vehicles, auto parts, cellulose, soybean oil, orange juice and other products with higher added value.” (Corpus 5, line 22)

(29) “As we celebrate 30 years of diplomatic relations, the Chinese and Brazilians are rediscovering each other with their eyes set on a future of growing cooperation.” (Corpus 5, line 55)

(30) “This is a special moment in relations between China and Brazil. We are celebrating 35 years of diplomatic relations between our countries and strengthening our strategic partnership.” (Corpus 7, line 1)

(31) “At dinner last night with President Hu Jintao, we once again noted the great coincidence of positions between Brazil and China in international forums in the economic, commercial and financial

areas, as well as the potential for expanding the already extensive bilateral cooperation.” (Corpus 7, line 45)

(32) “We are dynamic and complementary economies. For this reason, we have been able to intensify cooperation on several fronts...” (Corpus 8, line 11)

At this point, we will analyse Bolsonaro’s statements, starting with his ethos, which is aggressive, unconcerned with Chinese opinion of him and seeking to distance China from Brazil, as can be seen in:

(33) “No, that... For now, off the radar.” (Corpus 1, line 2)

(34) “After Trump’s praise yesterday, I am increasingly fond of him.” (Corpus 2, line 1)

(35) “It’s a new virus, no one knows if it was created in a laboratory or if it arose because a human being ingested an unsuitable animal. But it’s there. The military knows what chemical, bacteriological and radiological warfare is. Could we be facing a new war? Which country has seen the greatest growth in its GDP? I’m not going to tell you.” (Corpus 3, line 1)

(36) “João Dória’s Chinese vaccine.” (Corpus 6, line 1)

(37) “The Brazilian people WILL NOT BE ANYONE’S GUINEA PIGS” (Corpus 6, line 5)

The next category to be analysed is ideology. Bolsonaro’s ideology can be said to be aligned with Donald Trump’s anti-China rhetoric in both contexts analysed. Therefore, the pro-Western and, above all, pro-United States ideology of rejection of China can be seen in the following statements:

(38) “No, that... For now, off the radar.” (Corpus 1, line 2)

(39) “After Trump’s praise yesterday, I am increasingly fond of him.” (Corpus 2, line 1)

(40) “It’s a new virus, no one knows if it was created in a laboratory or if it arose because a human being ingested an unsuitable animal. But it’s there. The military knows what chemical, bacteriological and radiological warfare is. Could we be facing a new war? Which country has seen the greatest growth in its GDP? I’m not going to tell you.” (Corpus 3, line 1)

(41) “João Dória’s Chinese vaccine” (Corpus 6, line 1)

(42) “In view of the above, my decision is not to purchase the vaccine.”
(Corpus 6, line 8)

In terms of context, Bolsonaro’s statements analysed fit into the two contexts mentioned above, the trade war between the United States and China and the COVID-19 pandemic, giving special meaning to the words and justifying the ideology exposed above, which can be observed in the following statements:

(43) “No, that... For now, off the radar.” (Corpus 1, line 2)

(44) “It’s a new virus, no one knows if it was created in a laboratory or if it arose because a human being ingested an unsuitable animal. But it’s there. The military knows what chemical, bacteriological and radiological warfare is. Could we be facing a new war? Which country has seen the greatest growth in its GDP? I’m not going to tell you.”
(Corpus 3, line 1)

(45) “The Brazilian people WILL NOT BE ANYONE’S GUINEA PIGS.” (Corpus 6, line 5)

(46) “There is no justification for a billion-pound financial investment in a drug that has not even passed its testing phase.” (Corpus 6, line 6)

(47) “In view of the above, my decision is not to purchase the vaccine in question.” (Corpus 6, line 8)

Now we will present statements in which Bolsonaro uses the Democratic Ethos, respecting the members of the Chinese delegation present and the policy of Itamaraty. The following statements exemplify the ethos used:

(48) “I was very honoured by the warm hospitality I received during my visit to the State of China. The visit was extremely productive, and we achieved concrete results with the signing of several agreements.”
(Corpus 9, line 2)

(49) “I am happy to have the opportunity for this further meeting to discuss an extensive bilateral agenda.” (Corpus 9, line 6)

(50) “I am enthusiastic about the cooperation between Brazil and China to explore and develop the use of niobium. I am also optimistic

about the possibility of expanding cooperation to graphene.” (Corpus 9, line 16)

(51) “I congratulate the Chinese government on its willingness to increase imports of Brazilian products.” (Corpus 9, line 27)

(52) “Once again, I thank Your Excellency for the position taken by the Chinese government on recent questions about Brazilian sovereignty and the Amazon region. Thank you very much once again.” (Corpus 9, line 36)

(53) “...Mr Hu Chunhua, I would like to thank your ambassador to Brazil for his words recognising our sovereignty over the Amazon region during the recent G7 meeting. Many thanks to the Chinese government.” (Corpus 10, line 1)

(54) “The satisfaction of being here is priceless. I am honoured and happy. And this presence is concrete proof that we want, yes, more than to expand, to diversify our entire business environment.” (Corpus 10, line 6)

(55) “I am very happy to be here and, this afternoon, I will have the pleasure of personally shaking hands with President Xi, demonstrating that the new government is perfectly aligned with our business... that we are aligned on more things than just trade.” (Corpus 10, line 24)

With regard to ideology, Bolsonaro, in using the Democratic Ethos, reflects the ideology of Itamaraty rather than his own, which can be seen in the following statements:

(56) “The visit was extremely productive, we achieved concrete results with the signing of several agreements. I have instructed my ministers to promptly implement the agreements signed with China.” (Corpus 9, line 3)

(57) “I reiterate my invitation to Your Excellency to visit Brazil at an appropriate time.” (Corpus 9, line 8)

(58) “The Brazilian government will continue to welcome Chinese investments in Brazil, in areas of mutual interest and in accordance with current legislation. Brazil is building a business environment that is much more receptive to foreign investors. Chinese companies have played an important role in the Investment Partnership Programme...” (Corpus 9, line 20)

(59) “I congratulate the Chinese government on its willingness to

increase imports of Brazilian products. It is important that we make progress on civil aircraft certification, as well as on sanitary and phytosanitary issues.” (Corpus 9, line 27)

(60) “For our part, we have lifted the suspension on ten Chinese fish establishments. We hope that the health authorities of our countries will increasingly adopt measures to expand access to their respective markets, with diversification of exports.” (Corpus 9, line 32)

(61) “The satisfaction of being here is priceless. I am honoured and happy. And this presence is concrete proof that we do indeed want to diversify our entire business environment, rather than just expand it.” (Corpus 10, line 6)

(62) “Businesspeople in general, given the meeting we had yesterday and others we will have during this trip, I would like to thank you all for your confidence in Brazil. We were born to walk together in trade matters, among others.” (Corpus 10, line 20)

(63) “I am very happy to be here, and this afternoon I will have the pleasure of personally shaking hands with President Xi, demonstrating that the new government is perfectly aligned with our business... that we are aligned on more things than just trade.” (Corpus 10, line 24)

Regarding the context, during his administration, Bolsonaro highlighted his interest in the exploration of niobium and graphene. In addition, the Brazilian president was in conflict with the President of France, who relativised Brazilian sovereignty in the Amazon. This context can be observed in the following statements:

(64) “I am enthusiastic about the cooperation between Brazil and China to explore and develop the use of niobium. I am also optimistic about the possibility of expanding cooperation to graphene.” (Corpus 9, line 16)

(65) “I thank you once again, Your Excellency, for the position taken by the Chinese government on recent questions about Brazilian sovereignty and the Amazon region. Thank you very much once again.” (Corpus 9, line 36)

(66) “...Mr Hu Chunhua, I would like to thank your ambassador to Brazil for his words recognising our sovereignty over the Amazon region during the recent episode at the G7 meeting. Many thanks to the Chinese government. For us, this public recognition and your words about this region, which is so important for the world and for

Brazil, are priceless.” (Corpus 10, line 1)

4. Conclusion

This article sought to answer the following research question: How did Lula and Bolsonaro influence Sino-Brazilian relations through their governments’ foreign policies? We sought to understand the different ways in which the two Brazilian presidents behaved in relation to Brazil-China relations during their terms in office by analysing their statements using the French tradition of Discourse Analysis.

After investigating the statements and correlating them with the arguments presented, it was possible to observe, through the analysis of each president’s ethos and ideology within different contexts, that President Lula, since his first term, sought closer ties with the People’s Republic of China, while President Bolsonaro preferred to maintain a more distant stance from the Asian country, demonstrating mistrust and choosing to move closer to the United States of America, which rivals China, despite respecting the state policy of Itamaraty and being aware of the importance of Brazil’s relationship with China, so that he did not necessarily seek a break with the Asian country.

Lula, following a trend observed in previous governments, worked to contribute to the strengthening of ties between Brazil and the Asian country, both by increasing trade between the two countries and by cooperating in the development of technologies and cultural and knowledge exchange. The leader of the Workers’ Party was open to cooperation with China, encouraging the evolution of the strategic partnership between the two emerging economies and bringing the two countries closer together technologically and commercially.

In contrast, Bolsonaro focused his foreign policy on relations with Donald Trump’s United States, loosening ties between Brazil and China by showing mistrust and a desire for distance. By adopting this stance, Bolsonaro ended up giving little importance to the Sino-Brazilian strategic partnership, causing disagreements between Brazilian and Chinese diplomats, making unfounded accusations against China and hindering the advancement of technological cooperation between the two countries.

It can therefore be said that an analysis of the statements made by both Brazilian leaders corroborates the hypothesis that President Lula, for ideological reasons, sought to strengthen and develop Brazil’s strategic partnership with China, increasing trade and knowledge exchange between the countries, while Bolsonaro, also for ideological reasons, chose the

opposite path, distancing the countries and stimulating mistrust towards China, not collaborating with the strengthening of ties in the Sino-Brazilian partnership. However, it is important to emphasise that, in the case of the Bolsonaro government, this rhetorical position is not reflected in the absence of political relations or in the breakdown of the strategic partnership with China, particularly in the economic field. Contrary to what might be expected, judging by the anti-China rhetoric that characterised Bolsonaro's presidency, Sino-Brazilian ties have proven resilient. For example, bilateral trade not only withstood more severe impacts, but also strengthened rapidly, with the resumption of trade flows from before the Covid-19 pandemic, according to Brazil's Ministry of Economy, which states that "bilateral trade flows in 2020 grew by 3% compared to 2019, with a total value of US\$ 102.5 billion" (2021, para. 2). But what is most surprising is that, despite Bolsonaro's attempts to forge a closer partnership with then-US President Donald Trump, while seeking to reduce trade with China, exports to the United States (the country's second-largest buyer) fell considerably. In fact, between January and September 2020, Brazil exported US\$15.1 billion and imported US\$18.2 billion, totalling US\$33.4 billion in trade flows. These figures show a US\$11.2 billion decrease in total operations, a 25% drop compared to the US\$44.6 billion in the previous period (when Brazil sent US\$22.1 billion in exports to the US and purchased US\$22.5 billion in imports) (Gazeta do Povo, 2020).

In addition, the pandemic has shown how Brazil needs China "to breathe." In other words, like many other countries, Brazil has realised how dependent it is on China in terms of medical equipment. This is precisely where domestic actors and interests show their agency in the face of then-President Jair Bolsonaro's anti-China political and ideological agenda. For its part, China successfully passed Bolsonaro's test, despite some controversial friction in which Chinese diplomacy distanced itself from its traditional low-profile position and responded assertively to criticism raised by Bolsonaro supporters. In short, China's pragmatic patience, while viewing Bolsonaro as the exception rather than the rule in the long-standing Sino-Brazilian Strategic Partnership, also highlighted Brazil's lack of a coherent strategy towards China, compared to Beijing's consistent long-term interests and objectives towards Brazil.

Future work on the subject may explore other categories of the French tradition of discourse analysis, as well as seek to understand how the discourses made in election campaigns reveal the opinion of each politician's electorate regarding relations between Brazil and China. Another possibility is to analyse the discourses of each president's government teams regarding the partnership between the two countries. It would be advisable for future

work on the subject to investigate why Brazil has been reticent about joining the Belt and Road Initiative, despite the fact that the Sino-Brazilian strategic partnership is one of the most advanced in the world and that Lula da Silva's third term sought to strengthen ties with China, unlike what happened under the Bolsonaro administration. For now, Itamaraty's resistance to joining the Belt and Road Initiative has less to do with pressure from the US and more to do with the concrete benefits that the initiative seems to bring to Brazil.

Appendix

This appendix contains the transcription of the speeches referred to in this work.

The corpus number will be indicated in the title, followed by a full stop '.', and the line number will be indicated to the left of the text, followed by a closed parenthesis ')'.

1. Press conference during Bolsonaro's visit to China in October 2019:

1) Reporter: "Is *Huawei* welcome in Brazil?"

2) Bolsonaro: "No, that... For now, off the radar."

SOURCE: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vV4Xi-CizJA> BBC News Brazil channel. Accessed on 26 November 2023

2. Bolsonaro's statement in a news article in the newspaper "O Globo":

1) "After Trump's praise yesterday, I am increasingly fond of him."

SOURCE: <https://oglobo.globo.com/economia/bolsonaro-diz-estar-cada-vez-mais-apaixonado-por-donald-trump-23845889>

3. Bolsonaro at an official ceremony in Brasilia, 5 May 2021.

1) "It's a new virus, no one knows if it was created in a laboratory or if it arose because a human being 2) ingested an unsuitable animal. But it's here. The military knows what 3) chemical, bacteriological and radiological warfare is. Could we be facing a 4) new war? Which country has seen the greatest growth in its GDP? I'm not going to tell you."

SOURCE: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5UYI-6l4Ddo> Estadão Channel Accessed on 11 December 2023.

4. Speech by the President of the Republic, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, at the opening ceremony of the Brazil-China Seminar: "A Necessary Leap"

– BNDES, Rio de Janeiro, 30 April 2003. In: *Palavra Internacional do Brasil*, 02/05/2003. Available at: <http://www.relnet.com.br>.

1) “This is how, in my opinion, Brazil needs to proceed. We have South America, we have China, we have the whole of Asia, we have the Middle East, we have India and we have Africa, and it is our political, moral and historical obligation to strengthen our relationship with the African continent; we cannot forget this. (...) I have repeatedly said that South America will be a priority for my government, as I am convinced that Brazil’s full development will only be possible as part of the integration of the continent as a whole. (...) And while we have a regional vocation, we are also a global country. Just as national integration 9) requires regional integration, I am convinced that closer ties with Asia, and 10) in particular with China, will be decisive for Brazil to achieve this greater destiny.”

SOURCE: De Oliveira H. A. (2004) “Brazil-China: thirty years of a Strategic Partnership.” *Brazilian Journal of International Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0034-73292004000100002>

5. Excerpt from the speech by the President of the Republic, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, at the closing of the seminar “Brazil-China: a Successful Partnership” in Shanghai, China, 26 May 2004.

1) My friends from China, Deputy Mayor of Shanghai, Trade Representative for Latin America of the Chinese government, Ministers, Governors, Parliamentarians, Chinese businesspeople and investors, Brazilian businesspeople and investors (...)

4) (...) I believe that today we are experiencing another auspicious moment 5) in China-Brazil relations. It is important that we be very clear and very 6) humble in recognising that many before us worked hard so that we could 7) experience this day. And I hope that thirty years from now, other businesspeople, other 8) government officials, when visiting China, will realise that what we are 9) planting today will have borne fruit threefold, or perhaps even more than we have already achieved 10) to date. (...)

11) (...) I would like to begin by expressing my satisfaction at seeing so many Chinese and Brazilian businesspeople gathered in this vibrant and dynamic city of Shanghai.

13) It is meetings like this that will make our strategic partnership more than just a political or diplomatic reality and also give it commercial and economic substance. (...)

16) China is a country with a millennia-old history; Brazil is a

comparatively young nation; geographically, we are distant from each other. But we are united by the same aspirations for development and social justice. We are two large developing countries seeking to integrate into international trade and investment flows without relinquishing the autonomy of our decision-making processes. Hence the importance of our strategic alliance – not only to intensify our mutual relationship, but also to change the unfair rules that currently govern international trade. Ladies and gentlemen, Last year, China was the third largest destination for Brazilian exports. Soybeans and iron ore have been the traditional products in our sales to this country. Today, the list is beginning to diversify. We are exporting steel, vehicles, auto parts, cellulose, soybean oil, orange juice and other products with higher added value.

(...) We wish to continue with our joint investment plans. It was with great satisfaction that we concluded an agreement in Beijing to facilitate Chinese investment in the recovery and expansion of part of the Brazilian railway network. I was also very pleased to see that many of the companies represented here are 32)moving forward with joint venture projects in various areas, such as 33)steel, oil exploration, alumina production and various consumer goods. I also welcome the progress made in agreements to facilitate the flow of tourists between the two countries. Yesterday, President Hu Jintao confirmed that China has granted Brazil the status of authorised tourist destination. Tour operators and travel agencies will promptly begin their work to promote tourism in both directions. In addition to its economic importance, tourism is especially valuable as a means of bringing peoples and cultures closer together. Mutual understanding will allow our relations to deepen and diversify. Ladies and gentlemen, I have just returned from Beijing, where I had an extremely fruitful meeting with President Hu Jintao.

We agreed, in particular, on the importance of basing our relations on a set of four principles and objectives: strengthening political trust 46)on an equal footing; increasing trade on a mutually advantageous basis; 47)intensifying cooperation in international forums and multilateral negotiations; 48)and deepening knowledge and exchange between civil societies. As I had the opportunity to point out in my contacts in Beijing with leaders from the public and private sectors, the interest generated by this visit can be considered absolutely unprecedented. I brought to China a delegation composed of a large number of ministers, governors, and parliamentarians. I

am accompanied by more than five hundred businesspeople. The national and international press is watching this new chapter in the relationship between the two largest developing countries in the East and West with attention and expectation.

As we celebrate 30 years of diplomatic relations, the Chinese and Brazilians are rediscovering each other with their eyes turned to a future of growing cooperation. I repeat here what I said to the President of this great nation: China and Brazil have no disputes of any kind, whether political or economic. Together, we can join forces and work for our development in absolute freedom.

SOURCE: <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva/discursos/10-mandato/2004/26-05-2004-speech-by-the-president-of-the-republic-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-at-the-closing-of-the-seminar-brazil-china-a-successful-partnership20192019/view>

6. Bolsonaro's post on Instagram on 21 October 2020:

1)- João Dória's Chinese vaccine:

2) For my Government, any vaccine, before being made available to the population, 3) must be SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN BY THE MINISTRY OF 4) HEALTH and CERTIFIED BY ANVISA.

5) The Brazilian people WILL NOT BE ANYONE'S GUINEA PIGS.

6) There is no justification for a billion-dollar financial investment in a drug that has not even passed its testing phase.

8) In view of the above, my decision is not to purchase the vaccine in question.

SOURCE: https://www.instagram.com/p/CGm5PzxBnWT/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Accessed on 24 November 2023.

7. Excerpt from the speech by the President of the Republic, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, at the Brazil-China Seminar: New Opportunities for Strategic Partnership - Beijing, 19 May 2009.

1) (...) This is a special moment in relations between China and Brazil. We are celebrating 2) 35 years of diplomatic relations between our countries and strengthening 3) our strategic partnership. Bilateral trade has intensified. The potential for expanding investment between the two countries is becoming increasingly 4) clear. Our governments 5) have been working hard to strengthen our partnership. But more active participation from the business community is needed.

That is why I made a point of travelling with a large delegation of businesspeople. Ladies and gentlemen, since the beginning of this decade, trade between China and Brazil has grown at an average annual rate of more than 40%. Last year, it reached 55%. In 2009, China became Brazil's largest trading partner. Our trade continued to grow, even during the crisis, despite the recession that hit the world. Brazilian exports to China are concentrated in products such as soybeans, iron ore, oil and cellulose. These are important products. 14) We want to increase these exports. But we need to diversify them to 15) ensure the long-term expansion of bilateral trade flows. We have to add 16) value to these products. This depends on the combined action of governments, removing 17) barriers, and entrepreneurs, exercising their creativity. This will reduce the risk that commodity price volatility could have on the economy and employment. Advancing cooperation between health authorities in both countries is fundamental to this goal. This will boost sales of other products such as meat, for example. Diversification also involves products with greater technological sophistication. This is the case with Embraer aircraft, which, despite being among Brazil's main export products, are still little known in China. Petrobras' experience in deepwater oil drilling and our thriving industry of agricultural machinery and equipment, engines and compressors are also noteworthy. Brazil's experience with biofuels offers an efficient and clean alternative for motor vehicle transport and energy cogeneration. Here too, the application of technology to basic products will add value to our trade. There is great potential for cooperation in the service sector, especially in the computerisation of large systems.

31) (...) I recently signed a decree regulating the establishment of Export Processing Zones, creating great opportunities for the installation of Chinese industries in Brazil, focused on international trade.

34) We can greatly expand our Strategic Partnership by increasing direct investment. The agreements signed between the China Development Bank and Brazilian institutions such as Petrobras and the BNDES will allow Chinese participation in important projects in Brazil. We would also like to see more Chinese presence in the capital market. Therefore, I invite banks and investors to look more closely at the Brazilian market and companies. The Brazilian debt securities market is fully open to foreign investors. There is also a growing market for investments in private securities and shares. The Brazilian government will work with the relevant sectors of the Chinese government to facilitate these

investments.

Ladies and gentlemen,

45)At dinner last night with President Hu Jintao, we once again noted
46)the broad convergence of positions between Brazil and China in
international forums 47)in the economic, trade and financial areas, as
well as the potential for expanding 48)our already extensive bilateral
cooperation. For this cooperation, we are developing a Joint Action
Plan to guide our actions over the next five years. It will be a broad
cooperation programme, built on extensive consultations between the
governments and various sectors of civil society in both countries. I
invite all our business friends to participate in this effort, and I am
sure that this seminar will yield many contributions.

(...) I would like to congratulate the Chinese government, Chinese
businesspeople, and Brazilian businesspeople for the agreements
we are signing today. I am sure that you are making an invaluable
contribution so that we can build a new history for humanity in the
21st century. A history in which China and Brazil will never again be
forgotten in the conversations of rich countries, either because we will
be as rich as they are, or because they will depend on many things
that we know how to produce. And you cannot imagine the pleasure,
the satisfaction we feel 61)as we begin to realise that we are great,
that we are important, and that 62)no one will ever again sit at the
negotiating table saying: “We don’t need to 63)invite China and Brazil,
because they are poor”. We are learning to enjoy 64)being rich. We
are learning to enjoy bringing benefits to the 65)poorest part of our
population. And we know, China and Brazil – and both governments
66)know – that we still have a lot to do to consolidate an adequate
standard of living 67)for our people. One thing the world must be sure
of: there is no turning back. We want to become two major economies.
And for that to happen, we need to have the courage to renew and
strengthen our partnership every day. Thank you very much.

SOURCE: <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva/audios/lula-audios-2010/19-05-2009-speech-by-the-president-of-the-republic-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-closing-of-the-brazil-china-seminar-new-opportunities-strategic-partnership-beijing-china-21min43/view> Accessed on 11 January 2025.

8. Excerpt from the speech by the President of the Republic, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, during the inauguration ceremony of the Beijing-China Centre for Brazilian Studies, 19 May 2009.

1) (...) It is an honour to visit one of the most renowned academic institutions in China 2) and throughout Asia, whose excellence is recognised in all areas of research to which it 3) is dedicated. I am delighted to be present at the opening of the Centre for Brazilian Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. This is an ideal opportunity to share with you some thoughts on the strategic partnership between China and Brazil, analysing the challenges we face in these times of international change. Thirty-five years ago, China and Brazil established diplomatic relations, initiating a cooperation that has grown stronger, especially in recent years. Based on friendship and mutual respect, we have continuously improved our channels of dialogue and moved forward side by side in the development of important projects. We are dynamic and complementary economies. For this reason, we have been able to intensify cooperation on several fronts, such as in the areas of energy, aviation and mineral resource exploration. We have successful cooperation in science and technology, with the emblematic satellite programme, whose benefits we extend to other developing countries. Bilateral trade has been reaching record levels every year, and we remain committed to expanding and diversifying our trade. In 2009, China became Brazil's main trading partner. We also face the challenge of mutually exploring the immense investment potential that our economies offer. The dynamism of the relationship between China and Brazil can be measured in several ways. In a context marked by a strong emphasis on presidential diplomacy, interaction between heads of state is an important indicator of priorities. Let me give you an example: from July 2008 to the end of 2009, President Hu Jintao and I will have met on nine occasions. At these meetings and now on this visit to Beijing, we have renewed our determination to continue deepening the partnership between China and Brazil. Proof of this firm commitment is the decision we have taken to draw up a Joint Action Plan that will lay new foundations for broad cooperation in the period 2010-2014. Ladies and gentlemen, throughout these 35 years of mature coexistence, China and Brazil have shown broad convergence of interests and priorities in the pursuit of sustainable development and the construction of a more just international order. The international system is undergoing major transformations today. Developing countries have

33) managed to play an increasingly active role in international institutions

34) and in discussions on global governance reform. As two

- 35)major developing nations, we participate in mechanisms such as BRICS, the
- 36)G-5, the G-20 trade group and the G-20 financial group, which allows us to intensify dialogue
- 37)on major issues on the international agenda. Gone are the days when we merely
- 38)reacted to events. The multipolar world emerging in the 21st century will find us
- 39)acting at the centre of global decision-making with a multilateral perspective.
- 41) (...) China and Brazil are two giants united by a permanent desire to improve
- 42)the living conditions of our populations. Due to our interests and size,
- 43)we are destined to find ourselves united on various international stages
- 44)and in various coalitions. Thank you very much.

SOURCE: <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva/discursos/20-mandato/2009/19-05-2009-speech-by-the-president-of-the-republic-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-during-the-inauguration-ceremony-of-the-centre-for-brazilian-studies/view>

9. Excerpt from the speech by the President of the Republic, Jair Bolsonaro, during a meeting with the President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping - Itamaraty Palace, 13 November 2019.

- 1)Good morning.
- 2) I was very honoured by the warm hospitality I received during my
- 3) visit to the State of China. The visit was extremely productive, and we achieved
- 4) concrete results with the signing of several agreements. I have instructed my ministers to
- 5) promptly implement the agreements signed with China.
- 6) I am delighted to have this opportunity to meet again and discuss an extensive
- 7) bilateral agenda.
- 8)I reiterate my invitation to you to visit Brazil at an appropriate time.
- 9)We will continue to work together over the coming years to expand

10)cooperation between our countries.

11)We have just conducted the largest oil auction in history, and we welcome the two

12)Chinese companies that participated in it.

13)Brazil hopes to be among the world's largest oil producers in the coming decades. We want to continue deepening economic and trade cooperation in oil and gas exploration and production, mining, and renewable energy.

16)I am enthusiastic about the cooperation between Brazil and China to explore and

17)develop the use of niobium. I am also optimistic about the possibility of

18)expanding cooperation on graphene.

19)As you rightly pointed out during our recent meeting in China, we have

20)important '*complementarities*' in the area of investment. The Brazilian government

21)will continue to welcome Chinese investment in Brazil, in areas of mutual interest

22)and in accordance with current legislation. Brazil is building a

23)business environment that is much more receptive to foreign investors. Chinese companies 24)have played an important role in the Investment Partnership Programme, which includes 25)concessions and privatisations, railways, ports and airports,

26)as well as oil and gas, mining and energy projects.

I congratulate the Chinese government on its willingness to increase imports of Brazilian products. It is important that we make progress on the certification of civil aircraft, as well as on sanitary and phytosanitary issues. Our agricultural markets made great strides in terms of openness in 2019. The number of Brazilian meat producers authorised to export to China has increased.

For our part, we lifted the suspension on ten Chinese fish establishments. We hope that the health authorities of our countries will increasingly adopt measures to expand access to their respective markets, with diversification of exports.

36)Once again, I would like to thank Your Excellency for the position adopted by the Chinese government

37)in response to recent questions about Brazilian sovereignty and the Amazon region. Thank you very much once again.

39)Everything concerning the part of the Amazon that is within Brazilian territory is

40)a matter of national sovereignty. Brazil is a global example in reconciling environmental preservation

41)and agricultural production.

42)The Brazilian government is examining measures to exempt Chinese nationals visiting Brazil from visa requirements.

44)Thank you very much for now.

SOURCE: <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/bolsonaro/discursos/discurso-do-presidente-da-republica-jair-bolsonaro-durante-reuniao-com-o-presidente-da-republica-popular-da-china-xi-jinping-palacio-itamaraty>

10. Excerpt from the speech by the President of the Republic, Jair Bolsonaro, during the opening of the Brazil-China Business Seminar: 45 years building bilateral ties - Beijing, China, 25 October 2019.

1) (...) First, Mr Hu Chunhua, I would like to thank your ambassador to Brazil for recognising our sovereignty over the Amazon region during the recent G7 meeting. Many thanks to the Chinese government. For us, this public recognition and your words about this region, which is so important for the world and for Brazil, are priceless.

The satisfaction of being here is priceless. I am honoured and happy. And this presence is concrete proof that we want to diversify our entire business environment, rather than just expand it.

9) (...) We want to do business with the whole world. The fact that Brazil recently, after 20 10)years, signed the Mercosur agreement with the European Union is proof of this.

11)And in closing, dear Mr Hu Chunhua, a few days ago, after listening to

12)our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ernesto Araújo, we decided to exempt you from visa requirements

13)for tourism and business trips to Brazil. Our government

14)thus demonstrates its confidence in your country. In addition to business, we want

15)more Chinese people to visit us.

16)A little to your side, we have a small but great woman, our Minister

of

17)Agriculture, who is not visiting China for the first time in a short period of time, 18)increasingly expanding our agribusiness with you, ultimately bringing

19)food security in terms of quantity for the population of your country.

20)Businesspeople in general, given the meeting we had briefly yesterday and others we will have during the course of this journey, my sincere thanks to all of you for your confidence in our Brazil. We were born to walk together on trade issues, among others.

24)I am very happy to be here and, this afternoon, I will have the pleasure of personally shaking 25)President Xi's hand, demonstrating that the new government is

26)perfectly aligned with the business of our... that we are aligned on

27)more things than just trade.

28)Thank you all very much.

SOURCE: <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/bolsonaro/discursos/discurso-do-presidente-da-republica-jair-bolsonaro-durante-abertura-do-seminario-empresarial-brasil-china-45-anos-construindo-lacos-bilaterais-pequim-china>.

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to provide a comparative analysis of Sino-Brazilian relations from the Brazilian perspective during the presidencies of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Jair Messias Bolsonaro. This analysis is based on the examination of speeches made by both presidents during their respective terms. Drawing on the French tradition of Discourse Analysis, the study seeks to comprehend how the two presidents behaved in the context of the Brazil-China relationship throughout their respective terms. This study is based on the hypothesis that there was a desire to bring the relationship between the two countries closer during Lula's administration and an attempt to distance it, at least in President Bolsonaro's informal speeches, which was not, however, corroborated by his formal speeches.

KEYWORDS

Lula, Bolsonaro, Discourse, Brazil, China

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CHANGING PLACE: THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ORDER AND BRAZIL

Luiz Augusto Faria¹

“The great decisions that move the world are taken in other places, far away from our table. It’s necessary to build nearnesses in our region as to be heard at the international level. The challenges we face as humankind need more than ever collective efforts and innovative proposals.”

Pepe Mujica, **Letter to Lula**²

Introduction

“Brazil is back” is a phrase repeated in several international media since Lula took office as president for the third time and resumed the country’s international agenda. Member of the BRICS, leader in Latin America, friend of Africa and Asia, and well-liked by Europe and the United States, the South American nation has a vast horizon of possibilities at a time when history is open to the new. After centuries in which its center was one of the European cultural powers of the North Atlantic, the configuration of the international order hegemonized by the West is decomposing. Its replacement is something that is at stake in the movements of states and social forces at work on a global level (Cox, 2002).

To evaluate these challenges and prospect their consequences in the change of Brazil’s international insertion, this text will address the fracturing of the world order hegemonized by the United States and the decline of its phase of unilateral dominance that began in the 1990s after the end of the Soviet Union. Then, it will seek to situate the Brazilian national interest in the possible change from the peripheral condition to the one of an agent with free will and greater global influence. Next, to address this possibility, it is

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² “Las grandes decisiones que mueven al mundo se toman en otras partes, lejos de nuestra mesa. **Es necesario construir cercanía en nuestra región para hacernos oír a nivel internacional.** Los desafíos que tenemos como humanidad necesitan más que nunca esfuerzos colectivos y propuestas innovadoras.” (José “Pepe” Mujica is former President of Uruguay.)

necessary to evaluate Brazil's relations with its neighbors in Latin America and the Caribbean in terms of what it provides to the country in an international repositioning. Finally, the work will evaluate the domestic conditioning of foreign policy, identifying the role of class struggle between different social forces that define the national social formation, its will for power in the world system and its international alliances for its repositioning in global hierarchy.

2. From Disorder to a New Order

To understand the problem, it is necessary to assume the analytical perspective that Braudel (1987) called *longue durée*, the centuries in which History and the world economy evolved. There is a recurrence of long periods of stability and expansion, always followed by other periods of crisis, which have come to define the way international capitalism evolves. Contemporary events point to the fact that we are experiencing one of these moments of change. International order was struck by one of its great historical crises, a recurring movement since its formation in the seventeenth century. The origins of this system, as the French thinker has shown, go back much further when, in the interstices of feudal Europe, the institution of the market evolved to its configuration in national spaces under the domination of a new social class of merchants and bankers, the bourgeoisie. In this process, the bourgeois class assumed power in the national states, which were in the process of being built, at its center and became internationalized with the establishment of the interstate system in the Treaty of Westphalia. Even though it spread worldwide in the twentieth century, this system continues to be directed by European civilization, including its projection in North America.

Its expansionist trait was explained by Arrighi (1996) as the combination of two logics of power, the territorialist and the capitalist, respectively the command of human geography and the control of the accumulation of wealth. Rosa Luxemburg (1976) said that the triumph of its world expansion, by taking the capitalist regime to the ends of the entire planet, would indicate its terminal moment: there would be nothing more to conquer. On the other hand, the never-ending accumulation of wealth is limited in its material form producing concrete use values. In the form of money – like mathematics, an abstraction – infinity exists. Alongside this social and geographical limit, the endless accumulation of material wealth initiated in the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century, and which intensively exploits non-renewable natural resources, indicates another limit, the destruction of the environmental balance that supports all forms of life

on Earth.

Since the 1970s, the impulse to increase social wealth and at the same time distribute it so unequally, has lost strength in its historical hegemonic core of the North Atlantic. The engine of the system has shifted to Asia and is increasingly independent of the US-run Western core. In its last great wave of expansion in the second half of the twentieth century, the historical center of the world system eventually transferred most of its productive activity to other regions of the planet, first Latin America and then South and Southeast Asia. This new circumstance ended up emptying the industrial structures of the old center that had been its dynamic core for the past three centuries.

In the area of its inception as a mode of production, the accumulation of fictitious capital in the form of financial rent originated in the relation of interest-bearing capital to productive capital predominates today. The former became the creditor and conductor of the latter in the form of debts or control of its property. As a great part of these assets are on the periphery of the system, their return takes a second form of imperialist rent from the exploitation of these peripheries and their indebted peoples. Two other forms of rent originate from monopolistic domination over international trade flows, i.e. unequal exchange, and from the control of technological innovation that collects royalties, patents, and licenses (Carchedi; Roberts, 2021).

These forms of imperialist exploitation, precisely because of the relocation of economic activities driven by the old center, are now under pressure, on the one hand from the increasing presence of Sino-Asia in the flow of goods and in scientific research and development. And on the other hand, from the institution of forms of financing and foreign direct investment between countries of the Global South and in monetary circuits independent of the dollar.

Increasingly, the American empire is showing signs of decline. After a period of reaffirmation of its hegemony in the 1980s (Tavares, 1985), the US initiated the so-called neoliberal globalization in the 1990s. The collapse of the USSR and the incorporation of its old rival, Russia, into the capitalist system seemed to herald what the conservative leadership intended to become the “New American Century” (Kristoll, Kagan, 1996). However, this circumstance did not provide a new phase of development under the hegemony of the West led by Washington. Instead, there was a short period of expansion in the 1990s, which was followed by turbulent times that culminated in the great crisis of 2008 and 2009. Triggered by household indebtedness, a financial collapse at its world center, the United States, soon spread around the world. Trillions of bailouts for banks and credit organizations have prevented a domino of bankruptcies, but the crisis is far from any solution and has been

further amplified by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the ongoing genocide in Palestine.

On the other side of the North Atlantic, Europe's continued economic stagnation has deepened with the return of inflation and a political crisis that has resurfaced the terrible shadow of Nazi xenophobia and supremacism. This adverse situation stems from the loss of dynamic capability by Germany, the continent's central economy, which had experienced reduction in its labor productivity gains from an average of 4.42% per year between 1950 and 1990, to just 1.27% between 1991 and 2022 (Bergeaud et al, 2016). As Palma (2023) has shown, income has been concentrated by the virtual freezing of real wages and the investment rate in relation to GDP, which had been around almost 30% in the 1970s, fell to 21% in 2019. Productivity, which grew by 2% a year in the 1980s, plummeted to around 0.3% in 2019.

The U.S. action to prevent the rapprochement between Russia and Europe, especially the possibility of a Berlin-Moscow alliance, ended up definitively blocking an European alternative way out of the crisis. The support they had always provided for European integration and economic development had changed in the 1980s, at the beginning of the movement to regain its hegemony. Then it sought to contain the competition that the economic expansion of Germany and Japan represented for its uncompetitive productive system (Tavares, 1985). Since then, Japan has been in chronic stagnation while the reunified Germany has lost dynamism, despite the space given by the European integration agreement.

The war in Ukraine has accelerated the trend of dissolution of the old-world order by resolving two historical ambiguities affecting the two largest countries belonging to what for 300 years was imagined to be Europe, Germany and Russia. Having twice tried to assume a hegemonic position through the two world wars it lost, the reunified Germany took a central place in the European Union through the vacillation of the British and the realistic retreat of French pretensions. With its eastward opening in the agreements of economic complementarity with Russia, the possibility of a German detachment from the US was posed. In turn, the country that inherited the Tsarist empire, and was europeanized since Peter the Great and Ekaterina, was finally assimilated into what it imagined to be its civilizational destiny.

During this period, the United States made a complete U-turn in its policy toward Russia. If in the 1990s the largest country in the world was a good pupil of its policies, since the beginning of the 21st century this has changed. In addition to forcing Russia's economic decoupling from Western Europe, an intense encirclement of Moscow, acquiring military positions in countries on its borders was carried out. Feeling trapped, Russia eventually

reacted by invading Ukraine. The war has accelerated change, with Russia moving closer to the Global South, reinforcing its Asian alliance, and taking on a new personality of non-European civilization (Volosyuk, 2023; Trenin, 2023; Likhasheva, 2023). Europe, for its part, submits to American will by increasing its military spending, funding for NATO, and support for Ukraine, which deepens its double crisis, political and economic (Sapir, 2023; Palma, 2023).

In addition to fueling the confrontation in Europe, the US continues to promote instability in West Asia. Although it has ended its military incursions into Iraq and Afghanistan, it maintains its strategy of encirclement and aggression against Iran and of encouraging discord between neighboring countries. To this end, its unconditional support for Israel is central since the continuing colonial war against the Palestinians reinforces the role of “aircraft carrier on the ground” assigned by the Americans to that country. Interoperability between the two-armed forces greatly facilitates any attempt to use force in the region to destroy and try to thwart initiatives considered undesirable by Arab and Muslim states. The genocide in Gaza is just another brutal expression of this strategy.

At the same time, and in another radical turn, the US leadership began to regard Chinese development as an existential challenge. His national security strategy shifted from the fight against terrorism to preventing the rise of the Middle Kingdom. References for the “Thucydides Trap”³ have been present in the talks in Washington for some years now (Allison, 2017). Then, an economic siege of China begins, with the use of sanctions and blocking of business, and then also a military action with the escalation of defense spending by it and its allies in the Pacific, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

China, for its part, remains on its development path toward what it has defined as a moderately prosperous society. Its stance on the US move was released in February 2023 in a rather harsh tone (China, 2023). Before that, on the eve of the invasion of Ukraine, China and Russia announced the deepening of a strategic partnership. (China; Russia, 2022). At the same time, China (Pyng, 2023) expanded its economic integration movements with Asia and Africa on the Belt and Road Initiative and in a series of investments in infrastructure and exploitation of agricultural and mineral goods also in Latin America (Bernardi, 2023). Completing these movements, the BRICS

³ The idea developed by the Greek historian in his classic “The Peloponnesian War” explains the beginning of that military event by the growth of the power of Athens that had forced Sparta to attack it. In its words “...it was the rise of Athens and the fear that this instilled in Sparta that made war inevitable.” (Thucydides, 2020)

partnership has deepened and assumed an alternative reference position to the US-Europe axis. The next steps in this global change will be taken with the development of an alternative logistical and financial system to the one controlled by the US, a de-dollarization of debts, payments and assets, and the construction of alternative channels of trade and investment, as is already being done in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Belt and Road Initiative by China is the most visible action in this prospect. As for Brazil, not integrated in the BRI, there is IIRSA (Initiative for the Integration of South American Infrastructure), an ambitious plan of building an integrated infrastructure in South America. The New Development Bank, the BRICS bank, with former Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff as its CEO is playing an important role in this process.

3. The Pink Tide and Beyond

Latin America and the Caribbean have existed since their independence 200 years ago as a kind of “West of the South”, a space dependent on and associated with the hegemonic centers of world capitalism. This position allowed the region to experience a very vigorous process of industrialization that had begun around 1930, at the same time as the “Glorious 30 Years” of the Post-World War II Era were happening in the capitalist center. It all fell apart in the 1980s, when the great foreign debt crisis happened. At the same time, and combined with the exchange rate problem, the concentration of income – which favored the growth of the rate of profit by reducing real wages – narrowed one of the engines of economic growth due to the atrophy of the internal market. The fall in investment led to the end of development (Faria, 2004, 2016, 2020, 2022).

The crisis led to the abandonment of the National Developmentalist Project in the 1990s and the adoption of the neoliberal prescription, the “Washington Consensus”, which resulted in continued stagnation until 2003. In the neoliberal era, US relations with Latin America changed radically. In the previous mode of development, Fordism, the neighbor to the North, was a partner in industrialization in the South of the Rio Grande. Its foreign direct investment has located numerous branches of its multinational companies in the region, contributing decisively to the composition of its productive and industrial structures. In the new neoliberal model, which could be described as non-development, industrial investment has been delocalized to Asia, especially China. The type of economic policy that Washington has imposed through financial coercion of foreign debt and interference in the internal

affairs of countries has produced deindustrialization, economic stagnation and impoverishment.

At the turn of the 21st century, crises of great intensity in Argentina, Brazil and throughout the region resulted in political changes that in turn enabled a cycle of growth between 2004 and 2014. Known as the Latin American “Pink Tide”, a sort of developmentalist program was implemented with its national specificities, a new expansion project driven by domestic consumption boosted by social policies that caused income redistribution and increased exports. A decade of economic growth led to the overcoming of the two previous bottlenecks, the external imbalance, and the insufficiency of the domestic market.

This development period was limited in time, about a decade, which was motivated not by any insufficiency of the project, but by the comings and goings of politics. Its achievements were the reduction of poverty, the increase in real wages, the redirection of public spending in the expansion of social policies of assistance, health and education and the restoration of the inductive role of the State, in addition to overcoming external constraints.⁴ At the same time, organized in their regional institutions, Mercosur (Common Market of the South), UNASUR (Union of South American Nations) and CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States), the countries of the region distanced themselves from the historical Western perspective and assumed the non-aligned position as nations of the Global South.

The new policies were firmly opposed by the ruling classes.⁵ Their reaction was somewhat surprising because it implied a complete reorganization of the political leadership of these social forces, in some way replicating what happened in the Northern hemisphere. An extreme right-wing ranging from ordo-liberal to neo-fascist has taken over the leadership of the bourgeoisie. With the firm support of the United States, a neoliberal restoration has taken place in several countries, either in the electoral form with the option for a neoliberal right in Argentina, or by coup d'état as in Bolivia or a combination of the two in the case of Brazil.⁶

⁴ The results measured in social and economic indicators were quite expressive, as shown in the analysis of the Brazilian case by Fiocca (2023).

⁵ During the period, the rate of profit falling process that had been going on since the 1970s accelerated to the extent that the counter-remaining forces of wage squeeze or the new profit opportunities of privatizations were no longer present (see, for the Brazilian case, Faria, 2022 and Marqueti et al, 2023).

⁶ A “constitutional” coup d'état with the use of lawfare was responsible for the deposition of Dilma Rousseff in 2016. Bolsonaro's election in 2018 was favored by Lula's imprisonment, another case of lawfare, and brought to power a right that, in its extremism, recalls the Nazi-

Right-wing governments have made a shift in foreign policy, re-establishing unconditional alignment with the US, and dismantling the engines of previous growth, cutting public spending, concentrating income and increasing poverty. Their actions restored the interests of the ruling class and took away rights from the dominated, without any concern for what could be defined as a national project. At the same time seeking a position of hegemony in the Gramscian sense through an intense cultural war, they bet on the division of society and the action of eliminating and silencing divergent social groups. The Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 only amplified the crisis.

4. Brazil and its Challenges

Meanwhile, in this third decade of the 21st century, a new “Pink Tide” has formed, with special importance for Lula’s return to power in Brazil in 2023. The international circumstances in which it took place allow for a much wider range of action.⁷ There is room for the continent to situate itself in a more autonomous position between the West and the new poles of power on the rise, through a strengthening of its alliance with the Global South, where Brazil’s leading role – the largest country in the region – is very important.

This is what the signs coming from Lula’s third presidency indicate. The attempt to repeat the good economic and especially social performance of his first government requires more than economic growth and redistributive social policies. The country, like the entire region, has been taken over by the same financialized and rentier model as the West. Investment is very low and, apart from the rural and extractive sector, productivity has barely grown in 40 years. Brazil’s manufacturing industry was reduced to 12% of GDP, against 30.7% in 1985 (IBGE, 2023). It already had 2.5% of world industry in 1990 against 1.3% in 2020 (CNI, 2023). Early deindustrialization interrupted a process of development and incorporation of technology that had caused per capita income to grow to US\$ 5,600 in 1980. In the neoliberal period, GDP per capita stagnated.⁸ In the first “Pink Tide” of this century, GDP per capita grew again, reaching 8,000 in 2014, an increase of 40.4%. With the restoration of the far-right, income fell 12.5% to 7,000 in 2022.⁹ The

fascism of the 1930s.

⁷ It is not the same in its internal affairs. An empowered far-right and a parliamentary majority opposition narrowed political options to Lula.

⁸ In 2002, the value was still 5.7 thousand in constant dollars as of 2015 (World Bank, 2023).

⁹ This movement coincides in the main Latin American countries. Thus, the values for Argentina are 8.6 in 1980, 6.8 in 2002, 11.8 in 2013 and 9.7 in 2022. In the case of Mexico,

phenomenon of deindustrialization and economic and social regression has been repeated throughout Latin America, except for Mexico's industry, which has remained stable at 19% of GDP since 1985 due to its relationship with the United States.¹⁰

Lula's third presidency makes a choice between the stagnation of globalized financialization and the development of the productive forces with a reduction in inequalities. That is why his government, in addition to emergency policies to combat hunger, had increased the minimum wage, and transferred income to the poorest, presented an agenda of reindustrialization and scientific and technological development, investment in infrastructure, green energy, improvement in education and health, and environmental sustainability. This necessarily implies the action of the state through investment, government procurement, tax reform and financing by public banks. A new industrial park will need to be built for the creation of capacities in the new technologies for which development has taken place so far away from Latin America. A significant increase in per capita income will be necessary to achieve the position of a more prosperous society.

In the period 1990-2002, Brazil and the entire region compassionately accepted US pressure and abdicated or abandoned any action that resembled an industrial policy. Previous efforts in the development of alternative energies, information and communication technologies, the defense industry, chemicals and pharmaceuticals have been lost due to an indiscriminate market opening without any counterparts from its trading partners. Overcoming the current backwardness will require an effort to correct this mistake and follow the Asian example by producing the necessary capacities to achieve productivity gains, which requires, in addition to investment in production, more education, science and technological development. To this end, Latin America cannot count on the United States and Europe, which are only interested in preserving the pattern of asymmetric relations of imperialism.

The process that took place in a disorganized and unintentional way and that made China the main trading partner of a large part of the countries of the region needs to be modified to allow the redefinition of its position in the international division of labor. To this date, the trade flow between Latin America and Asia is composed of the export of primary products with low value added and the import of industrial goods with greater technological intensity. This situation will have to change for the region to resume its

which did not experience the first "Pink Tide", there was barely stagnation: 7.1 in 1980, 7.2 in 2002, 7.3 in 2013 and 7.0 in 2022, always in 2015 constant dollars (World Bank, 2023).

10 It is the "maquila" phenomenon, an activity that specializes in the assembly of industrial goods, the labor-intensive link in the value chain.

development while maintaining the partnership with the Asian country.

A central instrument in this repositioning in the world is regional integration in its various dimensions. If Mercosur has increased the flow of trade between its members, especially that of industrial products, it has had until today little capacity to expand its scope. As former Uruguayan President Pepe Mujica said: “...until now, when talking about integration we have been purely Phoenicians, how much I sell to you and how much you sell to me; and the Phoenicians, who were formidable merchants, did not create any civilization”¹¹ (Mujica, 2023). The creation of UNASUR and CELAC, the former involving South America and the latter all Latin America and the Caribbean, broadened the integration agenda to include political and defense issues. It also gave birth to a shared investment agenda, that of the IIRSA initiative integrating infrastructures of transport, energy, and so on. To cease to be Phoenicians has become a necessity.

Nevertheless, any alternative has to be constructed by foreign policy. As it is proper for its importance, the academic sphere has an important debate on Brazilian foreign policy that is fertilized by its dialogue with the outstanding professional staff of the national diplomatic service. Although it is not the objective of this article, it is possible to have a look at this intense debate by fixing two axes of discussion. On the one hand there are the opposite views of pragmatic institutionalists and autonomists (Saraiva, 2010) derived from how to deal with the peripheral condition of Brazil. Take it for granted and pragmatically explore opportunities or fight to change it.¹²

On the other hand, the causality of policy choices is stressed, looking at structure and agency (Reis da Silva, Pérez, 2019; Pinheiro, Soares de Lima, 2018). Structural conditions are those of world order and its hierarchy of states from center to periphery and to regional and worldwide arrangements. Also structural is national politics, class struggle and forms of state. Agency is assigned to the relative power of interest groups and their international alliances and alignments. It results from the degrees of freedom of foreign policies and relative autonomy of the state.

South and Latin America space and the significant parallelism of countries' histories are important points of academic debates (Pecequillo, Carmo, 2013; Saraiva, 2020, Faria, 2004). In this sense, great moves in South

11 “...(h)asta ahora, cuando hablamos de integración hemos sido puramente fenicios, cuánto te vendo y cuánto me vendes tú; y los fenicios, que fueron unos mercaderes formidables, no crearon ninguna civilización”.

12 There is another point of view considering Brazilian foreign policy as independent and self-confident since Cardoso's term (Cervo, 2010).

American history seem to have some degree of synchrony as was the case of the two so-called “Pink Tide”. This reality spurred regional integration. And integration is a matter of importance both to the biggest country in the region and to the smaller ones because it favors economic and political empowerment. As for Brazil, its regional leadership ought to be constructed in the necessary movement of regional integration. Pioneering this movement should be a decisive baseline for changing its place in the world order.

In fact, the process of regional integration has been expanding the interdependence of Latin American countries beyond trade, with the construction of transport, energy, and communication infrastructure via IIRSA projects, as well as political institutions. Its financing has been provided by CAF, the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, and by Brazilian public banks, but given the magnitude of these investments, the region needs external financing.

The diversion of trade within the region or towards China has already caused annoyance to the US. In its view advancing the political agenda of autonomy is anathema. As Sapir (2023) recalled, if the dissent of smaller countries, Cuba or Nicaragua, was responded to with the known violence, then it would be unacceptable to Washington that the large countries, such as Brazil or Argentina, would seek to leave their area of influence. The devastation of Venezuela’s economy and society is a grim wake-up call.¹³

The reaction to the crisis of its hegemony engages the US movement to preserve control of what it calls its “backyard,” as is visible in numerous statements and, even more, in actions of veiled or explicit intervention in the internal affairs of Latin American and Caribbean countries in recent years¹⁴ and the reinstatement of the Southern Command of its armed forces.¹⁵ Its objective is, first, to maintain the isolation of Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua, then to prevent relations with China or Russia from advancing even on economic issues – the investments of the Belt and Road Initiative are seen as

13 Venezuela’s GDP per capita in current dollars, which was \$12.7 thousand in 2012, before the effect of US sanctions, fell to 1.7 in 2020 and a mere 3.5 thousand in 2022, while total GDP went from 371.3 billion in 2013 to 111.8 in 2021 (STATISA, 2023 and World Bank, 2023). Oil production, which was 2.4 million barrels per day in 2012, fell to 512 thousand in 2021 (OPEC, 2023).

14 The recent political turmoil in Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, Bolivia, Argentina exemplifies this type of action.

15 The Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) Commander Gen. Laura Richardson made a statement about the importance of Latin America to her country, saying that control of the region’s natural resources (Amazon rainforest, lithium, rare earths, gold, copper) were vital to her country’s national security, as well as preventing China’s presence (Richardson, 2023).

a threat to their security – and, finally, that interstate relations only take place under US supervision.

5. The Will For Power

These are the conditions of the space in which the States and social forces of Brazil and Latin America move in the redefinition of their place in the international constellation. I think that this repositioning in the world is ultimately determined by the internal dynamics of the class struggle in each country (Faria, 2020). Nowadays there is a cleavage within the societies of the region: there is a conservative bloc that struggles to maintain the position of dependency and association with American imperialism, formed by most of the bourgeois class. Even in countries where developmentalism has generated some degree of industrialization, its support in the ruling classes has always been in the minority. This block, which had been hegemonized by the industrial bourgeoisie until 1980 and had the support of an ascendant middle class in the public and private bureaucracies and in small businesses, has changed. Today its configuration is quite diverse, with the complete hegemony of financial capital, a noisy participation of the rural bourgeoisie empowered by the commodity boom, and which has the support of a middle class resentful of its social decay and the rise of the popular classes.¹⁶ Its leadership is with the far-right.

Against this new version of a dependent and associated “buyer (comprador)” bourgeoisie – which in the past had been developmentalist and is now rentier – the coalition that won the 2022 elections with Lula was organized. Its social base was made up almost exclusively of the workers and other poorer popular classes, to which were added a small fraction of the middle class in the state bureaucracy, educators and scientists and an even smaller portion of the bourgeoisie, mainly in industry and commerce, frightened by the nazi-fascist inclinations of Bolsonaro and his allies who defend the return of dictatorship. The 2022 electoral map in Brazil clearly showed this political divide, a class and income split in Lula’s voters, the poor, black, and residents of less developed regions. Only the group of voters with incomes of less than \$500 voted overwhelmingly for the left-wing candidate.

Its project is the resumption of developmentalism with a stronger classist imprint. In addition to redistributive policies, social inclusion and protection of vulnerable groups assuming centrality in the government’s

¹⁶ The same middle class that, since the struggle against dictatorships in the 1970s, had sustained social progress...

agenda, the popular coalition wants the return of an independent and assertive foreign policy. Changing the place of Brazil and all of Latin America and the Caribbean in the world has been the banner of the new government's foreign policy, which translates into a great activism that seeks to integrate the region, strengthen the alliance with Africa and Asia, and reinforce the BRICS initiative, for which the recent increase in the number of participating countries is an important step in this direction.

The coalition of the great representative countries of the three continents of the Global South is going through a moment of definition of its identity, which will be decisive for its proposal for the creation of a multipolar world, a historic change in the form of the capitalist world order due to the absence of a single hegemony. Up to the present this has been a passing circumstance – of anarchy or systemic chaos – in the process of transition between two systemic cycles of accumulation (Arrighi, 1996).

For such a hypothesis to materialize, a transformation at the level of social relations, the result of the evolution of the contradictions of the mode of production, would have to take place. One possible path is the one proposed by Oliveira (1998). For this author, the contradiction between accumulation and the reproduction of society is taking form with the emergence of a new social form, the anti-value. The inability of the commodity form to provide stability and guarantee the subsistence of society means that a set of necessary activities such as health, education, infrastructure, planning, and control of inter-capitalist competition has increasingly been produced by the state or other non-capitalist forms of social organization that it has defined as the anti-value.¹⁷

The current debate over the nature of Chinese society¹⁸ brings to a greater level of concreteness the discussion about the nature of the transformation underway in the world system. The understanding of the social formation of the Middle Kingdom at the beginning of the twenty-first century appears as an interpretative key in the understanding of the ongoing transition of the international order. In opposition to the perception of a change within the world order, another look sees in the contradictions of the capitalist system, which have been made explicit since the end of the twentieth century, the emergence of insurmountable limits, indicating that the current crisis of US

¹⁷ The theme was deliberated over an historical and anthropological approach in the work of Karl Polanyi (1946 and 1977).

¹⁸ On the nature of Chinese society from an outsider's perspective, Gabrielli, Jabbour, 2023 and Weber, 2023, and in the view of authors from that country Ping, 2023; Tiejun, 2021 and Zhongqiu, 2023.

hegemony is also a terminal crisis of capitalism itself.¹⁹

If the announced goal of the BRICS alliance is an international order without hegemony, something completely unprecedented in the 300-year history of world capitalism, its realization would take place in the form of two parallel and simultaneous systems. In the former, the old capitalist order would be in decline, but persist for a long time to come, while the latter would be formed, accumulating quantitative changes that at a given moment would make a leap in quality towards a new order that will emerge (Ping, 2023; Zhongqiu, 2023). The various national social formations would participate in both systems if there was no final dissolution of the old and the affirmation of the new. It would be a revolutionary and unprecedented episode.

6. As a way of conclusion, if possible

The falling US hegemony, the new stronghold of Russia and the rising of China and other Southern nations are redefining the world order. If it is not the end of its capitalist nature, it should be the end of its centralized structure around one and only one imperial power. As is argued by the BRICS coalition, a new international system with a multipolar organization may be rising. And it could be peaceful and not chaotic or anarchic as Arrighi had seen in the past, in other moments of the world system. It is not out of reason to foresee an imbalance of power and shared prosperity as the mode of the international order, even if it is unprecedented. And it should be necessarily unprecedented if a transition in the very core of societies is going on from capitalism to another mode of production.

This changing world gives unseen opportunities to what is called The Global South, Brazil in its milieu. As I wrote above, it depends on the capabilities developed by those countries to achieve a higher position in the so-called concert of nations. It is far from the sight of some kind of international democracy, but cooperation could be improved and the exploitation of the periphery by the old imperialist center can be minimized.

As one of the biggest countries in the South, Brazil can have an important role in the new world order. This depends on the improvement of its regional leadership in Latin America now weakened by political divergencies. And it also depends on the building of a national will of autonomy and self-determination. None of the two are supported by the dominant portion of the national bourgeoisie, that of finance. Nevertheless, since the beginning of the

¹⁹ In this perspective are the works of Desai, 2023 and Hudson, 2022.

XXIst century, and despite the strong opposition by the capitalist elites and by the US, the popular governments of the Workers Party – PT have played what they call an “assertive and active” foreign policy, one that aims a protagonist role in the international arena and its transformation. But the road map is uncertain.

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ABSTRACT

The fracture of the world order and the falling of US hegemony are the context in which Brazil's national interest must be built. The possible change in its peripheric position to the place of a player with more global influence is examined. In order to do this, Brazilian relations with its Latin America and Caribbean neighbors are examined, and how they could help to redefine its place in the world order. Finally, this article will address domestic issues that affect foreign policy, by identifying the role of class struggle between different social forces that define our national social formation, its will for power in the world system and its international alliances for its repositioning in global hierarchy.

KEYWORDS

World Order, Brazilian Foreign Insertion, Development

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FOREIGN POLICY IN THE BOLSONARO GOVERNMENT FOR ISRAEL: THE TWO-LEVEL GAME AND PENTECOSTAL INFLUENCE

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1. Introduction

Historically, it has always been in the interest of Brazilian diplomacy to achieve a position of prestige and respect in the international context, and the complex political framework of the Middle East region has been used more than once as a way to boost Brazil's projection on the international stage. Due to the constant tensions and antagonisms present in the region, any diplomatic or economic movement must be conducted with extreme caution and premeditation so as not to compromise relations in the region, and throughout its history, it can be observed that this zeal for equidistance figured in Brazil's priorities in cultivating relationships and partnerships with Middle-Eastern countries. During the governments of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and President Dilma Rousseff, one can observe the growth of animosity between Brazilian and Israeli diplomacy, although these animosities arose not due to Brazilian incapacity, but due to the practical impossibility of reconciling Israeli interests on the one hand, and Palestinian, Arab and Iranian interests on the other. During the government of Jair Messias Bolsonaro, however, there was a disproportionate reversal of the balance that elevated Israel as a point of extreme importance in Brazilian foreign policy (BFP), possibly second only to Donald Trump's United States. In this parallel, this article understands that the rapprochement with Israel was not just due to

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external factors, quite the contrary, it understands that domestic factors were crucial in determining the performance of the BFP, especially with regard to the interests of actors with a (neo)pentecostal denomination at the base of Bolsonaro's government. Therefore, a brief historical review of BFP will be made with regard to relations with Israel and the Middle East, followed by an analysis of Bolsonaro's political trajectory and the internal developments of his presidency to, subsequently, unravel the nature of the domestic pressures that mobilized this rapprochement with Israel, the consequences of this movement, and the reasons why it was not successful.

2. Historical contextualization

The relationship between Brazil and Israel formally began with the presidency of Oswaldo Aranha at the United Nations General Assembly in 1947, when the partition of Palestine was approved by Resolution 181, which paved the way for the establishment of a Jewish state. Defender of people's self-determination, Aranha favored the first diplomatic interactions between Brazil and the new Israeli state, aligning himself with the United States in this initial context (Casarões and Vigevani 2014).

Despite the geographic distance and differences in national interests, Brazil and Israel have developed a consistent diplomatic relationship. The presence of a Jewish community in Brazil and the Brazilian participation in debates about the Middle East contributed to this rapprochement. In 1948, Brazil supported the creation of the Conciliation Commission for Palestine, signaling its concern for a peaceful solution to regional conflicts between Arabs and Jews (Feldberg 2019).

In the following years, Brazil maintained a stance of equidistance in the Middle East, recognizing Israel and exchanging embassies in Tel Aviv and Rio de Janeiro in 1952. In 1956, the country sent the "Suez Battalion" to join the UN Emergency Forces, consolidating what Uziel calls "prestigious multilateralism", a policy that sought to strengthen Brazilian diplomatic projection (Uziel 2014).

This diplomatic balance began to change in 1967, after the Six-Day War, when Brazil supported Resolution 242, which demanded the withdrawal of Israeli troops from occupied territories. In 1974, during a visit by Lebanese Minister Fouad Naffah, Foreign Minister Mário Gibson Barboza stated that Israel should return these territories as a condition for peace, a position that marked Brazil's commitment to respecting the self-determination of the Arab peoples (Sochaczewski 2014).

During the presidency of Ernesto Geisel (1974-1979), Brazil adopted “responsible ecumenical pragmatism”, moving away from automatic alignment with the USA and seeking a more independent role. The stance was emphasized by Chancellor Antônio Azeredo da Silveira at the UN General Assembly, defending the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. This position was consolidated in 1975, when Brazil voted in favor of Resolution 3379, which qualified Zionism as a form of racism (Spektor 2004).

During subsequent governments, including redemocratization under José Sarney, Brazil maintained its support for the Palestinian cause, defending the creation of a Palestinian State and the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. With the rise of Fernando Collor (1990-1992), there was a diplomatic realignment, and Brazil annulled its vote on Resolution 3379, reflecting a policy of rapprochement with the USA and Israel. Collor’s decision was reinforced by his refusal to support the US-led military coalition in the Gulf War in 1991, maintaining the Brazilian tradition of non-intervention (Collor de Mello 2011).

During the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Brazilian diplomacy expanded with the presence of Chancellor Luiz Felipe Lampreia, who resumed contacts with Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (ANP). FHC, however, maintained the focus on symbolic diplomacy, including Yasser Arafat’s visit to Brasília, but without an active role in resolving the conflict (Lampreia 1998).

With the arrival of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva as president, foreign policy became more engaged in the Middle East. Lula proposed a multilateral approach and approached Arab countries and Iran, in addition to speaking out against the invasion of Iraq in 2003. In 2009, Brazil formally recognized the Palestinian State, and Lula’s visit to Israel and Palestine was a diplomatic milestone that reinforced Brazil’s role as an interlocutor in the conflict. His visit to Iran in 2010 and the signing of the Tehran Agreement for external uranium enrichment demonstrated Brazilian interest in alternative diplomatic solutions (Casarões and Vigevani 2014).

During Dilma Rousseff’s government (2011-2016), Brazilian foreign policy maintained the position of supporting a two-state solution to the conflict. However, the intensification of the conflict in Gaza in 2014 led to criticism from the Brazilian government of Israel’s actions, including the return of the Brazilian ambassador to Tel Aviv. Michel Temer’s government (2016-2018) continued this line, albeit in a more conciliatory tone, seeking to preserve relations with Israel, without modifying traditional positions, such as condemning settlements in Palestinian territory (Vigevani and Calandrin 2019).

With this diplomatic continuity, Brazil and Israel maintained a relationship that oscillated between pragmatic support for human rights and technological and commercial partnerships, resulting in a diplomacy that aimed both at projecting “soft power” on the international stage and at preserving their traditional alliances.

3. Bolsonaro

Jair Messias Bolsonaro, born in Glicério, in the interior of São Paulo, entered political life at the age of 33, when he ran for the position of councilor in Rio de Janeiro in 1988, for the Christian Democratic Party. Before that, he had gone through a troubled career in the army, where he reached the rank of captain and gained some notoriety in the press. On October 27, 1987, the newspaper *State of S. Paulo*³ revealed an alleged plan by Bolsonaro and Captain Flávio Passos to install explosives in barracks if the Federal Government did not grant a salary increase to the troops. The episode came to light after an article written by Bolsonaro himself in the magazine *Look*,⁴ where he publicly exposed these salary demands (Nascimento et al. 2018). The case was taken to the Supreme Military Court, which acquitted him after differences between expert reports. In his electoral debut, Bolsonaro attracted support from the military and ultra-conservative segments of Rio society. During his term, he presented seven bills, including one that proposed free public transport for military personnel.⁵ Apart from these initiatives, his performance in the City Council was discreet, without much prominence in the media.

In 1991, Jair Bolsonaro was elected federal deputy, returning to attract the attention of the media the following year after organizing the March for the Dignity of the Military Family, which brought together 800 military wives in Brasília to plead for salary adjustments for the category, an event in which he insulted the army minister at the time, Carlos Tinoco (F. de S. Paulo 1992). It was during his term as a federal deputy that Bolsonaro began to carve out increasing space in the media through attacks on a wide range of public figures. In addition to Tinoco, Bolsonaro’s tirades targeted other deputies, members of the Catholic church, and other political figures such as presidents Fernando Henrique and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. The detailed study of Jair Bolsonaro’s media appearances published by PLURAL magazine

3 Jornal Estado de São Paulo.

4 Revista Veja.

5 Rio de Janeiro City Council (Câmara Municipal do Rio de Janeiro)..

in 2018 links the deputy's polemicism to greater media support:

Over the 30 years of articles, verbal attacks make up a considerable part of the deputy's public image. Generally, after the publication of the article reporting the insult, letters from readers, opinion columns and reports about the "progress of the complaint and/or process" appear. In this way, the controversies triggered by insults end up fueling visibility, seeming to forge a kind of "style" that has become one of the most characteristic marks of the deputy's public image. (Nascimento et al. 2018, p. 37)

Bolsonaro's effort to remain relevant in the media through the aforementioned aggressive and resounding statements was characterized by what the American journalist and politician Sidney Blumenthal conceptualized as a "permanent campaign", that is: the development of electoral processes for a given politician elected during the term of his office while outside the electoral period (Blumenthal 1980 *at* Joathan and Rebouças 2020); in other words, during his years in politics, Bolsonaro was engaged in a permanent re-election campaign, making his future terms viable through the space he carved out for himself and his character in the media. This perspective explains the president's perennialities and inconsistencies throughout his political career, always positioned firmly on the conservative wings, but taking different stances during his career.

4. Bolsonarism

According to historians Daniel Aarão Reis Filho and Giovanna Soares, Bolsonarism is a phenomenon closely linked to the transformations of the digital revolution, characterized by technical-scientific advances that have reshaped contemporary society. In the socioeconomic field, Reis and Soares highlight the financialization of the economy, the prevalence of financial capital and the decrease in state control over the global flow of capital. The spread of social networks and the internet, the weakening of labor movements, the increase in inequalities and the rise of identity and reactionary groups are other features that permeate this new social dynamic (Reis and Soares 2020).

In the political sphere, phenomena such as the elitization of democratic institutions, the strengthening of a cynical and apolitical culture, and the growing influence of social media in elections have emerged. In Brazil, the governments of Lula and Dilma, although responsible for social advances,

adopted a conciliatory stance in relation to financial capital and conservative religious forces. We can also observe the global rise of a reactionary and anti-democratic nationalism, marked by the defense of conservative values and the articulation of different right-wing currents – from traditional to religious fundamentalists and neo-facist and authoritarian (Reis and Soares 2020).

For Reis, Bolsonarism reflects the development of this reactionary movement in Brazil, although it has its own particularities. He divides the origin of Bolsonarism into two periods: the first, from the Estado Novo to the Military Dictatorship, where Brazil's inability to challenge authoritarianism became clear, both at the time and in retrospect; and the second, from the New Republic until the 2018 elections, highlighting the aristocratization of the political sphere, polarized between PT (Worker's Party) and PSDB (Brazilian Social Democratic Party), culminating in an election marked by the absence of an effective opposition, aggravated by the insistence of left-wing sectors on Lula's candidacy to the limit of his ineligibility, and the mutual inability to articulate a viable left by Ciro Gomes and Fernando Haddad.

The 2018 electoral period was crucial for the definition of Bolsonarism. At that time, distrust in relation to the electronic voting system exacerbated anti-PT sentiment, and right-wing digital activism stood out, which mobilized moral panic around issues of gender and sexuality. This context was intensified by the defeat of Aécio Neves in 2014, which cast doubt on the security of the ballot boxes, resulting in the PSDB requesting an audit from the TSE (Superior Electoral Court). Although the process confirmed the fairness of the elections, suspicion persisted, and gained strength again in 2018 and 2020, particularly among Bolsonaro supporters (GI 2014; Ruediger et al. 2022).

According to Reis, the New Republic represented a failed promise. The political structure, dominated by the PT and PSDB, seemed stagnant and incapable of responding to popular demands for improvements in public services, security and the fight against corruption, as demonstrated by the demonstrations in June 2013. The erosion of this political configuration fostered a desire for radical change, directed against the PT, which was seen as a symbol of immobility. This feeling of anti-PTism was channeled in different directions: towards Ciro Gomes, Geraldo Alckmin and, most significantly, towards Jair Bolsonaro, who emerged as the main challenger to the established order (Reis and Soares 2020).

The 2018 campaign highlighted the centrality of social networks, such as WhatsApp and Telegram, in the dissemination of political content, especially among Bolsonaro supporters. Many of these contents took on a religious tone, associating Bolsonaro's candidacy with a defense of traditional Christian values and promoting moral panic over issues linked to minority

rights. The Evangelical Parliamentary Front frequently took a stance against LGBTQIA+ rights, in defense of a traditional conception of family, while fake news reinforced this agenda (Coelho, Dias and Maranhão 2018).

Another point mobilized by Bolsonaro's campaign was the use of the economic situation of countries like Venezuela and Argentina as examples of what could happen in Brazil under a PT government. This argument simplified the crises faced by these countries, associating them with left-wing policies, while ignoring the failures of neoliberal policies in other Latin American nations (BBC 2022; GI 2019).

Thus, Bolsonaro's campaign in 2018 capitalized on latent social tensions and consolidated his figure as a solution to such dilemmas, promoting a narrative that presented Bolsonarism as a phenomenon not only Brazilian, but part of an international reactionary wave. Since 2010, Latin America was experiencing the end of the so-called "Pink Tide", with the rise of conservative leaders in several countries. This scenario strengthened political and religious conservatism, in addition to leading to the suspension of sexual and reproductive agendas, with marginalized people being portrayed as opponents of the State (Biroli, Vaggione and Machado 2020).

5. Political Trajectory of Pentecostals in Brazil: The Three Waves

To carry out a trajectory of Pentecostal politics in Brazil, one must first characterize the so-called three waves of Pentecostalism, the first, from the 1910s, represented by the Assembly of God; the second, from the 1950s and 1960s, represented by Quadrangular, Brasil Para Cristo, and Deus é Amor; and the third, which strengthened in the 1980s, represented by the denominations of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, and the International Church of the Grace of God (Freston 1993).

In the first wave, we observed the trajectory of the Assembly of God (AD), with Swedish and Northeastern roots. In its origins, in 1911, it had a character of low education and theological erudition, anti-intellectualist, and with little emphasis on socioeconomic ascension, as it emerged from marginalized and peripheral Scandinavian missionaries, Daniel Berg and Adolf Gunnar Vingren. The AD was quite quick to expand, having offices in all Brazilian states by 1933, and in the Federal District in 1956. This rapid expansion, in addition to the characteristics brought by Swedish missionaries, solidified it as a popular and national church par excellence, which will be

reflected above all in the 1986 elections, which will be analyzed in the future (Castro 2020; Freston 1993).

The second wave, which began in the mid-1950s, is, according to Freston, a São Paulo-based wave, initiated by the Foursquare Gospel Church (1951, originating from the practices of Aimee Semple McPherson, a Canadian preacher). The IEQ was the one who established the rules of the game for the second wave, with even more charismatic cults, greater dominance of mass media such as radio and newspapers, and a lesser chance of moral reprimand, more suited to the society of large urban centers. Following, and largely inspired by IEQ, the Brasil Para Cristo church emerged in 1955-1956, the first of the great Pentecostal churches founded by a Brazilian, Manoel de Mello, which further intensified the media participation of Pentecostals, filling stadiums, and being the first to appoint representatives to the congress, with federal deputy Levy Tavares, who served from 1962 to 1970, and state deputy Geraldino Santos, from 1966 to 1974, both can be considered the first deputies elected as evangelical representatives in the country's history (Freston 1993). Finally, in the second wave and, still citing Freston, true precursor of the third, we have the Pentecostal God is Love Church (IPDA), founded in 1962 by David Miranda. clothing, all with stipulated punishments (Freston 1993); the author also lists similarities between the practices of the IPDA and the upcoming Iurd

Several elements anticipate the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God: the uniformed workers, the interviews with demons, the cry of "burning" to make the devil leave his home. But it is the amateur version, poor and culturally outdated (...) This is, in many ways, the precursor of the third Pentecostal wave, but chronologically and sociologically it belongs to the second wave. (Freston 1993, pg. 93)

At the end of the 1970s, the third wave of Pentecostalism, also called neo-Pentecostalism, emerged in Brazil, marked by the founding of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (Iurd) in 1977, and the International Church of the Grace of God (IIGD) in 1980, founded respectively by Edir Macedo and his brother-in-law, R. R. Soares, after an internal rupture within the Iurd. The new churches, which witnessed their growth in the 1980s, emerge in a scenario of more intense urbanization, new developments in the field of communication, economic crisis and, in the Rio context where both originate, coexistence with *bicheiros*.⁶ Such elements, combined with the fact

⁶ "Bicheiros" refer to several (and different) organized crime groups that explore a popular

that, in contrast to the second and especially the first wave, the third had at its center people from a higher social stratum and higher education, caused neo-Pentecostalism to acquire a lot of traction in a scenario of advancing neoliberalism in Brazil (Freston 1993).

Castro lists important elements of neo-Pentecostalism, including: The construction of strong religious leadership, the use of mass media, and preaching centered on the victory of good over evil, intensification of the battle against Evil (Devil), emphasis on Prosperity Theology, active political participation, and construction of the church with business models. (Castro 2020). In addition, neo-Pentecostalism is also marked by hybridism and symbolism that until then were absent in previous waves, with various symbolic celebrations, and even the appropriation of elements of popular spirituality, being more malleable and therefore having a greater appeal to a broader social segment. The last position becomes even more notable when compared to the waves that preceded it, in which church leaders did not have such an inclination, or even the necessary knowledge for the definitive adaptation of the church to a political and economic business context; Manoel de Mello failed when trying to transform the BPC into something more than a Church, but a movement; and David Miranda, despite his investments, did not break with the logic of IPDA as a family business; Edir Macedo was extremely efficient not only in the internal structuring of the Iurd, but also in the diversification of its investments, which marks the effective management of the Iurd as a true company.

Another striking element for understanding the third wave is the so-called Prosperity Theology, a religious doctrine of American origin that equates reward and material abundance with the faithful practice of religion, at the same time that it relates poverty and misery to sin, that is, the practice that sees wealth not only as a reward but as a symptom of faith, and poverty as its opposite (Garrard-Burnett 2011).

6. Political Articulation: The “Evangelical Bench” in the National Constituent Assembly

Until the ANC, and with the exception of Manoel de Mello and the BPC, Pentecostalism was marked by a marked apoliticism and a prohibition on participation in public life, as it was considered something “of the world”,

lottery in Brazil, that is illegal. Each group explores this form of gambling and other illegal activities in Rio and Brazil as a whole. Each group tends to exercise its influence in distinct territories, which are under their dominance.

which could interfere with the asceticism of its faithful, as Bruna Saraguay Dantas wrote:

Classical Pentecostalism has always adopted a binary, dualistic and Manichaeic logic when dealing with the relationship between religion and politics. In his perspective, both spheres should remain apart because their natures are absolutely opposite and exclusive. While the Christian religion appeared as a representative of the supreme good, institutional politics was seen as evil, a propagator of corruption and perversity. (Dantas 2011, pg, 22)

Despite this, the insertion of evangelicals in politics began to occur, with emphasis, in 1986, when the first elections of official representatives of evangelical churches took place. These elections were marked by a change in the Pentecostal way of thinking about politics, no longer having to avoid it, but with the intention of bringing Christian morality into the institution, in order to purify it and use it as a tool in the service of God (Dantas, 2011). The 1986 elections inaugurated a new phase in Brazilian religious politics, and an unprecedented multiplication of evangelical representatives in the legislature, jumping from a total of 3 parliamentarians between 1933 and 1987, to 27 parliamentarians between 1987 and 1992. In other words, in 5 years, representation increased by a factor of 9. (Freston 1993).

For Freston, the precursors of this change brought with them a new political profile, with lower average education, lower-class and lower-middle class social roots, in addition to a relatively considerable percentage of black and brown people; Not only that, another important element in evangelical candidacies is the fact that, unlike Catholicism which they saw as an adversary in the public space, Pentecostal politicians had their candidacies marked and shaped around their political confessions, to the extent that Catholic parliamentarians, despite being in the majority, did not position Catholicism at the head of their public life. Pentecostal candidacies were, in broad consideration, religious candidacies, and not candidate candidacies. In the mandates after 1987, it is possible to see a greater protagonism of historic Pentecostal parliamentarians, especially from the Assembly of God, which in itself already implies a great territorial dispersion of these candidates. Such candidacies can be understood not as the result of some theological change within the denominations, but as an attempt to reconcile contradictions, in which Pentecostalism in Brazil is still, in a way, new, and the power dynamics within the churches are not as crystallized as they are, for example, within Catholicism. Therefore, the entry into politics by evangelicals was an

attempt, through their positions as public figures, to give greater legitimacy and structure to positions within the church, in other words, an attempt to professionalize the Pentecostal ecclesiastical branch.

As an addendum, another route that public life granted access to was also the media, especially television, and as can be seen in phenomena present even today, presence in television media is often equated with political capital, to mention within Pentecostalism Bishop Edir Macedo, and outside of this, former president Bolsonaro, both in their respective ways being able to garner political support due to their marked presence in the media.

Two other elements that Freston places as motivating the great Pentecostal emergence in politics are both confrontational. The first, the competition with Catholicism for the role of mass religion, in search of public resources that would comment on its position in civil space; and the second being confronting what was seen, both at that time and today, as threatening to the family. These elections were successful due to a contextual issue, the hitherto demobilized large mass of evangelicals, a scenario of “opening the floodgates” of an electorate dammed with redemocratization, and the optimism of the New Republic.

With his entry into politics, the “bench⁷ evangelical” that were broadly articulated on two fronts: social and economic. Socially there is what is known as the defense of the family, however this umbrella label omits the complexity of this defense, since the family is “the main means of socialization in the minority view of the world and a means of conservation across generations” (Freston 1993, 236). What this defense of the family implied, in practice, was opposition to a greater legal scope of abortion, a “defense” against advances in the rights of minority sexual identities (homosexuals), practically total opposition to divorce (93% of elected evangelicals), and the defense of religious freedom, a measure that Freston sees as symbolic since it was opposed to two non-existent political elites, a Catholic one that sought the repression of Pentecostalism, and an atheist that sought its extinction. of religion in general. In the economic sector, there was clear opposition to anti-capitalist measures. To this Freston attributes the very dynamics of Pentecostal social ascension, in which pastors attribute their success to the economic regime that thus favored them, while many believers observed a change in life for the better that, in perspective, opposes a more egalitarian social environment. Here we use the word “perspective” because it really is a point of view, since churchgoers come from poorer social classes, those who rise socially after

⁷ Bench is the name for an informal grouping of parliamentarians, both from the chamber and from congress, who represent specific interests. (Chamber of Deputies).

conversion find themselves surrounded by poverty, therefore believing that a more equitable social environment would result in their demotion. In other words, right from the start it is possible to see an alignment between political Pentecostalism and conservatism.⁸

The relative success of this group inspired a certain optimism in the Pentecostal political project. Freston cites the inclusion of God in the Constitution, expansion of religious freedoms - which the author sees as a symbolic victory - and the maintenance of religious teaching in the curriculum, as well as the rejection of the category “sexual orientation”, the death penalty and district voting; however, it also mentions the bench’s defeat on the issue of abortion and divorce (Freston 1993).

The aforementioned success inspired a large wave of Pentecostal candidates in the next election, in 1990, this large launch of candidacies, however, generated a large dispersion of votes and, therefore, a relative drop in the number of elected candidates (Dantas, 2011). A fact proven by Freston’s analysis, which observed that, despite the AD’s representation remaining the same with 12 elected candidates (5 re-elections, 4 substitutes, and 3 newly elected), the vote of those elected fell by 40%, and 35% compared to the average vote of candidates from all Pentecostal denominations. evangelical, which is also subject to social trends, incurred a large number of abstentions and invalid votes for deputies.

The only denomination that actually increased its representation in the 1990 elections was the Iurd, which launched a new candidacy model based on launching a few official candidates per state, as a way of not diluting votes (Sanches 1999 quoted in Dantas 2011). This model was adopted by other churches, which also began to concentrate their votes on candidates who, previously, occupied prominent positions within them and became, in fact, the rule of the game with regard to Pentecostal candidacies for decades to come.

7. The Evangelical Parliamentary Front (EPF)

Through Act No. 69/2005, the board of directors of the Chamber of Deputies created the register of parliamentary fronts, defined as a “supra-partisan association of at least one third of members of the Federal Legislative Branch, aimed at promoting the improvement of federal legislation on a certain sector of society” (Brasil, 2005). These formal groups are focused

⁸ It is worth noting that even at the time there were representatives of an evangelical left in the chamber, such as Lysâneas Maciel and Benedita da Silva (Melo, 2021).

on specific themes and can include both senators and deputies, with the same parliamentarian being able to join several fronts simultaneously. The Evangelical Parliamentary Front, for example, is made up of members of the Senate and the Chamber and its purpose is to promote and defend agendas linked to evangelical causes, such as tax exemption for churches, granting diplomatic passports to its members, alignment between politics and religious discourse, mandatory religious education in schools, in addition to opposition to abortion, same-sex marriage and divorce (Castro, 2020).

As previously mentioned, during the National Constituent Assembly (ANC), evangelical parliamentarians mobilized in defense of these agendas, even before the formal creation of the Parliamentary Fronts, through informal groups. These groups were called “benches”, a term that continues to be used unofficially to this day (e.g.: evangelical bench, ruralist bench, among others). It is worth noting that in Congress there are also so-called “party benches”, which should not be confused with informal groups. Dantas, in interviews with parliamentarians, clarifies the distinctions between “parliamentary front” and “party bench”: while fronts are non-partisan organizations focused on specific debates, as in the case of the EPF, which focuses on moral and religious issues, party benches are formed by members of the same party and aim to discuss ideological issues. Thus, the EPF is configured as a space for religious discussion among its members, while the party benches focus exclusively on political issues internal to their parties.

In 2005, the board of directors established regulations to formalize the Parliamentary Fronts, motivated by the proliferation of informal benches in Brazilian politics. However, evangelicals had already anticipated this measure, officially creating a parliamentary front in 2003. The objective was to coordinate and organize the actions of the many evangelical representatives in the legislature, who until then had acted in a dispersed manner. Thus, the Evangelical Parliamentary Front emerged as a means of structuring and articulating its initiatives more effectively.

According to Damares Alves, legal advisor, the formalization of the Evangelical Parliamentary Front gave rise to the organization and systematization of activities and the construction of more effective action strategies. Since then, the distribution of proposals among parliamentarians and advisors has been stipulated so that each one is responsible for monitoring bills relating to a specific topic, always of interest to the evangelical community. Furthermore, deputies should free their advisors to map out propositions and select those considered most threatening to the moral order and good customs with the purpose of following them throughout the entire legislative process (Dantas, 2011).

With the formalization of the front, the political organization and decision-making processes began to take place officially. EPF gained its own cabinet, operational positions, board of directors and clear responsibilities for each member. Among the positions are the functions of president, vice-presidents, secretaries, treasurers, coordinators, legal and legislative advisors, as well as a chaplain and chaplaincy assistant (Dantas, 2011; Frente Parlamentar Evangélica, 2023). Dantas also highlights the importance of the legal apparatus, which now allows the legality of the EPF's proposals to be verified in a more consistent manner, in the same way that it seeks to delegitimize contrary proposals.

EPF's actions are more subtle than one might imagine. Unlike parties, the front cannot demand ideological obedience from its members. Its political function is to structure ethical norms and establish a moral duty that influences social movements. Thus, although it does not require absolute loyalty, the EPF affects the acceptance or rejection of parliamentarians, particularly impacting its own members.

In short, the Evangelical Parliamentary Front, formed in 2003, was in many ways the next step in the professionalization of evangelical political practice, coordinating the political power of parliamentarians and evangelical morality, playing at the same time in the defensive and offensive field, and creating pressures that have direct repercussions on society, especially with regard to the political acceptance of its members. Evangelical political power, previously present in a diluted and disordered form, has definitively come together as a powerful agent of power in the Brazilian legislature, although there are still elements of informality.

Having outlined the differences, it is now worth describing Pentecostal political activity in the legislature. The main objective of the EPF is to monitor and evaluate all bills that are processed by the chamber, and, within its capabilities, to block those that attack the country's project and the moral order to which it subscribes, reinforcing a notion of "vigilance", in which it is the duty of parliamentarians to ostensibly watch over the barrage of projects that violate the so-called Christian values, through observation and persecutory, almost police-like attention (Dantas, 2020).

This surveillance work is made possible through the EPF advisory body, a work described as uninterrupted, in which projects of interest are blocked and opposed at all stages of the legislature. This demonstrates that the EPF's actions were, for a long time, defensive, seeking not a purposeful political action, but rather aiming to obstruct and shelve progressive bills, a legal "iron dome". However, from 2018 onwards, the dynamics changed, and Pentecostals assumed a propositional stance. Quoting the statement by the

federal deputy for Rio de Janeiro, Sóstenes Cavalcante, at the time affiliated with the DEM (Democrats), now PL (Liberal Party): “Now, instead of holding the left’s agenda, the left should try to obstruct to hold back our projects. The game has changed”; (Marini and Carvalho 2018). That is, the change in the political situation observed in 2018 empowered the FPE in such a way that, in the rhetoric mobilized by Cavalcante, “David became Goliath”, in a context of the right-wing takeover of power, the defeat and weakening of the left-wing, Bolsonaro’s combative discourse that largely set the tone of the political debate during his mandate, and the entry of evangelicals in force, no longer on the fringes, but at the center of Brazilian political power.

Throughout its political trajectory, the Evangelical Bench and, in the future, the EPF maneuvered skillfully through various alliances. Right from the beginning, they demonstrated support for right-wing forces, supporting Fernando Collor’s candidacy; subsequently, they demonstrated a discreet movement by supporting the liberal wings and the candidacy of Fernando Henrique Cardoso; afterwards, they had a shift in conjunction with the center-left, supporting the Lula and Dilma governments; and finally, turning against the center-left by supporting the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff (Camurça 2020), when they then firmly established themselves on the right, supporting Michel Temer’s government and, with emphasis, consolidating a strong base of support for the Bolsonaro government. It is also worth mentioning the presence of evangelical political power in candidacies in smaller instances of the executive power, among which Camurça highlights: Paulo Maluf’s candidacy for mayor of São Paulo in 1992; in 1994 they supported Mário Covas, Márcio Allencar and Paulo Souto for the government of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Bahia, respectively; and in 1998, José Serra, Sérgio Cabral Filho, and Antônio Imbassahy for the mayors of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Salvador. This points to the already mentioned tendency that Pentecostal political forces have to persist in the political scene, crossing entire governments, but until then remaining on the edges of power.

This persistence was due to two factors. The first being the degree of evangelical penetration in the most varied subtitles, as candidates included a large number of Pentecostal representatives in their subtitles, in order to win the vote of the faithful; and the second, due to the relative discursive flexibility of Pentecostal politics, which allowed them to join different groups, even those of former adversaries, without arousing a high degree of disapproval.

A striking fact about the political activity of evangelicals is that, politically, they have always been defined less by their propositions, which have remained relatively consistent, and more by their oppositions, which have metamorphosed over the years. When they entered the constituency,

they were in opposition to a Catholic and atheist (and, according to Freston, non-existent) political elite; subsequently, during the election of Collor and later Fernando Henrique, they were in opposition to the “communist threat” that permeated Brazil, then concentrated in the demonized figure of Lula; then, in a trend that persists to this day, they oppose feminists, LGBTs+, black and indigenous activists and “cultural Marxism”. On the other hand, the agendas they defended remained, in general terms, the same: defense of religious freedom, tax exemption, inclusion of religious education, among others that we have already discussed.

8. Israel for Pentecostals

Israel, a region of great importance for Abrahamic religions, is also the object of strong support among evangelical parliamentarians in Brazil, especially after the creation of the Evangelical Parliamentary Front (EPF) in 2003. Although initially Israel’s relevance for Pentecostal denominations may seem secondary, these parliamentarians have shown broad support for the policies of the Jewish State and have defended a rapprochement between Brazil and Israel, seeing the country as a model of development, technology, democracy and tolerance. To this end, the FPE, together with entities such as the Confederation of Pastors’ Councils of Brazil (Concepab), the Association of Evangelical Parliamentarians of Brazil (Apeb) and the National Evangelical Forum for Social and Political Action (Fenasp), have promoted rallies and regular visits to the Israeli embassy in Brazil, reinforcing ties of friendship between the two nations (Gonçalves 2015).

In 2007, the Brazil-Israel Christian Parliamentary Front for Peace (Frenpazbril) was established, with 214 parliamentarians and aiming to expand the participation of the Brazilian legislature in parliamentary diplomacy actions through international forums and organizations, including the UN and the World Trade Organization. The request for the creation of Frenpazbril also suggested periodic consultations between the Brazilian and Israeli Congresses, with the aim of promoting peace and tolerance, especially in the Middle East area (Frenpazbril Request 2007, 1-3).

This continued support for Israel reflects the interest of Brazilian Pentecostal forces in strengthening the alliance with the country. With the growing participation of Pentecostal representatives in the political sphere and a substantial evangelical electoral base, as well as the EPF’s alignment with the political projects of the United States and Donald Trump, pressure on the Bolsonaro government to strengthen ties with Israel has increased

significantly.

In the religious aspect, Israel is considered the “promised land” and, in the Christian view, a blessed land inhabited by a people favored by God. For evangelicals, supporting Israel is a moral duty, based, according to theologian José Barbosa Júnior, on the dispensationalist current, a theology originating in the United States that associates the history of Israel with eschatological events and prophetic fulfillment, giving the nation a central role in the divine plan (Barbosa Júnior 2019). As Maynard explains, dispensationalism organizes biblical chronology into “dispensations”, periods in which Israel plays a primary role. Many Pentecostal churches that adopt this theological perspective therefore place Israel at the center of their doctrine (Maynard 2016).

Maynard also argues that dispensationalism gained strength in Brazilian evangelical churches, especially among neo-Pentecostals, in the context of a secularization process that significantly affected Catholicism. This phenomenon generated an influx of ex-Catholics into evangelism, encouraging Pentecostal churches to develop symbols and rituals that contrasted with Catholic tradition. This movement led to a “Judaization” of Pentecostal cults, which incorporated Jewish symbols such as the Star of David, the menorah, and the shofar, in response to this demand for symbolic identity among new adherents (Maynard 2016). Marta Francisca Topel also observes the presence of items such as the tallit and replicas of the Ark of the Covenant, among others, in Pentecostal ceremonies (Topel 2011).

Thus, dispensationalism supports the adoption of Jewish symbolism among Brazilian Pentecostals, consolidating a type of Christian Zionism that strengthens the feeling of alliance with Israel. This mutual symbolic vision contributes to a religious identity that combines evangelical and Jewish elements.

In Brazil, this Zionist affinity manifested itself in demonstrations in support of President Bolsonaro, in which the flags of Israel were displayed alongside those of Brazil and the United States. This alignment with Israel also carries a political dimension, serving as a direct opposition to the left’s historic support for Palestine, especially during Lula’s governments, aligned with Yasser Arafat’s Palestine Liberation Organization, a topic covered in subsequent chapters. Zionism in the Brazilian context, therefore, fits into a logic of polarization – “us against them” – reinforced by the conservative perspective and the religious vision of dominant political Pentecostalism.

9. Religious tourism and Israeli soft power:

Michel Gherman (2009) observes that, from the second millennium onwards, the presence of Brazilian evangelical churches in Israel increased, with emphasis on the Christian Congregation in Brazil (CCB), associated with the first wave of Pentecostalism, and the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (Iurd), representative of the third wave. According to their official websites, the CCB has only one headquarters in Israel, located in the Old City of Jerusalem, while the Iurd has two, in Tel Aviv and Nazareth. This international expansion of Brazilian churches is part of a well-structured project, not only of evangelization, but also of diplomacy, in line with the growth of relations between Brazil and Israel and the importance of Israel in dispensational practice, thus strengthening the identification between evangelicals and Jews. As disclosed on their respective websites, Iurd is present in 97 countries, and CCB in 87, consolidating the internationalization of Brazilian headquarters.

In terms of tourism, there is a growing number of Brazilians visiting Israel, according to data from the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, presented in the table below.

Table 1: Number of Brazilians visiting Israel

Year	Total (in thousands)	Growth compared to the previous year
2017	54,8	3,9 (7,7%)
2018	62,5	7,7 (14,5%)
2019	82,1	19,6 (31,4%)
2020	13,4	-68,7 (-83,7%)
2021	68	54,6 (407,5 %)

Source: Israel Ministry of Tourism

The sharp drop in 2020 is attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic,

which reduced international travel due to safety and social isolation protocols. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the pandemic caused a 73% drop in global tourism; Still, in 2021, the number of Brazilian tourists in Israel surpassed those in 2018.

In a detailed analysis of Brazilian evangelical tourism in Israel, Magno Paganelli de Souza (2018) highlights the “professionalization of tourist activity” and the economic interests of Pentecostal groups in Israel. According to Souza, the first caravans organized by Brazilian pastors occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, with a significant increase in the 1980s and 1990s, in part due to the stability brought by the Real Plan. Ubiratan Martins, founder of the US Travel agency, reported in an interview that the caravans, initially formed by pastors seeking in-depth theological understanding in Israel, today consist mainly of groups of believers led by pastors, who determine the itinerary according to the group’s profile (Souza 2018).

To maintain the tourist flow, Israel’s Ministry of Tourism offers incentives such as “continuous marketing”, “building sub-brands”, “niche tourism”, and “financial incentives to airlines that create new routes to Israel” (Souza 2018, pg. 304). Partnerships with tour operators specializing in the caravan market, such as Brazilian companies Terra Santa Viagens, El Gibor and Hebron, are also encouraged; the first two have the seal of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism on their websites. Israel also invests in influencers: data from 2017 indicates that more than 3000 content producers, bloggers and celebrities were hired to promote the country’s image.

Souza also investigated the cost of caravans, finding that, in 2016, the cost for a 12-day excursion reached R\$9,500 per person, equivalent to approximately US\$2,932 at the exchange rate at the time. In a November 2011 update, it was found that operators maintain the price in dollars, and the most affordable packages are around US\$3,000 (R\$14,605.80). The recent instability between Israel and Gaza has resulted in the cancellation of several caravans, with the last tour scheduled by the Hebron company for February 2024.

The Israeli Ministry of Tourism also prioritizes the Latin American market, offering support to film and documentary productions that are recorded in the country, such as the film “Nada a Perder”, a biopic of Iurd leader, Edir Macedo, according to Souza. The country uses tourism to promote “soft power”, positioning tourists as “ambassadors” of the Israeli narrative, especially in the context of the conflict with Gaza.

Thus, it is concluded that Brazilian Pentecostal groups involved in religious caravans establish a symbiotic relationship with the Israeli Ministry of Tourism. They receive incentives to organize these tours, which are sold to

the faithful, generating profits and strengthening Israel's soft power. Religious caravans to Israel therefore represent a profitable and effective means of disseminating Israeli influence, benefiting both the country's tourism and Brazilian religious tourism operators.

10. Messianic phenomenon

In this study, "messianic phenomenon" refers to the religious elements that permeate both the campaign and Jair Bolsonaro's term as President of the Republic. To understand this facet of Bolsonaroism, it is necessary to define the concepts of "messianism" and "populism".

Lísias Nogueira Negrão explains messianism as the belief in a savior, who could be God or a divine envoy, whose coming would bring the end of an order seen as oppressive, establishing a new era of justice. The messianic movement involves a collective mobilization that seeks to realize this new order under the leadership of a charismatic leader (Negrão 2001, 119). In short, messianism is a belief, while the messianic movement is the practical result of this belief, a collective action to bring about the new order. This mobilization is often associated with eschatology, which is pertinent to understanding the messianic elements present in the Bolsonaro government.

On the other hand, populism has different approaches. Here we will adopt Margaret Canovan's concept of "authoritarian populism". For Canovan, the authoritarian populist leader is characterized by his charisma and his attempt to distance himself from the intellectual elites and the political system itself, seeking to appeal to the reactionary feelings of the population, positioning himself as a representative against the established system (Canovan 1999). Thus, authoritarian populism is a political configuration in which a charismatic and anti-intellectualist leader garners support by intensifying the people's discontent in relation to the system, of which he himself is a part, even if he distances himself discursively.

Messianic movements and authoritarian populism converge in the high degree of personalism, both centered on the charisma and personality of a leader. Furthermore, they share a vision of a "beyond", a definitive state to be achieved. For the messianic movement, this state would be the "eschaton", a new divine order; for authoritarian populism, it represents a promise of political order where corruption would be eliminated. In the messianic movement, the rise of a leader emerges from the bottom up, with a community that legitimizes the leader's charisma; in authoritarian populism, the movement occurs from the top down, with the leader attracting followers

through his speech and personality.

In 2018, Brazil had favorable conditions for the convergence of these two forces. Politically, there was great dissatisfaction with the New Republic, a scenario of elitism in politics and a lack of alternation of power, while the strengthening of the right globally intensified cohesion between heterogeneous groups. On the messianic level, Pentecostal denominations, mainly neo-Pentecostalism, achieved strong social and political influence, without yet having a representative with a conservative profile who could reconcile elements of charisma and authority from a Judeo-Christian perspective. Bolsonaro then emerged as a figure who fit, and was fitted, into the messianic narrative by his supporters (Reis and Soares 2020).

It is worth mentioning that, although the best-known Brazilian messianic movements, such as Canudos and Contestado, took place in rural and Catholic contexts more than a century ago, the country was also the scene of urban messianic phenomena, with elements of varied beliefs, such as the Aladino Félix group in the 1960s, which mixed esotericism and Judaism, and the “Blue Butterflies” in the 1970s, in Campina Grande, who integrated traditional Catholicism with spiritualism (Negrão 2001). Such examples demonstrate that messianism, although rarer, remains in the Brazilian imagination.

Around Bolsonaro, his followers created the image of a “myth” through social media, with a moralistic and public security discourse that distinguished the “good citizen” from the “criminal”. The first was portrayed as a worker oppressed by systemic corruption, personified in anti-PTism; the second, as a representative of old politics and an enemy of society’s traditions and values (Ferreira Dias 2020). In the evangelical movement, support for Bolsonaro was reinforced by the historical opposition to the Workers’ Party (PT) and progressive groups, especially in relation to racial, sexual and gender minorities. This evangelical project incorporated Jewish symbolism in support of Bolsonaro, consolidating a solid base of support that included elements of dispensational theology, an eschatological doctrine aligned with populism and messianism.

The messianic phenomenon in Bolsonarism, therefore, results from the convergence between authoritarian charisma and emerging messianism. Bolsonaro became the representative of a radical restructuring in a scenario of dissatisfaction and polarization, and the messianic movement, present in the popular imagination and driven by Pentecostals, gathered around him, validating his leadership from a dispensationalist perspective.

Recent studies investigate the messianic elements in Bolsonarism through different approaches, such as semiotics (Brito and Lara 2023),

theology (Bonfim 2020) and sociology (Ferreira Dias 2020). Evandro Sousa Bonfim highlights that the charisma of a messianic leader, although seen as innate, is a construction carefully managed through the insertion of the leader in the religious context and the management of his image by religious leaders who support him. Clebson Luiz Brito and Gláucia Muniz Proença Lara (2023) and João Ferreira Dias (2020) argue that, despite not being new, the presence of religious elements in political discourse takes on new contours in the context of the new right, integrating different ideologies. These messianic phenomena can even be interpreted as part of a “re-enchantment of the world” in light of Weberian theory, where secular leaders take on the charismatic aura of religious leaders (Ferreira Dias 2020).

11. Two Level Game

In 2016, Jair Bolsonaro began to strengthen ties with Pentecostal leaders, as exemplified in his trip to Israel and the baptism in the Jordan River carried out by pastor Everaldo Pereira, president of the Christian Social Party and leader of the Assembly of God (Extra 2016). This approach was consolidated at his inauguration, where he counted on the prayer of the senator and campaign coordinator Magno Malta and the almost unanimous support of the main Pentecostal leaders, including Silas Malafaia of the Assembly of God, Edir Macedo of the Universal Church, Valdemiro Santiago of the Worldwide Church of the Power of God, and Romildo Soares of the International Church of the Grace of God (Camurça 2020). This support was reflected in the occupation of key positions by evangelical leaders in the Bolsonaro government, as Magali Cunha (2019) points out.

Among the appointments, Pastor Damares Alves took over the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights; the Lutheran Onyx Lorenzoni was responsible for the Civil House; the Ministry of Tourism was led by the member of the Maranata Church, Marcelo Álvaro Antônio; the Presbyterian pastor André Luiz Mendonça held the Office of the Attorney General of the Union; and General Luiz Eduardo Ramos, a Baptist, took over as head of the Government Secretariat (Cunha 2019).

With significant evangelical support, Bolsonaro committed to maintaining a series of policies so as not to contradict this influential political base, which, in addition to being crucial to his election, now occupied strategic positions in the government. To analyze this dynamic, we will apply Robert D. Putnam’s theory of the “Two-Level Game”.

The Two-Level Game, according to Putnam (2010), is an analytical tool

that explores the interactions between domestic and international politics, and how political leaders must manage these spheres to build a favorable position on the global stage while meeting internal demands, preserving their legitimacy and avoiding political destabilization, such as impeachment. Putnam argues that foreign policy cannot be understood in isolation from domestic pressures, since both are intertwined in a complex game of interests.

In the domestic context, Putnam highlights the constant conflict between parties, social classes, interest groups, legislators, public opinion and the Executive branch (Putnam 2010, 150). Internationally, the Executive seeks to satisfy the interests of the groups that supported its election, often granting them important positions in government and influencing foreign policy to represent their interests. Schutte, Da Fonseca and Carneiro (2019) point out that, in the Bolsonaro government, although the composition of key ministries such as Economy, Agriculture and Mines and Energy has maintained similarity with previous administrations, the appointments of Hamilton Mourão as vice-president and Walter Souza Braga Netto in the Ministry of Defense highlight the strong presence of military interests in the government. This group, historically aligned with national economic elites, defends a foreign policy focused on economic pragmatism (Schutte, Da Fonseca and Carneiro 2019, 96).

The authors identify a tension in the Bolsonaro government between a pragmatic wing, focused on traditional economic conduct, and another inspired by the political philosophy of Olavo de Carvalho, who sees foreign policy as a tool to strengthen Bolsonaro's domestic position. This contradiction reflects a clash between a pragmatic foreign policy and an ideological vision.

During the Bolsonaro government, internal and external dynamics provided a context that influenced his political decisions. Domestically, Brazil was experiencing a conservative wave, characterized by the rejection of the New Republic project and the strategic use of new mass communication tools by right-wing forces. This climate of aversion to traditional politics created space for an anti-establishment discourse, which Bolsonaro adopted and directed at those dissatisfied with the republican structure. Internationally, the scenario was largely dominated by the figure of Donald Trump, president of the USA, whose government served as a model and inspiration for several of Bolsonaro's actions.

The analysis of Bolsonaro's policies allows us to observe explicit attempts to align with the Trump administration. In a study published by Sul Global in 2021, Thomaz, Vigevani and Ferreira examined how the Bolsonaro government made unilateral concessions to the United States, many of which did not result in concrete benefits for Brazil, reinforcing a posture of

subservience. Two prominent examples were the failed sale of Embraer to Boeing and the visa exemption for citizens of the USA, Canada, Australia and Japan.

In the case of Embraer, Bolsonaro abdicated his veto power to allow negotiations with Boeing to proceed, despite domestic resistance, especially from sectors that saw the sale as a threat to the national economy and technological sovereignty. The agreement was justified as a way to position Boeing in the small aircraft sector, in response to the partnership between Bombardier and Airbus. However, the process was interrupted in April 2020, with Boeing canceling the purchase and Embraer suffering large losses, leading it to seek compensation from the International Center for Dispute Resolution (Thomaz, Vigevani and Ferreira 2021).

Another example of a unilateral concession was the visa exemption for citizens of the USA, Canada, Australia and Japan, according to decree No. 9731, of 2019. The measure was adopted shortly after President Trump imposed visa restrictions on several nationalities, including Brazilians. Although defenders claimed that the exemption would stimulate tourism, the decision was criticized for breaking Brazil's tradition of diplomatic reciprocity, being classified by former chancellor Celso Amorim as an attitude of a "mutt complex" (Amorim, Correio do Povo, 2019).

To reinforce this unilateral opening, Bolsonaro signed decree No. 10269 of 2020, allowing Brazil's entry into the US Global Entry program, a system that facilitates the entry of frequent travelers, although it does not replace the full American visa. This decree was seen as an additional concession, as Brazilians continued to need a visa to enter the USA, and Global Entry only benefits a specific audience (US Embassy and Consulates in Brazil 2020). In May 2023, Brazil revoked visa exemptions, with the new rule coming into force in January 2024 (Valor Econômico 2023; Folha 2023).

These actions indicate Bolsonaro's efforts to please the Trump administration, demonstrating what Thomaz, Vigevani and Ferreira describe as adherence to the Monroe Doctrine, which reinforces US hegemony on the American continent. For professor Igor Fuser, the concept of "diplomacy of subservience" captures this posture of dependence, which was manifested from the first months of the Bolsonaro government and was based on Trump's unconditional approach to the USA (Fuser 2019).

Fuser notes that, historically, Brazilian foreign policy has oscillated between periods of autonomy and alignment with Washington's interests, as in the "independent foreign policy" of Jânio Quadros and the "responsible pragmatism" of Ernesto Geisel, contrasting with the dependence adopted by Bolsonaro (Fuser 2019, 108). Anticipating that the link with the USA would

end at the end of Trump's term, Fuser identified decisions that reinforced this stance of dependence, such as the request to join the OECD, Brazil's attempt to join NATO, the support for interventionist measures against Venezuela and the handover of the Alcântara base to the USA.

The "diplomacy of subservience" represents a move away from multilateralism and the defense of national sovereignty, exchanged for an alignment with US interests. At the diplomatic level, the Bolsonaro government intensified its rapprochement with Israel, reflecting the bond between the USA and its greatest ally in the Middle East. Thus, alignment with Trump inevitably led to closer ties with Israel, showing how Brazilian foreign policy was shaped by international and domestic pressures, in line with Putnam's Two-Level Game theory.

12. BFP in the Bolsonaro Government for Israel

The Bolsonaro government's foreign policy was marked by several breaks with Brazilian diplomatic traditions. According to Mônica Hirst and Tadeu Maciel (2022), the orientation of Brazilian foreign policy (BFP) under Bolsonaro was based on three pillars that, although they cooperated at times, often competed with each other: the ideological core, divided between Pentecostals and "Olavists"; the liberal-conservative economic policy, represented by agribusiness and the financial sector; and the security and defense complex, supported by the military. In the Brazil-Israel relationship, the ideological pillar had undeniable prominence.

The proposal to transfer the Brazilian embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem is an example of a decision driven by ideology. This movement was driven by strong pressure from the Pentecostal base, as a response to a similar gesture made by the USA in 2017, under the government of Donald Trump. In Brazil, the Brazil-Israel Parliamentary Group pushed for this transfer to be a symbolic gesture of partnership between the two countries, becoming a campaign promise from Bolsonaro. The president even expressed his intention to close the Palestinian embassy, stating that Palestine "is not a state" and, therefore, would not have the right to an embassy, in an interview with the Israeli newspaper Israel Hayom (Bolsonaro 2018; Schutte, Pidone and Correa 2020).

The "Olavista" wing of the government, formed by supporters of Olavo de Carvalho's theories, such as former chancellor Ernesto Araújo and the president's sons, Carlos and Eduardo Bolsonaro, also supported the transfer of the embassy. According to Schutte, Fonseca and Carneiro, the Olavista

project is based on the idea that Brazil is a deeply conservative nation and that the regular alternation of power between left and right is a fundamental characteristic of democracy, a characteristic that Olavo attributed exclusively to the USA. In Olavo's view, Brazil only experienced true democracy with the election of Bolsonaro, a representative of "pure and legitimate" conservatism (Schutte, Fonseca and Carneiro 2019).

The Olavista project sees the fight against globalism as one of its central bases, understanding globalism as a system that aims at cultural homogenization, eliminating Christian values and national sovereignty. For Olavists, globalism is supported by Islam, Russian-Chinese Marxism and anti-Christian technocratic capitalism. The rapprochement with Israel, from this perspective, is a consequence of the alignment with the USA, considered the main defense against the advance of the East — represented by China, Russia and Islam —, where Israel is seen as the front line in the "Western defense" against Islam (Carvalho 2019 quoted in Schutte, Fonseca and Carneiro 2019).

This stance breaks with the tradition of Brazilian support for Palestine and often tense diplomatic relations with Israel, in tune with anti-PT sentiment and domestic political polarization (Schutte, Fonseca and Carneiro 2019). However, while ideological groups supported the transfer of the embassy, other sectors, such as the economic and military sectors, expressed concerns. The Arab League criticized the proposal, indicating that the measure could threaten Brazil's lucrative trade partnerships with the Middle East, a crucial region for the export of Brazilian chicken meat, especially halal meat, in which Brazil leads in the global market (Saraiva and Costa Silva 2019; Schutte, Pidone and Correa 2020). In 2022, Brazil exported US\$2.9 billion in chicken meat to Arab countries, a value higher than total exports to Israel, which totaled US\$1.8 billion, representing just 11% of Brazilian exports to the region (Comex Stat 2022).

Faced with these pressures, Bolsonaro retreated, adopting a more ambiguous stance. In 2019, Eduardo Bolsonaro opened a Brazilian commercial office in Jerusalem, reiterating his father's intention to move the embassy. In the same year, Agriculture Minister Tereza Cristina hosted a dinner with ambassadors from Arab and Islamic countries, including representatives from Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Kuwait, and others, in an effort to mitigate potential diplomatic damage (Dianni 2019).

Ultimately, the failure to transfer the embassy exemplifies the internal contradictions of the Bolsonaro government and demonstrates how the rapprochement with Israel was fundamentally motivated by ideological issues and the domestic context, with significant pressure from Pentecostal and Olavist groups, each with their own national projects and world views.

13. Final Considerations

The research shows that the rapprochement between Brazil and Israel during the Bolsonaro government resulted from complex pressures, both internal and external, which intertwine as explained by the Two-Level Game Theory. In a chronological analysis, it is noted that, traditionally, Brazil maintained a stance of neutrality between Israel and Palestine, gradually leaning towards the Arab side, especially during the military governments and that of Collor, motivated by ideological and economic reasons, as commercial relations with the Arab world were more advantageous than with Israel. During the Geisel government, this relationship was reinforced as part of an independent US foreign policy, while during the Collor government, although with free market rhetoric, Brazil maintained tensions with Israel due to its military partnership with Iraq, which distanced it from a position of diplomatic leadership in the Middle East. During the FHC government, there was an attempt at greater Brazilian involvement in the Arab-Israeli issue, hampered by the worsening of tensions after 9/11. During the Lula government, Brazilian diplomacy reached its peak of activity and projection in the region, especially in the Middle East, intensifying tensions with Israel; This scenario persisted, albeit in a reduced form, during the Dilma government.

Internally, in addition to the anti-PT sentiment and political disillusionment, the political strength of the Pentecostals, already widely infiltrated in the spheres of power, was decisive for the rapprochement with Israel. With Bolsonaro's election, these pressures gained strength, converging with anti-PTism and creating a shift away from the Palestinians in favor of Israel, also motivated by the government's unconditional affinity with the United States and ideological influences such as those of Olavo de Carvalho.

Despite the ideological alignment with Israel, the project to transfer the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem was blocked by strong economic pressures, especially from agribusiness. This episode demonstrates not only the weight of economic interests on the Brazilian government, but also the subordination of ideological issues to these interests, with agribusiness maintaining its dominant position, even with Bolsonaro's strong ideological rhetoric.

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ABSTRACT

President Jair Bolsonaro's government saw several ruptures in relation to the political tradition of Brazilian diplomacy, and nowhere was this as clear as in the changes that occurred in the long relationship between Brazil and the State of Israel. Using Robert Putnam's Two-Level Game theory, this work aims to understand the influence that changes in the domestic context caused by Bolsonaro's election motivated this rapprochement with the State of Israel, especially taking into account the influence that Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal groups exerted throughout this process.

KEYWORDS

Bolsonaro, Israel, Brazilian Foreign Policy

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MAINSTREAMING SECURITY NORMS AS JAPANESE STRATEGY TO GAIN ITS GLOBAL POWER: A CONTENT ANALYSIS ON ODA DOCUMENTS

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Introduction

In the 19th century, Japan was a major power, especially during the economic and military modernisation carried out during the Meiji Emperor's reign. The success of this modernisation, known as the Meiji Restoration, established Japan as a major power in East Asia. This position also positioned Japan as a global power that competed with Western colonial powers such as Britain, the Netherlands, France, Portugal, Spain, etc., which at that time controlled several regions in Asia. In its efforts to become a global actor, Japan won regional wars by defeating Russia and China (Morris-Suzuki, 2014). These victories enhanced Japan's confidence and led it into World War I, which was centred in Europe. Japan's involvement in the First World War began shortly after the outbreak of the conflict in Europe in 1914, when it entered the war on the side of the Allied Powers in accordance with the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902. At Britain's request, Japan declared war on Germany with the primary objective of expelling German influence from East Asia and the Pacific. Japan's military operations focused on seizing German-held territories, including the port of Qingdao (Tsingtao) in China

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and several Pacific islands such as the Marianas, Carolines, and Marshalls. Although Japan's direct involvement in the European theatre was minimal, its participation allowed it to expand its regional influence, secure strategic territories, and gain recognition as one of the victorious powers at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. Japan's confidence in becoming a major power grew stronger thanks to its success in seizing several European colonial territories, as well as its swift and powerful attack on the US naval base at Pearl Harbor, which then triggered US participation in World War II (Slavinsky, 2004).

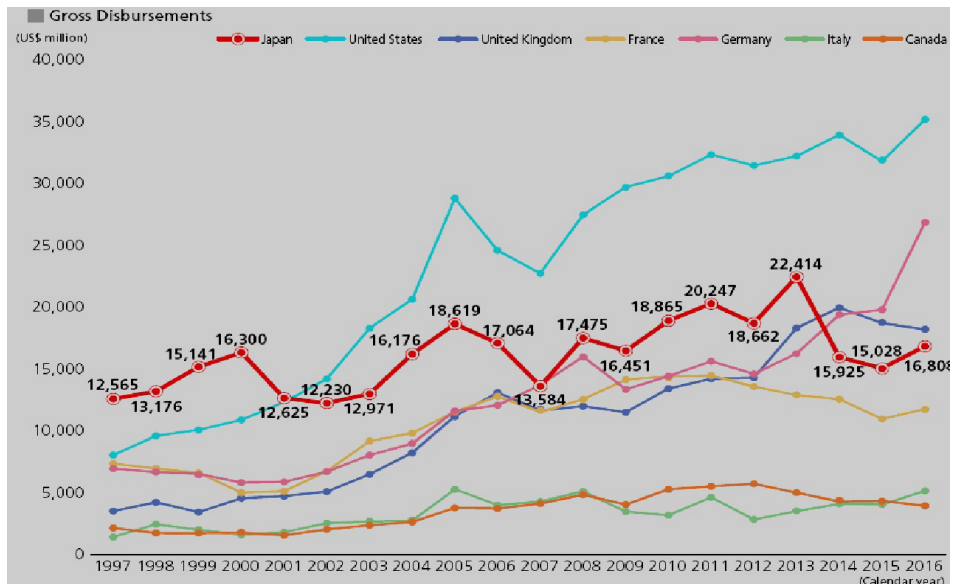
Japan's military mobilisation in the Asia-Pacific region then sparked World War II. This war was fought using mass destruction technology, causing ecological, social, economic, and political damage, as well as a huge loss of life. In this war, Japan and Germany became common enemies of the Allied Powers led by the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China. In World War II, Japan suffered defeat and incurred severe domestic infrastructure losses due to atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. Japan surrendered unconditionally to the Allies and remained under Allied occupation until 1952. During this occupation period, the Allies implemented policies of demilitarisation and political reform (Dobson & Kosuge, 2009). These policies forced Japan to transform itself into a pacifist nation by eliminating all provisions regarding the use of military force and power, and requiring Japan to remove war clauses from its constitution (Cooney, 2006).

However, there is an interesting fact in the 1947 Japanese Constitution, which forms the basis of Japan's pacifism, whereby Japan still declares itself a major power and internationally responsible for maintaining global prosperity. Japan, which was decisively defeated in World War II and bound by several international agreements, did not abandon its ambition to become a global power. This provides a valuable lesson for any country with ambitions to become a global power (Kinzley, 2001).

One of Japan's strategies to regain its position as a global power without violating the constitution is to use economic and development assistance instruments through Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). The primary target of ODA as a tool of Japan's foreign policy was initially countries that had been victims of Japan's aggression and Third World nations (Rix, 2010). Japan's assumption was that the aid distributed would lead to Third World countries recognising Japan's hegemony. At the same time, several European and American countries joined the liberal bloc and also used economic aid instruments through the Marshall Plan to rebuild third world countries while also serving as a deterrent against the Soviet Union's economic initiatives through the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon), which

targeted the same objectives. The implementation of international aid to Third World countries was systematically, objectively, and amicably structured.

Figure 1: Trends in Major DAC Countries' ODA (Gross Disbursements) 1997 - 2016



Source: JICA, 2017

Figure 1 shows how Japan, as a donor country, has consistently provided substantial international assistance through ODA over the past 20 years. Japan's consistency as a donor country demonstrates its status as an established global power that defines the dynamics of the international system. However, Japan faces serious challenges in its quest to become a major power once again. Meanwhile, this is one of the main ethics of becoming a major power in the Samurai tradition (Titus, D. A., & Large, 1993). In this context, this article will fill the gap in the argument that intelligent, systematic, objective, and visionary legal governance is a critical variable in how a country deals with international regulatory issues and is able to become an established global power.

Literature Review

Japan has become an established global power in the middle of the international anarchy system, which caused some ups and downs. Japan became a global power that can manage challenges as a big nation effectively and efficiently. Many studies have discussed the Japanese foreign policy, especially Japanese foreign assistance (ODA) towards developing countries. However, most research on ODA relies on a rationalist perspective. ODA is often seen as a tool for Japan to satisfy its capitalist desires and achieve its own national goals.

Some articles expounded Japan's persistence as a global power by using an economic approach, such as norm of capitalism and Japan (Estevez-Abe, 2008) a norm to comply with agreements or international law (Cooney, 2006), develop science and technology, and utilization of foreign aid for recognition (Rix, 2010). However, how human security norms construct Japanese ODA has rarely hit the spotlight.

Historically, Japan's defeat in World War II led to its pacifism and heavy dependence on US aid. This marked the beginning of ODA development. However, Japan worked hard to rise and transform itself from a recipient country to a donor country within a few years (Takashi & Jain, 2000). The evolution of Japan's foreign aid can be classified into four stages: from repatriation to export promotion, from export promotion to interdependence rationality, from interdependence rationality to a tool for global position, and from global position to the protection of world peace and stability. In the first stage, as it began to emerge as a donor nation, Japan joined the UNCTAD and DAC (Donor Countries) 30 years after becoming an aid recipient. In the second stage, Japan joined several international organisations, including OPEC, to manage the energy crisis caused by the oil embargo imposed by some OPEC countries on Western nations. Japan's international aid was not limited to Asian countries but also extended to several Middle Eastern nations. In the third stage, Japan managed international aid as a tool to ensure Japan's needs and interests, as the idea of investing for the future had become widespread at that time. In the fourth stage, Japan finally succeeded in integrating international aid, particularly ODA, to create world peace and stability, as stated in the ODA Taiko on 2 June 1992 (Inoguchi & Bacon, 2006; Takashi & Jain, 2000).

Since the 1970s, Japanese ODA has begun to take on a more strategic nature, particularly in its relations with China, where aid is seen as a tool to curb military development and support the principles of human rights and democracy. Concerns about security issues were further emphasised with the enactment of the ODA Charter in the early 1990s, which stipulated that

aid should not be used for military purposes and should take into account environmental, democratic and human rights considerations. These changes were also related to global dynamics and geopolitical relations, such as Japan's reaction to China's nuclear tests, which led to a reduction in aid funds. Meanwhile, the development of human security issues in the context of Japanese ODA distribution became an important part of foreign policy that prioritised the political stability of recipient countries as a prerequisite for creating an environment conducive to investment and bilateral relations. The 2003 ODA policy reform further emphasised Japan's repositioning in the face of global challenges such as post-9/11 terrorism and the decline of the domestic economy, which ultimately changed the aid strategy with a greater emphasis on human security and sustainable development cooperation. However, how human security norms shape Japan's ODA has rarely been highlighted.

Studies on security have undergone a number of developments over the past few decades. The contextualisation of World War I and World War II has influenced security studies, which were initially viewed through a militaristic approach. Security was understood only as the absence of physical violence in international or inter-state relations. However, since the end of the Cold War, the trend of conflict and war has changed drastically, from wars and conflicts involving two or more state actors to wars and conflicts involving individuals, groups, opposition forces, and entities below or equal to state actors. Within a century, genocide, civil wars, brutal separatist movements, terrorism, corrupt governments, extreme hunger, and poverty have caused many people to die at the hands of their fellow citizens, even their own governments. This phenomenon challenges previous understandings of security and contributes to the emergence of a new paradigm in security (Centre, 2005).

The concept of national security, traditionally interpreted by traditionalists as the protection of the state's survival through the enhancement of military and economic capabilities, has shifted to the protection of human dignity and living standards (Tsai, 2009). The securitization paradigm introduced by the Copenhagen School provides a narrative explanation for analysing security issues. Security management is not only carried out by gathering forces capable of neutralising actors who have the opportunity to threaten national security, but also through the resolution of problems that may cause insecurity. States do not need to increase their military budgets to be secure (McDonald, 2008). The emergence of Human Security has gained momentum amid the increasing role of non-state actors in international relations. Human Security is constructed as a new value that will make the anarchic international world more concerned about humanitarian issues.

Human security does not only prioritise the protection of the state against external threats, but also emphasises the protection of the rights and freedoms of individuals and communities. The idea of human security has also been adopted by a number of political parties as a platform for electoral political struggle in several countries.

This new spectrum has sparked debate regarding the concept of human security. Some experts argue that human security only addresses issues related to development (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2006), while others argue that the concept of human security needs to be tightened and made more rigid (Hobson & Bacon, 2014). To prevent ambiguity in understanding human security, the UNDP outlines seven points as indicators of human security, namely economic security, food security, environmental security, health security, personal security, community security and political security. Economic security ensures economic sovereignty, including access to decent work, adequate and reliable income, and improved living standards. Food security encompasses access to food, good nutrition, and access to food during and after natural and man-made disasters. Environmental security refers to the protection of forests, land, prevention of various environmental problems, and the ability to resolve them, as well as mitigation of natural hazards. Health security aims to improve access to adequate health services, clean water, a safe environment, prevention of exposure to illegal drugs, and protection from serious diseases. Personal security safeguards freedom from fear, violence, torture, accident prevention, crime, drugs, or other things that may harm individuals. Communal security aims to preserve specific ethnic cultures, languages, and values, eliminate discrimination, and promote freedom from fear of inter-ethnic or inter-regional conflict. Finally, political security encompasses freedom of speech, the promotion of democratisation, and protection of citizens from state oppression. Given the complexity of human security, the indicators used to evaluate security can vary across regions and locations.

Human security issues have so far been discussed more by international organisations than by countries. The concept of human security that promotes inclusiveness and non-participation always comes up against state sovereignty (McDonald, 2002). The United Nations, for example, has successfully incorporated the concept of human security into the MDGs and SDGs, making the MDGs and SDGs widely accepted at the global level. The concept of human security, on the one hand, appears to be central to the functions of International Governmental Organisations (IGOs) and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) (Thomas, 2001). On the other hand, human security is rarely articulated by states, as states

often prioritise the preservation of sovereignty, nationalism, and national security, making state articulations of human security tend to be overly bureaucratic, exclusive, and rigid (Mahmud, Quaisar, Sabur, & Tamanna, 2008). The construction of human security by states is often used merely as a “sweetener” to strengthen state hegemony.

In her article, Sarah Tanke explains that human security has become a central concept in Japanese diplomatic discourse over the past three decades (Tanke, 2022). By tracking Japanese state speeches in international forums, Tanke notes that human security has been consistently used as Japan’s diplomatic identity to gain international recognition. Furthermore, Japan not only promotes human security for global development but also as a means to strengthen its legitimacy, role, and self-image among other nations in the international community. In its speeches at international forums, Japan constructs a narrative that highlights its contributions and leadership on human security issues, linking them to domestic achievements, foreign aid (ODA), and multilateral cooperation. This article highlights the need for a study on how Japan prepares human security issues as part of its diplomatic narrative to position Japan as a global player, which could ultimately restore Japan to its position as a global power (Tanke, 2022).

In the constructivist approach, norms are not simply external rules that govern the behavior of the state, but are an integral part of the identity and interests of the state itself. Alexander Wendt in his famous work *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999) asserts that “anarchy is what states make of it”, which shows that international structures are not fixed determinants, but are constructed through social interactions and norms embraced by international actors. In this context, post-World War II Japan sought to revitalize its position in the global arena by utilizing international norms, especially *human security* norms, as a strategy for identity reconstruction and expansion of its global role. Instead of relying on military power limited by its pacifist constitution (Article 9), Japan developed normative power through development assistance, humanitarian diplomacy, and active engagement in non-traditional security issues. This approach shows how Japan uses norms as an instrument of status transformation, from a militarily “castrated” country to a morally and politically respected global actor (Wendt, 2003).

Japan’s normative strategy is reflected in its international aid approach that emphasizes *human security* as the main framework. This concept places the protection of individuals from the threat of violence, poverty, health and disasters at the center of foreign policy and development assistance (Shibuya et al., 2016). Through Official Development Assistance (ODA), Japan actively supports developing countries, not only through financial assistance but also

technology transfer, institutional capacity building, and support for post-conflict reconstruction. In a constructivist framework, these actions are not merely technocratic policies, but rather part of the production of meaning and identity that shows Japan as a responsible, moral, and peace-oriented country. By positioning itself as a pioneer in the promotion of *human security*, Japan has gradually formed an international perception that supports its status as a *normal state*—a country that has the capacity and legitimacy to play a strategic role on the global stage (Yoshinobu, 2012), without having to rebuild aggressive military power.

The recognition of Japan as a legitimate and respected global power does not come instantly, but rather is the result of a long-term social construct based on the consistency of norms and international engagement. In Wendt's logic, social structures are formed through repeated practice and intersubjectivity—and Japan succeeded in creating a new social structure that saw it no longer as a military threat, but as a moral leader (Swenson-Wright, 2009). This recognition is reflected in Japan's increased role in international institutions, recognition of its humanitarian contributions to major conflicts, and support for its aspirations to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Thus, through the constructivist approach, it can be understood that Japan's transformation into a *normal state* is not merely the result of a change in material capabilities, but the result of its success in articulating *human security* norms as a national identity and foreign policy strategy, which ultimately gains affirmation from the international community as part of a legitimate global power.

Methodology

This study uses quantitative methodology by applying content analysis to Japanese normative and operational documents. Content analysis is a research method used to identify, categorise, and analyse various types of data such as text, images, or audio-visual recordings systematically and objectively in order to find patterns, themes, or hidden meanings in the content. Content that can be explored includes official government documents, news, speeches, or media articles, among others. This method was chosen with the aim of revealing the frequency of the appearance of words or ideas in the selected documents and identifying patterns that can be concluded.

In this article, the documents to be used are the 2015 ODA Charter or Development Cooperation Charter (DCC) and the White Paper on Development Cooperation (WPDC). The DCC is an official Japanese

government document (normative document) that serves as the main guideline for the implementation of Japan's international development cooperation, particularly ODA. Meanwhile, the WPDC is a report by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs that provides information on Japan's international development cooperation policies, implementation, and results, particularly in the form of ODA (operational document). These two documents will be tracked through the most frequently occurring words to form patterns that identify Japan's strategy in using ODA to maintain its influence as a global power.

To achieve this objective, four significant variables will be analysed in this study. First, Actors. Keywords referring to actors include countries, society, developing countries, private companies, Japanese companies, the private sector, local governments, NGOs, individuals, institutions, non-state actors, communities, women, men, governments, nations, vulnerable groups, the public, and civil society. Second, governance. Some terms referring to governance include development cooperation, international cooperation, law, democratisation, economy, experience, expertise, and lessons, diplomacy, investment for the future, transparency, certainty, maintenance and protection of the international order, universal values, non-military objectives, human security, self-reliance, independence, quality growth, poverty eradication, technical cooperation, loan assistance, grant assistance, and partnerships. Third, value variables covering human security issues consist of universal values, justice, peace, freedom from fear and want, economic development, peacebuilding, governance, humanitarian assistance, human rights, women's rights, democracy, prosperity, development, sustainable growth, the environment, climate change, water issues, natural disasters, food crises and famine, energy issues, infectious diseases, and prosperity. In addition, issues covering the dimension of national security include international terrorism, cross-border organised crime, piracy, fragile states, regional conflicts, political instability, conflict, and stability. Fourth, the scope of assistance covers Asia, other countries, the Caucasus, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Oceania, the Caribbean, international, national, domestic, and foreign.

Discussion Analysis

Before analysing Japanese ODA documents to determine Japan's strategy in using ODA to maintain its influence as a global power, this paper traces several practices of using aid as an instrument of foreign policy carried out by countries. First, it traces the concept of how Japan designs capacity

building for state and non-state actors. In the practices of some other donor countries, cooperation with recipient governments is considered the best way to increase the donor country's hegemony over the recipient country (Barone, 1982). International partnerships can also aim to increase the capacity of the recipient country's bureaucracy or improve its productivity. The Japanese government appears to have a different argument compared to those developed by most donor countries.

Second, tracing the logic used in constructing Japan's ODA governance. Most Western donor countries aim to strengthen their political affiliations in exchange for supporting the recipient's economy (Barnett & Duvall, 2009). Political ideology is considered an important factor in building commitment and integrity between donors and recipients. Therefore, political affiliation is an important tool used by Western donors in establishing hegemony in other countries (Agnew, 2005). This fact raises the question of whether Japan uses a political ideology perspective or an economic perspective to support Japan's transformation into a global power.

Third, tracking Japan's aid management to determine whether it is based on human security or traditional national security. Major donor countries need to enhance the security of smaller countries or recipient countries to strengthen their position and build global power. This perspective explains why the United States established several military alliances such as SEATO, ANZUS, NATO, and CENTO during the Cold War. This also applies to the Warsaw Pact established by the Soviet Union. Accumulated and centralised security is more effective in building compliance from recipient countries, as political-security cooperation tends to be hierarchical in nature (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2010). This raises two questions: whether Japan is following the same pattern as the United States or the Soviet Union, or another pattern suited to Japan's political, economic, and social conditions. The next question is whether using the concept of human security as the basis for cooperation is more effective and appropriate for Japan in facing the post-Cold War era and multipolarity compared to the traditional concept of national security (Winkler, J. R., & Nye, 2005).

Fourth, tracing ideas rooted in human security norms. Other donor countries tend to position themselves as global powers using economic norms and values rather than social norms. Economic aid is seen as a panacea that can drive social change, as believed by modernisation theory (Ish-shalom, 2006). As one of the major powers, the United States has used the Marshall Plan and economic or financial institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, and UNTACD to become a global economic power. The same applies to the Soviet Union (Gill & Law, 1989). Does Japan follow a similar pattern to the United

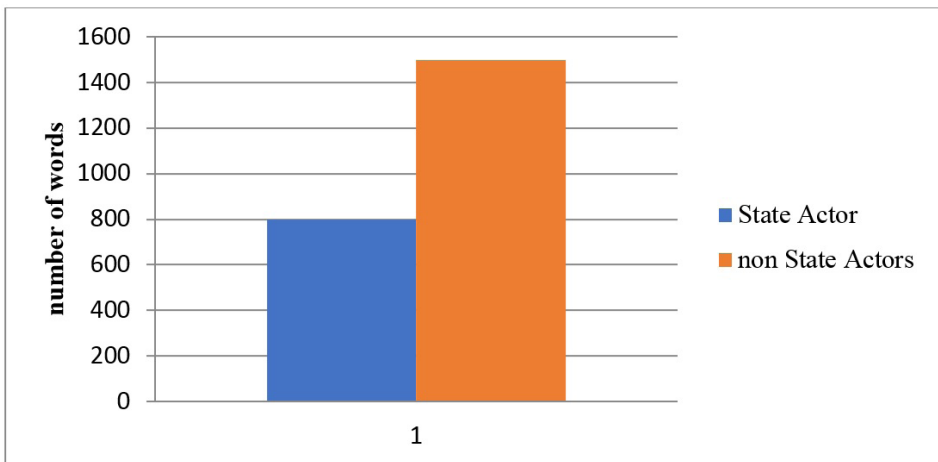
States and the Soviet Union in becoming a global economic power?

Fifth, tracking how areas of cooperation have become mainstream. Some countries that have developed themselves as global powers tend to spread their influence divergently and reach various regions around the world. Spain (Bishko, 2016) and Portugal, for example (Ikenberry, 2014), spread their influence divergently during the 13th to 15th centuries BC. This led to intense competition between the two kingdoms. A similar pattern was also applied by other countries such as England and France, which developed divergent hegemonic powers during the industrial revolution. The United States and the Soviet Union also applied a similar pattern to spread their hegemony throughout the world (Sedivy, 2004). So, what pattern did Japan choose to spread its influence throughout the world?

1. Empowerment of Non-State Actors

There is a significant trend that international aid patterns from donor countries to third world countries after the 1962 UN decolonisation resolution place governments as the main partners and beneficiaries. Donor countries will ensure that the international aid provided has a significant positive impact on recipient countries in a short period of time (Jain, 2016).

Figure 2: Discourse of Actors

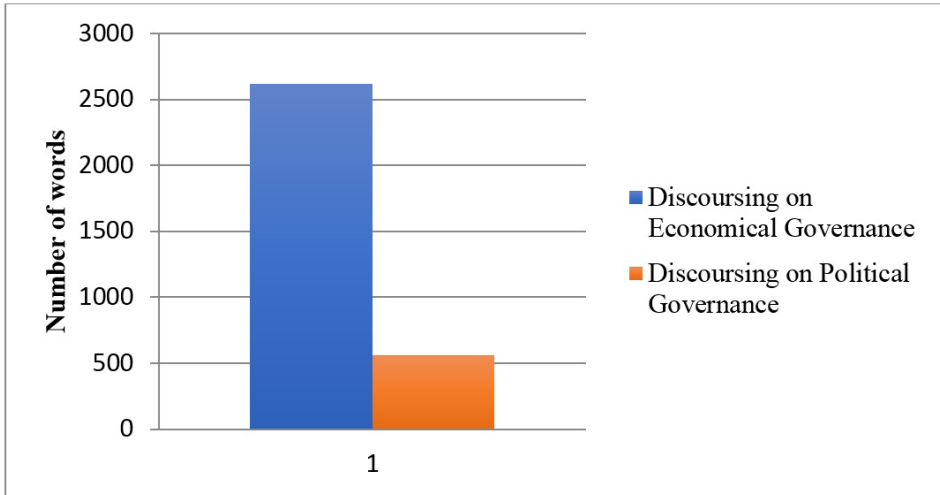


Source: Data proceed from DCC and WPDC

Figure 2 shows that the DCC and WPDC documents discuss the use of non-state actors more than state actors. In fact, the difference in numbers is almost double. This data can be interpreted to mean that although Japanese aid is government-to-government in nature, the Japanese government seeks to strengthen the capacity of non-state actors. The Japanese government believes that through non-state actors, international aid can mobilise the social and economic sectors and avoid political corruption (Asongu & Nwachukwu, 2016). This kind of governance is expected to prevent Japanese aid recipient countries from falling into the Samaritan's Dilemma, which is a situation of dependency on the part of the recipient, reducing the incentive to improve their own situation, and even worsening the conditions of the recipient in the long term (Raschky & Schwindt, 2016). With this kind of pattern, it is hoped that international aid can benefit both parties, both the donor and recipient countries.

2. Mainstreaming Economic Cooperation Governance

In terms of governance, the results of tracking DCC and WPDC documents can be classified into two types: ideology-political governance, also known as high political governance, and socio-economic governance, also known as low political governance. This classification is important for understanding how Japan identifies the needs of third world countries as recipients and how to ensure that Japan's interventions in third world countries are effective and efficient. The results of tracking in the DCC and WPDC documents are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Discourse of Governance

Source: Data proceed from DCC and WPDC

From the figure, it can be seen that the governance that is more frequently mentioned in the documents is economic governance rather than political governance. This is in line with the characteristics and objectives of the Japanese government to become a global power through economic issues, not through military capacity.

3. Mainstreaming Human Security Norms

The results of the content analysis of the two documents reveal consistency in the use of terms related to human security development norms and national security development norms. These two terms are divided into traditional security norms and non-traditional security norms (Frieman, 2014). There are several interesting issues that Japan is concerned about in the context of non-traditional security, such as climate change, natural disasters, energy, and even women's issues.

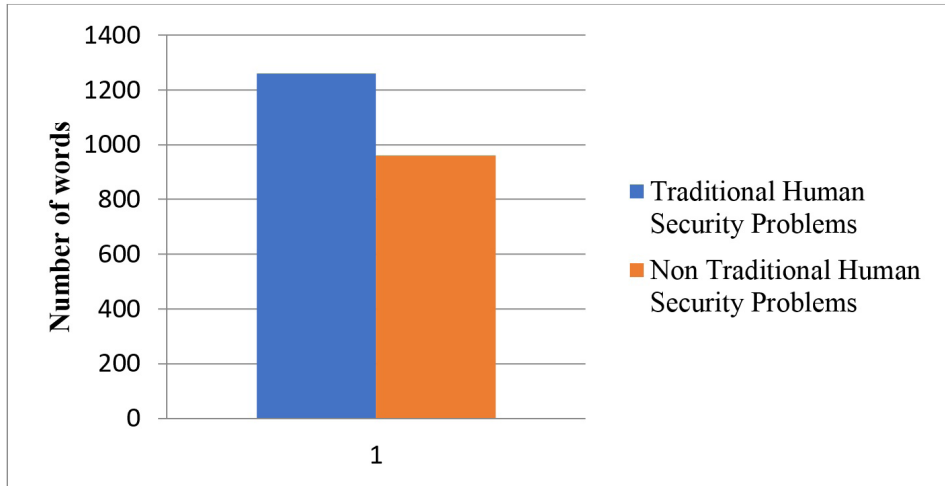
Japan is a country that is vulnerable to climate change (Emmers, n.d.), so climate change is a sensitive issue for Japan's future. This is because the increase in global surface temperature due to the depletion or leakage of the ozone layer will cause sea level rise, which could threaten Japan's geographical

areas in the northern latitudes due to the melting of ice in the Arctic. The issue of natural disasters also highlights Japan's vulnerability to disasters due to its geological structure, which has the highest level of vulnerability in the world. The experience of facing natural disasters has prompted Japan to develop better natural disaster management. This situation influences Japan's perspective on its international aid schemes, as Japan feels the need to emphasise the importance of proper disaster management (Herningtyas, 2010). This is related to the issue of disaster mitigation so that the impact of disasters can be managed properly and does not significantly affect some of Japan's investments (Sahashi, 2015). Water issues are also a concern for Japan. Japan is one of the countries with high standards in clean water management (Engle & Lemos, 2010). For recipient countries, most of which are developing countries, water is a strategic issue, both in the context of clean water shortages due to geological and geographical structures and poor clean water management in urban areas due to contaminated water sources.

Energy issues have also received serious attention from Japan. This is related to Japan's experience of once being highly dependent on fossil-based energy sources such as oil and coal (Morse, 1981). This situation prompted Japan to use cleaner and cheaper energy sources, such as nuclear energy, which requires high technology to reduce and manage the risks of its use. Currently, Japan has chosen nuclear energy as its primary energy source to meet the needs of industry and households (Patrick, 2011). Japan's experience in managing this energy source has become an alternative for energy development in developing countries. This position is inherently strategic for Japan because its ability to manage nuclear energy for peaceful development is far more advanced than that of other nuclear-armed countries. The Fukushima nuclear disaster was not caused by technological failure, as was the case in the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Instead, the disaster was caused by a natural disaster, which forced Japan to manage the issue seriously. Additionally, the Japanese Prime Minister had to resign as a form of public accountability. The Japanese government successfully handled the nuclear leak in Fukushima, allowing Japan to claim itself as the most efficient country in managing nuclear energy peacefully (Openshaw, 2002; Patrick, 2011).

On the issue of women, Japan has a desire to change values to strengthen the position of women in politics in third world countries. The dominant patriarchal culture in third world countries was formed due to women's low capacity in public issues. The Japanese government defines the low number of women in public issues as one of the problems that must be solved by third world countries (Bauer & Tremblay, 2011).

Figure 4: Discourse of Human Security



Source: Data proceed from DCC and WPDC

The results of tracking words related to human security issues are shown in Figure 4. The results show that Japan's human security issues in the distribution of international aid place more emphasis on traditional human security than on non-traditional security. This refers to the norms developed by Japan regarding 'investment for the future.' Traditional norms in security issues will be a major factor in whether Japan's international aid will be productive for Japan's future. If non-traditional security factors prove to be safe, the probability of achieving greater investment interest will be guaranteed (Rix, 2010)

This construction needs to be further investigated. Is the Japanese government not committed to cooperating with countries in the fragile category for investment or humanitarian reasons? This is stated in the DCC document as a normative document, in which the Japanese government demonstrates an affirmative policy in the form of a willingness to engage in conflict resolution in vulnerable countries. However, in its operational practice, the affirmative policy becomes less robust. Many studies on international aid find that international aid routinely considers the national stability of the recipient country. This means that the logical reason for aid as an investment in the future becomes rational.

Countries with unstable social and political conditions cannot provide a clear picture of how much they will benefit from investment (Lawson,

2013). Unlike women's issues, in the normative DCC document, the Japanese government does not provide clear affirmative policies on the importance of women's issues in international cooperation. Instead, in practice, women's issues are outlined in operational documents.

This construction is interesting because, to a certain extent, women's issues in developing countries are less noticed. Women tend to be objects rather than subjects of development. In the patriarchal culture that dominates developing countries, women's roles in public issues are often ignored (Salviana & Soedarwo, 2014). In some JICA photo documents, images of women and children are more dominant than images of men. An image of a woman providing healing care to conflict victims, Ms Ran Honda, a Japanese overseas cooperation volunteer (JOC), is teaching by playing games with students at the Teacher Training Centre in Mchinji, Malawi, which was later published as the cover photo in the WPDC document.

What about the security norms developed by Japan within the framework of its assistance? From the outset, Japan decided to prioritise human security norms while still paying sufficient attention to several issues related to state security norms without getting too involved.

Japan confidently emphasises that partner countries should consider peaceful political governance. This is clearly evident in the normative DCC document, which does not introduce the term 'war' while still using the term "conflict" in many places. The term 'war' in Japanese political logic is traumatic, and it is Japan's obligation to eliminate this term in its interactions with the international context, as explicitly stated in its constitution (Kinzley, 2001).

Regarding the term 'conflict,' the Japanese government emphasises the importance of peaceful conflict resolution. Third world countries, in Japan's perception, are still experiencing identity conflicts that give rise to horizontal and vertical conflicts. Japan is quite concerned that conflict management norms in third world countries can be implemented democratically by adhering to the principle of non-violence (Williams, 2018).

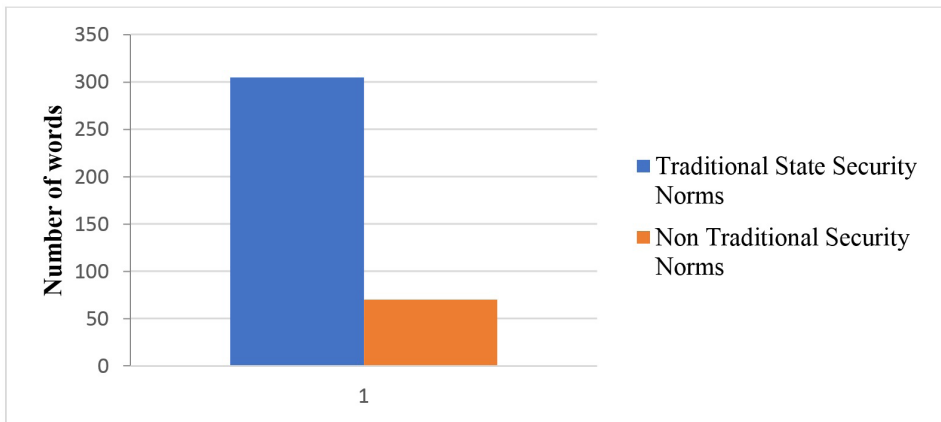
In managing non-traditional national security norms, Japan places greater emphasis on terrorism than on transnational organised crime or piracy. It is interesting to note that in the DCC document, these three terms of non-traditional national security are mentioned equally, i.e., once. However, in operational documents, the term 'international terrorism' is mentioned 47 times, far more than the terms "piracy" and 'transnational organised crime.' This can be interpreted as the Japanese government needing to address terrorism in third-world countries with a different approach compared to many Western countries in dealing with terrorism (Azam & Thelen, 2010;

Woods, 2005).

Nevertheless, Japan is also concerned about piracy. However, Japan's concern is not traditional piracy, such as the hijacking of ships at sea, which often occurs in East Africa or the Malacca Strait. Japan is more concerned about piracy in the context of technology transfer (Bond, 1998). For Japan, this is very important because Japanese international aid is also provided through technology transfer; therefore, these norms are strongly emphasised by Japan.

With regard to norms for managing transnational organised crime, the Japanese government believes that this needs to be addressed. This is related to common problems in third world countries such as human trafficking, drugs and illegal firearms. Such issues are often found in Africa and some conflict-ridden regions in Southeast Asia, such as Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia. Japan's commitment to addressing this issue is linked to its compliance with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (JICA, 2017; Koivu, 2015).

Figure 5: Discourse of State Security Norms

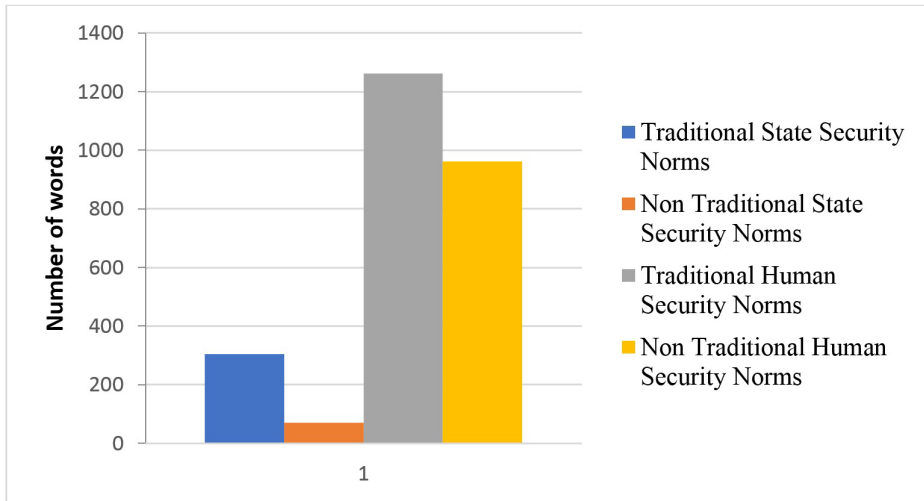


Source: Data proceed from DCC and WPDC

Figure 5 shows that the Japanese government continues to use traditional national security norms rather than non-traditional security norms. Similar to human security norms, the Japanese government also emphasises traditional human security norms. This indicates that the main issue for Japan's partner countries in relation to Japanese international assistance is

traditional security. Nevertheless, Japan also believes that managing non-traditional security issues is also very important (Er, 2006).

Figure 6: Discourse of Security Norms



Source: Data proceed from DCC and WPDC

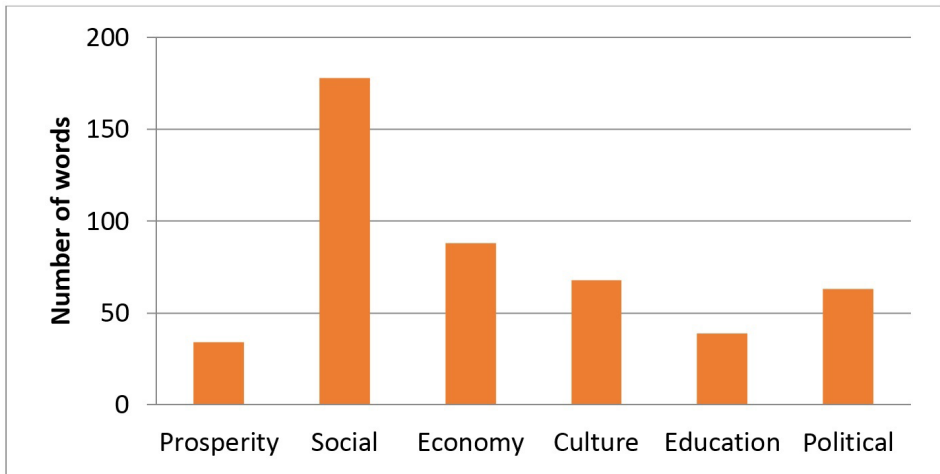
Figure 6 shows that among the four security norms, Japan prioritises traditional human security norms, followed by non-traditional human security norms. This indicates that the Japanese government assumes that international assistance should reach the private sector and individuals. This differs from Japanese international assistance in the 1970s–1990s, when many Japanese assistance programmes focused on public sector-based human security issues, such as infrastructure.

In the context of international cooperation to build national security norms, Japan has consistently refrained from engaging in military-oriented cooperation. Although the Japanese government recognises that many third world countries face vertical conflicts such as separatism and need military assistance to resolve them, Japan has remained consistent in not engaging in this area.

4. Economic Assistance as a Norm of Social Assistance

This section discusses the scope of programmes offered by the Japanese government in relation to international assistance. This analysis is used to describe which programmes are most important by tracking the use of words in the two documents analysed.

Figure 7: The Scope of International Assistance Program



Source: Data proceed from DCC and WPDC

Figure 7 shows that the scope of partnerships is more focused on the social sector than the economic sector. This is unique because Japanese aid schemes always use “development” as their tagline. The choice of the word “development” has a meaning closely related to the economy and prosperity. However, the global economy is not the main focus, and is even lower than the words “culture” and “politics”. Further research is needed to determine why Japanese documents prioritise social engineering over the economy.

Referring to several development theories, the engineering process is a transformational effort to change behaviour. This behavioural change will then have a multiplier effect on other aspects of life. Cluckhohn’s idea about behavioural patterns and norms that shape behavioural patterns provides a convincing argument, stating that behavioural patterns will shape behavioural patterns (Dollar & Alesina, 2000).

New technical behaviour patterns, by providing new norms about the order of life in society, will shape new behaviour. As a case example, in

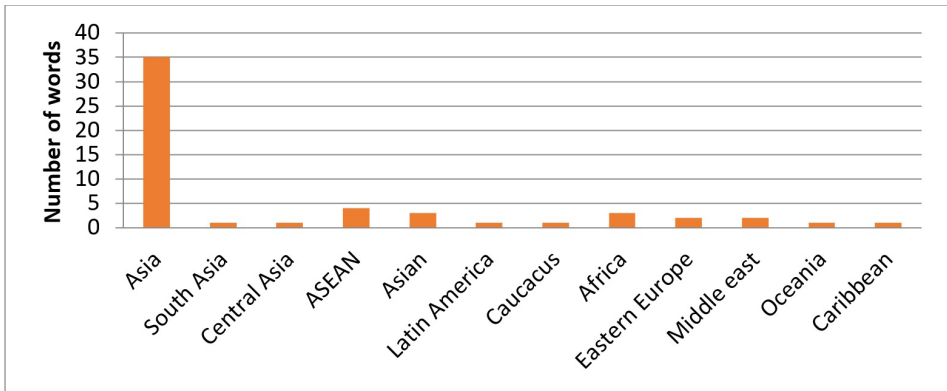
Indonesia, Japan provided assistance for road infrastructure development to improve horizontal mobility. This assistance aimed to change existing norms in Indonesia, where the most efficient mode of transport was railways.

This was designed and developed by the Dutch government, which colonised Indonesia for a very long time. The Dutch government built very little road infrastructure, the most monumental being the road from Anyer to Panarukan. Japan's massive assistance in the form of road development has changed the norm of mobility from using trains to bicycles, motorcycles, and cars, as well as public transport such as buses and trucks for logistics.

The Japanese government, through its visionary aid, did not aim for immediate or short-term gains. This narrative is clear; Japan did not use direct reciprocity norms when providing aid, as found in international interaction norms (Keenes & Gilpin, 2010). Japan's economic motives were elegantly packaged as social and humanitarian motives (Jain, 2016). This is the factor that determines Japan's success as a global actor in managing economic assistance as a social dimension.

5. Integrating Asia as a First Step

The regions targeted for Japan's international partnerships have been designed systematically and objectively. The Japanese government has carefully mapped out its international assistance partners. The term 'partnership regions' covers almost every continent, from Asia, Africa, Europe, America, and the Pacific region. From this perspective, Japan does not engage in international aid mechanisms with developed countries. The G-7 countries or developed countries are not found in the document.

Figure 8: Japan's International Target Areas

Source: Data proceed from DCC and WPDC

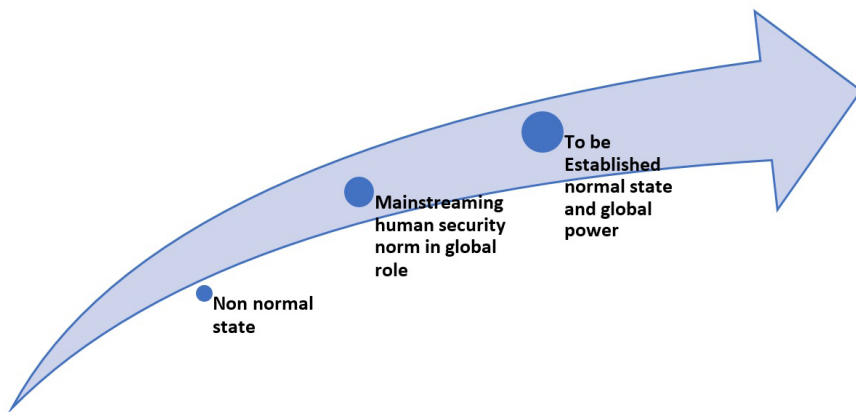
Figure 8 shows that Japan engages in comprehensive international cooperation with countries in Asia, Europe, America, Africa, and the Pacific region. However, there is an interesting fact: the Japanese government focuses more on Asia. From a review of the documents, the term 'Asia' appears ten times more frequently than other regions. This indicates that, to build global power, Asia is the most effective and productive region to adopt the norms offered by Japan (Lewis-Workman, 2018). Therefore, Japan builds its global power by engaging in intensive cooperation with neighbouring countries as the foundation of its partnerships. The region that is also a key focus for Japan in Southeast Asia is ASEAN. Japan has a long political and economic history with several Southeast Asian countries. ASEAN, as a regional organisation, is viewed by Japan as an organisation that can create harmony and stability conducive to economic growth and prosperity (Asplund, 2015).

6. Getting to be a Normal State and a Global Power based on a Global Role

The productivity of mainstreaming *human security* norms in Japan's foreign aid policy plays a strategic role in the process of repositioning Japan as a *normal state*. After World War II, Japan faced a serious challenge in rehabilitating its international image and role that had been tarnished by the expansion of militarism and imperialism. In this context, *human security* becomes a symbolic and substantive means to present a new face of Japan that

is responsible and peace-oriented. By focusing aid on basic human needs—such as protection from poverty, conflict, disease, and natural disasters—Japan is showing the world that it is no longer an aggressor but a contributor to global stability and humanity (Ishida, 2019). This strategy not only dampened suspicions of Japan’s potential remilitarization, but also strengthened Japan’s moral and political legitimacy in the eyes of the international community.

Figure 9: Logic Analysis on Japan’s Road Map to be Global Power



Source: Data proceed from DCC and WPDC

One important dimension of this strategy is the mainstreaming of aid to non-state actors such as local NGOs, civil society, and educational institutions (Hollifield & Sharpe, 2017). Logically, support for non-state actors strengthens Japan’s legitimacy as an inclusive and progressive power. Compared to elitist and top-down inter-state aid, cooperation with non-state actors allows Japan to reach out to grassroots communities and promote social transformation from the bottom. In Arrighi analysis (1998), it creates the impression that Japan is not only concerned with the stability of the country, but also with the resilience of the community and human development (Arrighi, 1998). Furthermore, by strengthening the capacity of civil society in aid-recipient countries, Japan is simultaneously creating a network of socio-political influences that asserts its role as a global normative force. This is a very effective soft power strategy to reconstruct Japan’s status as a normal country that actively contributes to the new world order.

In terms of aid content, Japan prioritizes the mainstreaming of economic governance over political governance. It is a strategic choice that reflects Japan's prudence in entering a realm that is considered geopolitically sensitive. Instead of explicitly pushing for democratization or political reform, Japan prefers to strengthen the capacity of economic institutions such as the tax system, fiscal management, MSME development, and public infrastructure (Arrighi, 2007). This kind of assistance has two implications: first, it avoids Japan from accusations of meddling in the internal affairs of other countries; second, building a sustainable and stable economic growth base in partner countries, which ultimately strengthens regional stability that benefits Japan's strategic position. Although not directly related to political reforms, this economic governance assistance still supports the creation of stable political conditions through strengthening welfare and reducing inequality, which is part of the broader vision of *human security*.

The mainstreaming of traditional and non-traditional security norms is also an important pillar in the process of normalizing Japan's status. In traditional security, Japan remains cautious and more instrumental through passive contributions such as peacekeeper training and the logistics of humanitarian assistance in conflict situations. But in non-traditional security, such as disaster mitigation, climate change, pandemic management, and countering human trafficking, Japan has been very active. This role strengthens Japan's position as a relevant country in responding to contemporary global challenges, while expanding the scope of its influence without generating resistance. Japan's main focus in foreign aid is also on the Asian region, especially Southeast Asia and South Asia, as a strategic geopolitical arena. This regional focus reflects not only geographical proximity, but also historical heritage, postcolonial responsibility, and economic importance. In this context, Japanese assistance serves as a diplomatic instrument to establish a stable and friendly regional environment, which is a prerequisite for the restoration of the normal status of the state (Rother, 2012).

In recent years, Japan has been increasingly active in expanding its economic influence in the Latin American region (Stallings & Horisaka, 2021), especially Brazil, through various forms of development assistance, infrastructure investment, and technological cooperation (de Oliveira & Lessa, 2022). This initiative is not only aimed at strengthening bilateral relations, but also as part of Japan's geopolitical strategy in the face of global competition, especially with China (Masahiro, 2013). One striking manifestation of the closeness is Japan's support for Brazil's claim to expand its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the South Atlantic region (Masahiro, 2013), especially around the underwater mountain known as the Elevado do Rio Grande. This support

reflects a reciprocal relationship, in which Brazil openly supports Japan's claim to the Okinotorishima archipelago, which is strategically important for Japan's expansion of the EEZ in the Western Pacific (Yoshikawa, 2007). This mutually supportive relationship reflects a diplomatic closeness that not only relies on economic relations, but also strengthens the position of each country in multilateral forums such as the United Nations and UNCLOS. Japan sees Brazil as a strategic partner in the South American region that has an important role in the global architecture of the South, while Brazil views Japan as an economic and technological power that can sustain its ambitions as a new maritime power.

After successfully positioning itself as a *normal state* through a norm-based strategy, Japan now has a strong foundation to establish itself as a *global power*. International recognition of Japan's contributions to non-traditional development, humanitarian and security is an important capital in expanding its global role. With the foundation of *human security* norms, Japan can position itself not only as an economic power, but also as a moral force that carries the values of peace, inclusion, and human development. In an era of global multipolarity, where military power is no longer the only indicator of power, Japan has a great opportunity to become a respected global power through normative and institutional channels. By strengthening its participation in global forums such as the G7, G20, and the United Nations, as well as expanding its diplomatic and foreign assistance networks, Japan is on track to consolidate its position as a *global power* that is not only economically strong, but also respected for its normative commitment to humanity (Befu & Guichard-Anguis, 2003) (Yoshinobu, 2012).

Conclusion

Japan's strategic embrace of human security norms within its Official Development Assistance (ODA) framework underscores a transformative approach to global engagement in the post-World War II era. This study demonstrates that Japan has successfully institutionalised a dual-track strategy that combines normative commitments with operational mechanisms to reposition itself as a global power. By shifting the emphasis from traditional notions of national security to the inclusive and human-centred agenda of human security, Japan leverages soft power rooted in humanitarian principles, non-military cooperation, and socio-economic development.

Through rigorous content analysis of Japan's Development Cooperation Charter (DCC) and the White Paper on Development Cooperation (WPDC), it

is evident that Japan consistently prioritises human security over hard security approaches. The Japanese government has tactically highlighted traditional and non-traditional human security themes such as disaster mitigation, environmental sustainability, energy security, and gender empowerment—demonstrating a nuanced understanding of global development challenges. Moreover, Japan’s strategic preference for engaging with non-state actors over state-centric channels reflects an innovative model of inclusive governance aimed at reducing aid dependency and enhancing local ownership. The article also reveals Japan’s region-specific strategy, with a notable concentration of ODA efforts in Asia—particularly Southeast Asia—as a foundation for its broader international ambitions. This regional focus not only reflects geographical proximity and historical ties but also Japan’s calculated move to build legitimacy and trust within its immediate environment before projecting influence more globally. Japan builds its global power systematically and consistently. All international cooperation documents are well arranged to get a high coherence between the normative and operational documents. Japan’s visionary management of international assistance documents arrangement and measurable legal drafting process can produce well-implementable working documents. In document arrangement, the Japanese Government can convert all obstacles into its global power as the consequence of being the losing party in World War II by transforming itself as a global state with unique international assistance style through the mainstreaming of economic, security, and humanity management in Asian regions. The mainstreaming decision is a part of selection and prioritization policies.

Japan’s experience offers valuable insights for how a nation constrained by a pacifist constitution can still exercise significant global influence through the strategic use of legal instruments, development cooperation, and norm entrepreneurship. Its deliberate alignment of humanitarian ideals with pragmatic goals allows Japan to construct a credible image as a responsible global actor while subtly advancing its national interests. Ultimately, Japan’s ODA strategy, with human security at its core, serves as a model for how global power can be pursued through normative leadership rather than military prowess. While questions remain regarding the measurable impact of these efforts on Japan’s standing in global governance structures, the framework and coherence of its approach indicate a sophisticated and sustainable path toward renewed international prominence.

Limitation and Study Forward

This study has shown how the Japanese Government successfully created an ODA document that emphasized the importance of human security issues as Japan's means of achieving global power. However, in the writings, it has not yet been explained how effective this Japanese effort was towards achievement in Japan's global position. Will the international community be able to accept Japan to play its international role again and become a respected global power in the future.

Acknowledgement

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ABSTRACT

Japan's defeat in World War II did not discourage its obsession to become a global power that influences the behaviour of other countries and the world order at large. Following World War II, despite being constrained by the 1947 Constitution, Japan emerged as an economic agent capable of playing a significant role on the global stage through economic and cultural instruments. Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) has become one of the key tools for Japan to actively participate and contribute to current global politics. This article aims to identify Japan's strategy in using ODA to maintain its influence as a global power. Using content analysis of 2015 ODA Charter or Development Cooperation Charter (DCC) and the White Paper on Development Cooperation (WPDC), this article finds that Japan's strategy to maintain its influence at the global level is carried out by prioritising human security norms in ODA distribution. The Japanese government consistently applies normative and operational norms regarding human security rather than national security to ensure acceptance from recipient countries. These efforts begin with the development of Japan's legal governance framework, which is designed in a smart, systematic, objective, and visionary manner. Japan demonstrates how a country facing constitutional constraints can become a stable global power.

KEYWORDS

Global Power, Security Norms, Japan's ODA, Content Analysis, Human Security

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EAST ASIAN COOPERATION APPROACHES TOWARDS LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: THE CASES OF JAPAN, CHINA, AND SOUTH KOREA¹

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1. Introduction

Despite recent efforts promoted during the 21st century by several countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela, among others, to support regional integration and foster collaboration, especially through South-South and Triangular Cooperation, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) remains a region full of disparities.

Historically, the region's economies have been tied to the extraction of raw materials, agriculture, livestock practices, and other activities linked to the primary sector of the economy. This situation has created a strong dependence on industrialized countries that, based on Cardoso and Faletto (1971), could have led to the region's persistent inequality.

Additionally, the region has been the victim of political instability, social turmoil, and even natural disasters. This situation made LAC countries historic recipients of Official Development Assistance (ODA) from traditional donors, especially the United States (the U.S.) and European countries, as well as emerging donors in recent years.

The 21st century has been marked by several global events that have shaped development cooperation—including the 9/11 attacks, the 2007–2008 financial crisis, and China's rise as a global actor. Although LAC is not the primary destination of development cooperation initiatives led by Asian

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countries, increasing interconnectedness since 2015—driven by economic, political, and social factors, as well as the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—has fostered closer ties, as Asian countries seek to project and promote their development cooperation models abroad.

Amidst this evolving context, this paper aims to analyze and compare the development cooperation approaches promoted by Japan, China, and South Korea toward the LAC region during the post-2015 period. To this end, the following research question is posed:

What are the similarities and differences in the development cooperation approaches promoted by Japan, China, and South Korea toward Latin America and the Caribbean in the post-2015 period?

Japan is an established traditional donor, which holds a significant position in the realm of development cooperation due to its longstanding tradition of providing ODA. In 2022, Japan's ODA contribution reached \$20.103 billion, placing it only behind the U.S. and Germany (OECD, 2024). While Asia, followed by Africa, remains the main focus of Japanese cooperation, there has been a consistent allocation of ODA to LAC, ranging between 5% and 10% from 2000 to 2022, as documented by the White Papers on Development Cooperation annually published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MoFA). Therefore, as Asplund and Soderberg (2017) highlighted, Japan's foreign aid presents a compelling case study that offers valuable insights into regional and even global dynamics linked to development cooperation.

Japan's policy to the region is based on the guidelines established in the ODA Charters (2015) (2023) and the White Papers on Development Cooperation issued by the MoFA. These documents unveil that Japan aims to contribute to addressing the disparities in the sustainable development of LAC nations, taking into account the presence of Nikkei communities in the region as a catalyst to nurture cooperative relations.

In the case of China, "it has become the main trading partner of South American countries, displacing the U.S. and the European Union (the E.U.) (Serbin, 2024, 109). Moreover, Dollar (2017, 3) highlighted that "the \$106 billion that China has already invested in LAC is significant, and the cooperation initiatives are certain to grow substantially in upcoming years".

Unlike traditional donors, China promotes development cooperation through the South-South Cooperation (SSC) modality. Consequently, the rise of China in the economic and political fields has challenged the cooperation models promoted by traditional donors worldwide, including the LAC region.

South Korea had a relatively recent history as a recipient country.

However, since 1996, it has become an OECD member and represents one of the most successful emerging donor cases in rapid succession.

South Korea's cooperation with LAC started in the early 1990s. Korea's ODA to LAC increased steadily until 2018, when it reached the \$ 215 million peak (IDB, 2022). Additionally, Korea's latest five-year strategy (2021–2025) aims to double the ODA budget and focus on several areas to achieve sustainable development. Therefore, in a regional dynamic in which LAC countries are looking for new partnerships beyond traditional donors and avoiding the confrontation between the U.S. and China, the South Korean cooperation model is attractive for those countries aiming to diversify their alliances.

At this point, it is necessary to mention that the academic literature on East Asian cooperation approaches toward LAC have mainly focused on individual countries, such as Japan, China, or South Korea, rather than analyzing them from a comparative perspective.³ Moreover, the few comparative studies, such as those by Levy and Rose (2019) or Garcia (2020), usually select the cases of Japan and China from a general perspective, including trade and bilateral relations, and often leave aside the case of South Korea.

2. Analytical Framework and Methodology

This study adopts the analytical frameworks proposed by Lancaster (2007) and Kragelund (2019) to examine development cooperation in terms of institutions, ideas, interests, organizations, and vectors. These dimensions are used to characterize the cooperation models implemented by Japan, China, and South Korea toward LAC during the post-2015 period.

The “institutions” are those that establish the rules of the political dynamics, e.g., electoral rules, presidential systems, and the legislature's role. The “ideas” refer to worldviews and principal beliefs shared by a significant part of the public and political elites that characterize cooperation processes. The “interests” are the goals that the government aims to achieve through cooperation dynamics. “Organizations” refers to the location within the government of tasks related to a major function or program of government. Although Lancaster did not consider international organizations

³ For example, Japan's cooperation with LAC has been studied by Potter (2015) and Myers and Kuwayama (2016), among others. China's South-South relations with the region have been analyzed by Gallagher and Irvin (2015), Dollar (2017), and Dussel (2021), among others. South Korea's engagement with LAC has been researched by Faure (2016), Ayhan (2017), and Ellis (2022), among others.

in her framework, due to their increasing importance and proliferation, the author included regional and international forums in which countries have memberships and promote cooperation initiatives. Finally, the “vectors” are defined as the way of engagement between two or more countries involved in development cooperation.

It is essential to note that these dimensions are intertwined and can vary over time. Consequently, the selection of this analytical framework, rather than analyzing isolated aspects, aims to comprehensively characterize the cooperation approaches implemented by Japan, China, and South Korea in their relations with LAC.

This study employs a qualitative research approach based on the analysis of both primary and secondary sources relevant to the development cooperation strategies of Japan, China, and South Korea toward LAC. Primary sources include books, reports, statistics, surveys, serial publications, national laws, international treaties, and other materials issued by local, state, and national government agencies. These include institutions such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the China Development Bank, and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), as well as relevant multilateral organizations. Secondary sources consist of academic literature that examines the bilateral and multilateral relations between the selected countries and LAC, with particular attention to development cooperation modalities, policy orientations, and institutional frameworks.

3. Japan's Development Cooperation Approach

Japan's cooperative engagements in LAC have their roots in the early 1900s. Originally, these began as aid projects to assist Japanese immigrants, primarily in Brazil, Paraguay, and Peru. These involvements entailed offering economic support for constructing basic infrastructure and promoting agriculture, livestock activities, and small businesses (IDB, 2013).

Likewise, at different times through the 21st century, Japan has been the most important donor for Antigua and Barbuda, Costa Rica, Dominica, Grenada, Panama, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, Mexico, Brazil, and Peru. In this direction, Myers and Kuwayama (2016) argued that LAC countries are considered important political allies nowadays as Japan actively promotes its global governance and development approach.

3.1 Institutions

Japan's development cooperation system operates within the framework of a constitutional monarchy with a bicameral parliament. Within this political structure, multiple parties coexist, the most prominent being the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has dominated Japanese politics—either independently or in coalition—for nearly the entire period since 1955, with the exception of 2009 to 2012 (Lancaster, 2007).

Lancaster (2007) also showed how, historically, the LDP has internally molded ODA policies, while opposition parties have generally supported Japan's aid. This dynamic generated a situation in which the role of the Prime Minister was restricted without significant involvement in ODA policy. However, she pointed out that since the beginning of the century, Japanese legislators have started to take more interest in the effectiveness and accountability of the country's cooperation system due to internal and external criticism, a generational change in the composition of the Diet, and episodes of mismanagement in aid budgets.

Additionally, during the second administration of Shinzo Abe (2012-2019), the figure of the Prime Minister had a more preponderant role. In this direction, Kamiya (2020, 1) highlighted that:

Shinzo Abe will be remembered as a consequential prime minister who advanced a vision of the international order that would be comfortable both for Japan and the rest of the international community and promoted the international cooperation necessary to achieve such an order.

An example of Shinzo Abe's prominent role in development cooperation was the creation of the SDGs Promotion Headquarters; a cabinet body headed by the Prime Minister and composed of all ministers, on May 20, 2016. This entity aims to ensure a whole-of-government approach to implementing the 2030 Agenda in a comprehensive and effective manner (MoFA Japan, 2020). As of December 2024, 15 meetings have been held, addressing various topics to promote and implement the SDGs more effectively, both domestically and internationally (Prime Minister's Office of Japan, 2024).

Although Shinzo Abe is no longer in power,⁴ the LDP remains Japan's most significant political force. Consequently, subsequent Prime Ministers—Yoshihide Suga, Fumio Kishida, and Shigeru Ishiba—have each maintained,

4 Editor's note: Former Prime Minister Abe was killed by a political opponent in 2022. From October 2025 onwards, Prime Minister Ishiba was replaced by Sanae Takashi current Prime Minister in November 2025..

with distinct policy orientations, a political and strategic continuity in Japan's approach toward LAC.

3.2 Ideas

The ideas promoted by Japan through cooperation initiatives in the region are based on the "Together" strategy, launched in 2014 by Prime Minister Abe. This strategy relied on three guiding principles:

1. To progress together in connectivity of economies by enhancing a free and open international economic system.
2. To lead together toward the connectivity of values supported on a rule-based multilateralism.
3. To inspire together in connective of wisdom with the aim to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. (MoFA Japan, 2021)

Similarly, the 2015 ODA Charter established that:

Japan will provide assistance to foster an environment more conducive to economic development through trade and investment, among others, and to extend necessary cooperation against a backdrop of internal disparities which exist even in countries that have achieved considerable progress in development. Consideration will be given to the presence of ethnic Japanese ("Nikkei") communities in the region, which serves as a strong bond between Japan and the region (MoFA Japan, 2015, 8).

All these documents (the Together strategy, the 2015 ODA Charter, and the White Papers on Development Cooperation) underline the historical connections between Japan and the region based on enduring and amicable relations, primarily attributed to the substantial Nikkei community, which surpasses 2 million (Zavarce, 2022).

Since key diplomatic allies of Japan in LAC are also considered Pacific countries, including Mexico, Peru, Costa Rica, and Chile, Japan advocates for the principles of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy, launched by Prime Minister Abe in 2016. This strategy is based on three central pillars: 1) Promotion and establishment of the international rule of law, freedom of navigation and trade; 2) Pursuit of economic prosperity; and 3) Commitment

for peace and stability (MoFA Japan, 2019).

It is necessary to mention that Japan released a new Development Cooperation Charter in 2023. While it does not make reference to Latin America or any other specific region, the document highlights the following principles for ensuring the appropriateness of development cooperation:

1. Situation regarding consolidation of democratization, the rule of law and the protection of basic human rights.
2. Avoidance of any use of development cooperation for military purposes or for aggravation of international conflicts.
3. Situation regarding military expenditures, development and production of weapons of mass destruction and missiles, export and import of arms, etc.
4. Impact of development on the environment and climate change.
5. Debt sustainability.
6. Promotion of inclusive societies, including gender mainstreaming, and ensuring fairness.
7. Preventing fraud and corruption.
8. Security and safety of development cooperation personnel. (MoFA Japan, 2023).

It is also important to note that during Prime Minister Kishida's visit to Brazil in May 2024, he delivered a speech entitled "Paving a Pathway to 'Human Dignity' with Latin America and the Caribbean" at Sao Paulo University, where he presented his vision to nurture cooperation with LAC based on four pillars:

1. Ensuring the free and open international order based on the rule of law
2. Overcoming common challenges that humanity faces, such as the environment and climate change
3. Pursuing prosperity that can be shared by all people in the world and does not come at others' expense
4. People-to-people ties (Prime Minister's Office of Japan, 2024)

Moreover, as a traditional donor and an OECD-DAC member, Japan has embraced the principles and ideas established in the 2005 Paris

Declaration, the 2011 Busan Partnership and the 2016 Nairobi Partnership when promoting cooperation with recipient countries.

3.3 Interests

According to the latest “Diplomatic Initiative Toward LAC,” Japan will pursue new partnerships with the region based on traditional diplomatic approaches (e.g., bilateral policy coordination, collaboration in the international arena, development cooperation, economic relations, and people to people exchanges) in increasingly important affairs such as 1) maritime issues and gender equality, 2) Nikkei community. (MoFA Japan, 2024).

However, when addressing Japan’s interests in the region, it is important to note that historically, Japan has not sought a prominent role in LAC, as the region is considered part of the U.S. traditional sphere of influence (Potter, 2015 and Garcia, 2020). Therefore, as bilateral and multilateral relations have evolved, Miyachi (2017) argued that Japan’s approach to the region has been built on four pillars: 1) coordination with U.S. diplomacy; 2) maximization of economic interests; 3) establishment of friendship with as many countries as possible to obtain support in the UN; and 4) prioritization of countries and issues related to Japanese immigrants.

Table 1: Japan’s ODA Top 5 Disbursements to the LAC region (2017-2021)⁵

(Unit: Millions of Dollars ⁵)									
2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
Country	Total (General Expenditure)	Country	Total (General Expenditure)	Country	Total (General Expenditure)	Country	Total (General Expenditure)	Country	Total (General Expenditure)
Costa Rica	55.74 (14.96%)	Brazil	67.73 (14.96%)	Brazil	61.78 (14.96%)	Brazil	157.36 (24.42%)	Brazil	312.93 (43.98%)
Brazil	48.12 (12.91%)	Peru	58.89 (13.01%)	Paraguay	56.00 (13.56%)	Mexico	112.78 (17.50%)	Panama	75.55 (10.61%)
Peru	37.23 (9.99%)	Costa Rica	48.74 (10.77%)	Costa Rica	35.16 (8.51%)	El Salvador	62.76 (9.74%)	Paraguay	44.93 (6.31%)
Cuba	35.72 (9.59%)	Cuba	47.48 (10.49%)	Peru	32.50 (7.87%)	Paraguay	53.44 (8.29%)	El Salvador	38.71 (5.44%)
Paraguay	23.29 (6.25%)	Haiti	43.33 (9.57%)	Honduras	24.24 (5.87%)	Guatemala	42.00 (6.51%)	Guatemala	24.70 (3.47%)

Source: Elaborated by the author based on MoFA Japan (2018-2022)

Table 1 reflects the amount allocated by Japan to LAC countries during the 2017-2021 period. The distribution patterns outlined above revealed that

⁵ The total amount (100%) of ODA disbursement for the LAC region by year was as follows: 372.45 (2017), 452.46 (2018), 412.83 (2019), 644.28 (2020), and 711.41 (2021)..

Japan places special emphasis on cooperation with Brazil, Peru, Costa Rica, and Paraguay (highlighted cells).

The relevance of Brazil, Peru, and Paraguay lies in their status as destination countries for the most significant settlements of Japanese nationals and their descendants outside of Japan. Brazil has approximately 2.7 million Nikkei residents, Peru about 200,000, and Paraguay around 10,000 (JICA, 2024).

Brazil is also important for Japan's economic interests, as evidenced by placing second in the number of Japanese corporations in LAC, surpassed only by Mexico (JETRO, 2019). Paraguay is one of the leading producers and exporters of soybeans worldwide, with Japan being one of its primary destinations (Embajada del Japón en Paraguay, 2012). Furthermore, Peru stands out as one of the selected nations in the region with which Japan has an Economic Partnership Agreement (MoFA Japan, 2020). This agreement serves as a framework for fostering economic cooperation, trade liberalization, and strengthening bilateral ties.

The relations between Japan and Costa Rica differ from the other cases. Japan sees this Central American nation as a like-minded country that shares common principles like peace, democracy, and human rights. Another essential feature of this relation is environmental preservation. Because of this, Japan proactively shares knowledge and experiences based on its best practices for sustainable development in Costa Rica. Besides, Costa Rica is a strategic ally for promoting Japan's triangular cooperation in the region (Embajada del Japón en Costa Rica, 2021).

Additionally, amidst China's growing presence in the region, Myers (2024) claimed that Japan and the U.S. "have expressed interest in modernizing and expanding their partnership in an era of strategic competition between the U.S. and China," adding that "many bilateral and multilateral platforms offer opportunities both to strengthen ties and improve coordination when supporting partners in the so-called Global South," including LAC.

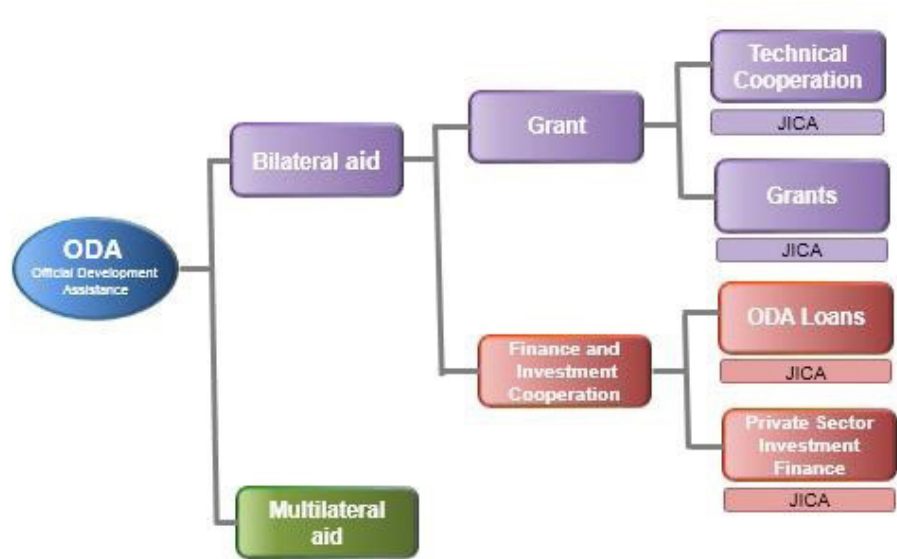
The dynamic explained above exposes that while Japan's coordination with the U.S. is important, its approach pursues multiple goals in LAC, taking into account new markets, Japanese communities abroad, and other diplomatic interests.

3.4 Organizations and Vectors/Schemes

The Japanese development system underwent a significant

restructuring in 2008 when most ODA channels were consolidated in the new JICA. Since then, JICA has managed concessional yen loans, grant aid, and technical cooperation. JICA has also promoted triangular cooperation, which involves collaboration between Japan and a former aid recipient in assisting a current aid recipient.

Figure 1: Japan’s ODA



Source: Japan International Cooperation Agency (2024)

Likewise, the MoFA of Japan manages a lone bilateral aid budget line dedicated to human security, named the Grassroots Human Security Grant program. Through this initiative, the Japanese government provides financial resources to NGOs and local administrative units through the Japanese embassies. In addition, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation participates in developing cooperation policies providing non-ODA lending (Katada, 2020).

Another important initiative is the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers program (JOCV).⁶ Based on official data, 10,081 JOCVs, 2,206

6 JOCV is an international voluntary service established in 1965, which JICA provides under the supervision of the MoFA. It has three main objectives: “1) to provide technical assistance to developing countries, 2) to promote friendship and mutual understanding with foreign

senior volunteers, and 2,089 youth and senior volunteers for Nikkei Communities have decided to take part in projects in LAC (JICA, 2020).

Beyond ODA, in recent years, Japan has also promoted the use of other official flows (OOF), which the OECD (2022) defines as official sector transactions that do not meet ODA criteria. In this direction, the Development Cooperation Charter (2023) establishes that OOF are managed by organizations such as the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, Nippon Export and Investment Insurance, Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corporation for Transport & Urban Development, Fund Corporation for the Overseas Development of Japan's ICT and Postal Services, and Japan Organization for Metals and Energy Security.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan used multiple schemes to provide economic cooperation to LAC countries. For example, UNICEF (2022) reported that in 2022, as part of efforts to accelerate the vaccination rate in the region, the Japanese government allocated US\$10 million to strengthen cold chain systems and build local capacities for vaccine management in Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, and Honduras. This amount complemented a 2021 donation of US\$11.11 million to six other countries in the region, for enhancing COVID-19 vaccination capacities.

3.5 Regional/International Organizations

Historically, Japan has prioritized diplomatic relations with LAC countries through bilateral channels. However, when partnering with regional or international organizations, Japan has preferred to engage through the agencies within the UN system. For example, between 2002 and 2023, Japan, through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, sponsored 298 projects, of which 13,2% are distributed in LAC (UNTFHS, 2023). Likewise, since 2006, Japan has been a member state of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Besides, Japan has at times collaborated with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), relying on it as a central multilateral platform to consolidate financial engagement and deliver multiple development programs in LAC (Garcia, 2020).

countries, and 3) to widen the perspective of young Japanese about the world" (Okabe et al. 2019, 2)..

4. China's South-South Cooperation Approach

Traditionally, China was seen as a recipient country, receiving aid from Japan and other established donors. However, China surpassed Japan as the second-largest economy in the world in 2010 and has transformed itself into the most active cooperation provider outside of the OECD, competing against traditional actors in the development system and challenging their approaches worldwide.

4.1 Institutions

China's cooperation model is supported by a hybrid institutional structure—neither purely presidential nor parliamentary—in which, according to the 2018 Constitution, the National People's Congress appoints the President. However, it is necessary to point out that despite the different transformations that China has undergone in recent years due to its incredible economic growth, one characteristic remains constant, namely the political monopoly of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), China's ruling party since 1949 (Brown, 2016a).

In addition, Brown (2016b) showed how, since 2012, when Xi Jinping became General Secretary of the CCP, there has been an increasing concentration of power around his figure. A key example of this trend is the 2018 amendment to the Constitution of China, which removed the restriction that limited the President and Vice President to two consecutive terms, paving the way for his political consolidation.

China's cooperation policies are not exempt from this control, Yu (2024, 3) argued that “under President Xi, Beijing's foreign policymaking has evolved from a more pluralistic approach – with various ministries and agencies partially shaping the final decision – into a form of centralized decision-making by President Xi and his lieutenants within the politburo”. However, she also emphasized that despite the centralization of foreign policy under Xi Jinping, Chinese leaders still seek expertise from the country's wider strategic community, including academics, policy experts, and former officials.

This evolution in foreign policymaking illustrates how Xi's political consolidation extends beyond domestic affairs and into China's external engagements, a dynamic commonly observed in Global South countries, particularly within the BRICS group, where executive power often plays a

dominant role in shaping foreign policy.

4.2. Ideas

China's foreign policy is based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence: mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

Also, aiming to differentiate itself from traditional donors and OECD members, China's cooperation approach is framed into the South-South relations and cooperation modality (Kragelund, 2019). Because of this, China hardly crafts its narrative with expressions like aid, donor, or recipient. Therefore, "the dominant rhetoric from the Chinese side is that it engages with the recipients of its aid and other resources as a partner rather than being involved in a donor-recipient relationship" (Stallings, 2016, 73).

China's cooperation policy with the region is established in the Policy Paper on LAC. It states that:

Based on equality and mutual benefit, the comprehensive and cooperative partnership between China and LAC is oriented toward common development. China is committed to building a new relationship with LAC with five salient features, namely, sincerity and mutual trust in the political field, win-win cooperation on the economic front, mutual learning in culture, close coordination in international affairs, as well as mutual reinforcement between China's cooperation with the region as a whole and its bilateral relations with individual countries in the region (The State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2016).

Furthermore, the document recognized a number of fields to establish regional cooperation projects led by China. These are political, economic, social, cultural, people-to-people, international collaboration, peace, security, and judicial affairs.

In 2021, China launched a White Paper entitled "China's International Development Cooperation in the New Era, which drew China's Principles for Development Cooperation: Respecting each other as equals; Doing the best we can to help; Focusing on development and improving people's lives; Providing the means for independent development; Conducting effective cooperation in

diverse forms; Ensuring delivery and sustainability; Being open and inclusive to promote exchanges and mutual learning; and Advancing with the times and breaking new ground (The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 2021).

These principles updated the Eight Principles for Economic Aid and Technical Assistance to Other Countries, adopted in 1964, and reflect China's intention to adapt its cooperation model to a more dynamic international cooperation system.

4.3. Interests

China's increasing interest is closely tied to securing access to critical raw materials and agricultural products, including but not limited to petroleum, minerals, and soybeans. Simultaneously, the CCP is actively working to cultivate political backing for its commitment to the One-China Policy, a move designed to diplomatically isolate Taiwan and enhance China's influence. China is also nurturing soft power, projecting its development model based on infrastructure and industrialization, and attempting to weaken the development models supported by traditional International Financial Institutions such as the World Bank and the IDB. Beyond these geopolitical aims, China also aspires to generate new opportunities and markets, providing advantageous conditions for the promotion of Chinese goods. This multifaceted approach underscores China's comprehensive strategy to bolster its presence and influence on both economic and political fronts within LAC (Zavarce, 2022).

In order to achieve China's wider interests in the region, the White Paper on Development Cooperation (2021) highlighted the importance of the Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI) for its foreign policy, stating that through this platform, China aims to enhance policy coordination with its international partners, strengthen infrastructure connectivity to connect China with the world through air, land and sea, promote trade, deep financial integration, and foster closer people-to-people ties.

When partnering with LAC nations, China has given priority to left and center-left-likeminded oriented governments with closer political identities, which have also been accused, mainly by the Western countries, of poor governance and lack of the rule of law, e.g., Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela (Alvaro & Minaya, 2015). Still, China has also promoted cooperation to a lesser extent with more conservative and pro-U.S. governments, such as Colombia during the Santos and Duque

administrations or Guyana during the Granger and Ali administrations.

Consequently, Chinese financial entities have become alternative sources of economic resources for countries such as Argentina, Ecuador, and Venezuela, which, because of their large foreign debts and radical political models, have been unable to access resources from traditional financial institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the IDB.

4.4. Organizations and Vectors/Schemes

In contrast to other regions, Chinese investment in LAC has grown in recent years. LAC countries started joining the BRI⁷ in 2017, opening new opportunities for China – Latin America trade, investment, and cooperation in several fields (Baker McKenzie, 2020).

Since China is not an OECD member and does not have to report to an intergovernmental entity periodically, there is a lack of public data and information regarding its cooperation projects. In addition, China's approach combines resources traditionally categorized as ODA with OOF. This situation makes it difficult to assess China's cooperation realistically. (Gallagher & Irvin, 2015).

However, China has been increasing the availability of statistical data regarding cooperation initiatives. The White Paper on Development Cooperation (2021, 11) showed how, from 2013 to 2018, China allocated a total of RMB 270.2 billion for foreign assistance: Grants of RMB 127.8 billion, Interest-free loans of RMB 11.3 billion, and Concessional loans of RMB 131.1 billion, specifying the field and partner countries involved.

In addition, other estimations calculated that China has disbursed investments and contracts in the region as follows:

⁷ Currently, twenty two LAC countries have signed agreements under the BRI (Green Finance and Development Center, 2024)..

Table 2: China’s Top 5 Disbursements in LAC⁸

Country	Amount (%) ⁷
Venezuela	\$59.2 B (49.15%)
Brazil	\$ 32.4 B (26.90%)
Ecuador	\$ 11.8 B (9.79%)
Argentina	\$ 7.7 B (6.39%)
Bolivia	\$ 3.2 B (2.65%)

Source: Ray & Myers (2024)

These financial flows, as illustrated in Figure 2, have three main components: grants and interest-free loans, managed by the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), concessional loans handled by the Eximbank, and other sources of financial cooperation sponsored by the Chinese Development Bank (Gallagher & Irvin, 2015; Stallings, 2016).

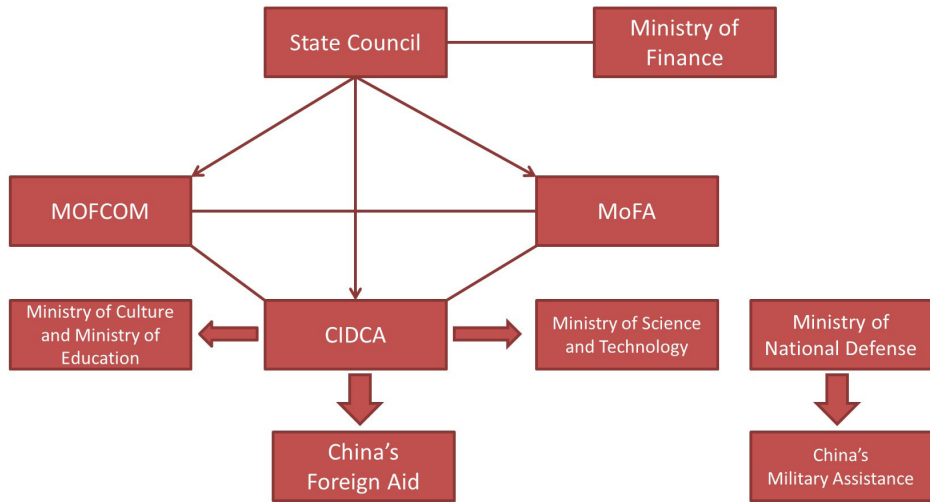
Figure 2: Type of China’s Aid

MOFCOM Grants	MOFCOM Interest Free Loans	Eximbank’s concessional loans	Chinese Development Bank Financial Cooperation
Support small-scale social infrastructure Human Resources development Technical Cooperation Emergency humanitarian aid	Construction of public facilities	Economic infrastructure	Electric power Road construction Railway Petroleum and petrochemical Coal Postal and telecommunications Agriculture and related industries Public infrastructure

Source: Elaborated by the author (2024)

Beyond the MOFCOM, the Eximbank, and the Chinese Development Bank, China’s internal architecture includes several other organizations, as reflected in Figure 3:

⁸ The total amount (100%) of development finance disbursed for the LAC region in 2023 was \$ 120.4 B..

Figure 3: China's Aid System

Source: Azis and Basen (2023)

However, despite its complex organizational architecture, after a period of expansion, there has been an increasing focus on establishing a dedicated cooperation agency in recent years, China's International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), created in 2018.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, China strengthened the significance of the Digital Silk Road, bringing new opportunities through the so-called Health Silk Road. In this sense, many LAC nations received sanitary and medical equipment from China. Similarly, LAC countries used China's digital solutions to address the pandemic.⁹

Moreover, from 2019 to 2021 China donated nearly \$215 million in supplies to the region, ranging from surgical gloves to advanced thermal imaging technologies, and offered \$1 billion in loans for vaccine purchases (Wilson Center, 2021). Likewise, according to Stuenkel (2021), by mid-May 2020, China had exported more than 250 million Covid-19 vaccine doses globally overall, or 42 percent of its total production, being the LAC region the

⁹ For example, different companies such as Alipay and Tencent have developed health apps that generate QR codes indicating a user's health status, and Alibaba is already offering its cloud services to model regional COVID-19 outbreaks and connect patients to health professionals (Malena, 2021)..

recipient of more than half of China's total exports, around 165 million doses.

4.5 Regional/International Organizations

Over the past decade, China has actively nurtured its relations with the region, primarily through the CELAC platform. The CELAC-China forum was established on July 17th, 2014, at the end of the 6th Summit of the BRICS in Brasília. As observed by Garcia (2020), China has deliberately chosen this avenue as its preferred mode of engagement with the region in which the U.S., European countries, or Japan do not participate.

China's engagement with CELAC was strengthened at the first ministerial meeting of the China-CELAC Forum, held in Beijing, on January 8th and 9th, 2015. There, Xi Jinping set a \$500 billion goal in inter-regional trade and \$250 billion of FDI until 2019. This strategy was supported by a "1+3+6" framework, which intended to generate inclusive growth and sustainable development through "three engines" (trade, investment, and cooperation) in "six" fields: energy and resources, infrastructure, agriculture, manufacturing, technological innovation, and information technologies. (Dussel, 2021).

China renewed its commitment to the region in April 2025, at the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the China-CELAC Forum, celebrated in Beijing. During the opening ceremony, Xi Jinping launched five programs (Solidarity, Development, Civilization, Peace, and People to People) that advance shared development and revitalization, and contribute to a China-LAC community with a shared future. Among the benefits of these programs are new opportunities for economic cooperation as well as 3,500 government scholarships, 10,000 training opportunities in China, 500 International Chinese Language Teachers Scholarships, 300 training opportunities for poverty reduction professionals, and 1,000 funded placements through the Chinese Bridge program (China-CELAC Forum, 2025).

Another relevant organization for China's cooperation is the Chinese-founded Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), in which nowadays, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay are full non-regional members.

5. South Korea's Cooperation Approach

Not long ago, South Korea was still considered a recipient country,

receiving ODA from the U.S., Japan, and other major donors. However, between the 1980s and the 2000s, the country experienced rapid economic growth, becoming a developed country, joining the OECD in 1996, and since 2010, being an OECD-DAC member. Due to this situation, development cooperation with different regions of the world, including LAC, represents an important topic in South Korea's foreign policy

5.1 Institutions

South Korea's cooperation approach relies on a presidential system established in its constitution (1987). According to the constitutional text, "the Prime Minister shall be appointed by the President with the consent of the National Assembly." This is important since Korea's Framework Act on International Development Cooperation (2014) designates the Prime Minister as the ultimate authority for Korean development cooperation.

The Prime Minister exercises authority through the Committee for International Development Cooperation, a high-level body composed of 25 members: 15 ministers, 3 heads of agencies, and 7 civil society experts. This Committee is responsible for (1) formulating the Mid-term ODA Policy and Annual Implementation Plans; (2) conducting evaluations; (3) coordinating ODA policies and plans; and (4) addressing other matters deemed important and recommended by the chairperson (ODA Korea, 2023).

Consequently, although South Korea operates under a presidential system, its constitutional framework delegates the responsibility of leading the policy-making process linked to cooperation policies to the Prime Minister's Office.

5.2 Ideas

South Korea, as a proactive member of the OECD-DAC, promotes the principles established in the 2005 Paris Declaration: ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual accountability. Likewise, South Korea embraced the principles agreed upon in the 2011 Busan Partnership and reiterated in 2016 in Nairobi to make development cooperation effective: ownership of development priorities by developing countries, a focus on results, partnerships for development, and transparency and shared responsibility.

In 2021, aiming to comply with international commitments and

make aid more effective, KOICA launched its Mid-term Sectoral Strategy to promote development cooperation. This strategy seeks to align South Korea's cooperation with the 2030 Agenda. Thus, KOICA promotes policies oriented to:

Inclusive development through quality education; ensuring health rights for all; peaceful, just, and inclusive societies; securing a stable and affluent life for rural people; water as a natural right; promoting sustainable development through righteous energy production and consumption; sustainable transportation for all; creating inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and communities; contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through STI; limiting the rise in global average temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius and a planet safe from the climate crisis; establishing an equal society without discrimination based on gender and ensuring dignity for everyone; and promoting human rights for all in partner countries through people-centered development cooperation. (KOICA, 2021).

Additionally, in addressing cooperation with LAC in particular, Korean authorities have highlighted mutual trust as a foundational principle for relations with the region (ECLAC, 2022). This principle was emphasized by former Prime Minister Han Duck-soo during his visit to Latin America in 2022, as well as by Latin American diplomats and in official documents from multilateral forums involving South Korea and LAC countries.

5.3 Interests

South Korea considers the LAC region an important growing market with multiple partners. In this sense, the IDB reported that:

Bilateral trade in goods took off, growing at an impressive annual rate of 11.5% between 1990 and 2021, more than twice the growth rate of trade with Japan. In 2021, it reached US\$57 billion—an all-time high. The trade boom was followed by US\$26 billion in investments by Korean firms in the region since 2000. (IDB, 2022, 11)

Additionally, ever since becoming a member of the OECD, South Korea has prioritized development assistance in its foreign policy agenda

(Faure, 2016). Therefore, international agreements such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development allow the country to fulfill its duty as an OECD-DAC member and portray itself as a bridge between developing and developed countries based on its experience.

Moreover, Lopez Aymes emphasized that “Korean and Latin American scholars, as well as some government officials, normally consider that Korea and its firms aim for natural resources (mining, agricultural goods, and notably energy sources) and cheap labor for assembly work” (2012, 1). Consequently, South Korea, which imports 95% of its energy, sees in LAC a region with one of the largest energy reserves in the world, which can secure the supply of energy resources virtually free of geopolitical risks.

Table 3 shows the top LAC recipients of South Korea’s in recent years:

Table 3: KOICA top recipients (2017-2021) (Unit: Thousand US\$)¹⁰

2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
Country	Total	Country	Total	Country	Total	Country	Total	Country	Total
(13) 1. Bolivia	10.653 (17%)	(13) 1. Paraguay	12.750 (16%)	(16) 1. Bolivia	12.602 (16%)	(9) 1. Paraguay	13.817 (21%)	(8) 1. Paraguay	16.098 (23%)
(16) 2. Peru	9.515 (15%)	(15) 2. Bolivia	12.166 (15%)	(18) 2. Paraguay	12.465 (16%)	(18) 2. Colombia	9.027 (14%)	(17) 2. Colombia	10.932 (15%)
		(16) 3. Peru	11.522 (14%)	(20) 3. Peru	9.719 (12%)			(19) 3. Bolivia	9.958 (14%)

Source: KOICA (2018-2022)

In this dynamic, Bolivia and Paraguay were among the first countries to receive Korean Migration. Kim and Lee pointed out that “since the first official emigrants landed in Brazil in 1963, thousands of Koreans moved to farm plantations in Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Bolivia until the early 1980s” (2016, 79).

Likewise, both countries have vast quantities of natural resources; Paraguay is rich in hydropower, timber, iron ore, manganese, and limestone, and Bolivia in lithium, tin, natural gas, petroleum, zinc, tungsten, antimony, silver, iron, lead, gold, timber, hydropower (CIA, 2023). Moreover, both nations are linked to Mercosur as State parties.

In the cases of Colombia and Peru, these countries are among the few nations with Free Trade Agreements with South Korea. Peru is also a member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. These partnerships work

¹⁰ The total amount (100%) of ODA disbursement for the LAC region by year was as follows: \$62.632 (2017), \$81.405 (2018), \$79.726 (2019), \$ 66.358 (2020), \$70.884 (2021)..

as catalysts for promoting cooperation among their participants.

5.4 Organizations and Vectors/Schemes

South Korea's ODA organizational structure is given by the Framework Act on International Development Cooperation (2014), which established in Article 9¹¹ that following the guidelines emanated from the Committee for International Development Cooperation, led by the Prime Minister, the main organizations in charge of supervising cooperation policies are the MoFA and the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

Under the supervision of the MoFA, KOICA is the leading agency in charge of ODA. It was established in April 1991 as a government-funded agency to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Korea's ODA by unifying the segmented aid programs implemented by different ministries (KOICA, 2024).

KOICA led wide cooperation initiatives such as projects, overseas volunteer groups, global training, public-private partnerships, overseas emergency relief, and collaboration with international organizations, focusing on healthcare, education, governance-peace, agriculture and fisheries, technology-environment-energy, and cross-cutting issues.

Another important agency within South Korea's cooperation system is the EXIMBANK, "established with aims to facilitate the development of Korea's economy and enhance economic cooperation with foreign countries through the provision of financial supports for export and import transactions, overseas investments projects, and the development of overseas natural resources" (Korea Eximbank, 2024).

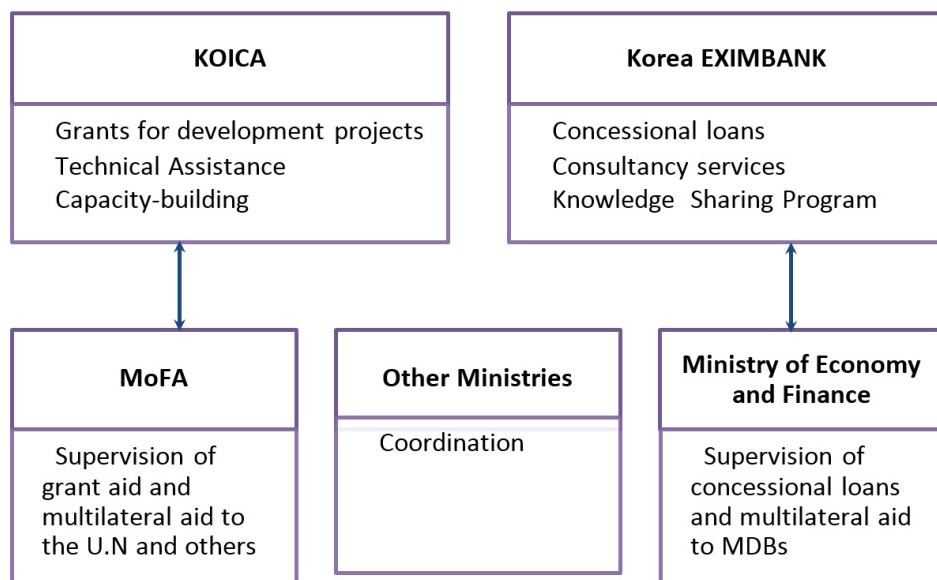
Consequently, figure 4 draws South Korea's organizations and vectors for development cooperation:

¹¹ Article 9:

(1) Loans, among bilateral development cooperation, shall be supervised by the Minister of Economy and Finance, and grant aid by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

(2) Cooperation with international financial institutions under the Act on the Measures for the Admission to International Financial Institutions, among multilateral development cooperation, shall be supervised by the Minister of Economy and Finance and cooperation with other organizations by the Minister of Foreign Affairs..

Figure 4: South Korea's ODA organizational structure



Source: Elaborated by the author (2024)

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, in April 2020, KOICA established the ABC program to strengthen the capacities of beneficiary countries through comprehensive emergency assistance, humanitarian support, and coordination with existing projects. According to Quispe and Llatas (n.d.) and KOICA's 2022 annual report, eight countries in Central and South America received 14 projects with a total budget of USD 5,300,015, benefiting 9,436,462 individuals. Paraguay, Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru were the primary recipients.

5.5 Regional/International organizations

Beyond bilateral channels, South Korea's engagement with the region has been nurtured mainly through two regional organizations: the IDB and ECLAC.

South Korea became a non-borrowing member of the IDB in 2005. In this direction, since 2012, Korea has financed development projects in the region through the IDB for more than US\$ 550.6 million in areas such

as innovation, poverty reduction, private-sector development, and public capacity-building (IDB, 2022).

South Korea also joined ECLAC on July 23rd, 2007. Since then, several cooperation agreements have been signed mainly for promoting trade and investment, as well as sharing and applying development knowledge to achieve the goals established in the 2030 Agenda, based on the previous South Korea's development experiences.

6. Comparing the cooperation approaches of Japan, China, and South Korea to Latin America and the Caribbean

This section aims to contrast the approaches undertaken by Japan, China, and South Korea during the post-2015 period to identify their similarities and differences. In this direction, a comparison based on institutions, ideas, interests, organizations - vectors/schemes, and regional/international organizations is presented as follows:

Firstly, regarding institutions, we can see that Japan's political model is based on a constitutional monarchy with a bicameral parliament called the Diet, as Lancaster (2007) highlighted in her study of the country. In contrast, China, in theory and as reflected in its 2018 Constitution, has implemented a hybrid system in which the National People's Congress appoints the President. Meanwhile, South Korea follows a presidential system in which the President, as Head of State, chooses a Prime Minister.

However, to not overlook the political dynamics that shape the three systems, it is necessary to consider the nature of the political regimes and the practices established within each. In this regard, assessments made by independent organizations—such as the Freedom in the World Report, the Democracy Index, and the World Report, published annually by Freedom House, the Economist Intelligence Unit, and Human Rights Watch, respectively—enable a more comprehensive understanding of the internal political dynamics (institutions) in the countries under study.

The Freedom Report (2025) characterized Japan as a multiparty parliamentary democracy in which political rights and civil liberties are generally well respected. Similarly, despite the recent controversial attempt by former President Yoon Suk Yeol to declare martial law, the same report labeled South Korea as a democratic system with regular rotations of power and robust political pluralism, with the largest parties representing conservative and liberal views. Both countries are also categorized as democracies, Japan as a “full democracy” and South Korea as a “flawed democracy” by the Democracy

Index (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2024) and recognized for having a positive record of human rights (Human Rights Watch, 2025).

On the other hand, the same reports considered China as an “authoritarian regime” in which the ruling CCP continues to tighten control over all aspects of life and governance, including the state bureaucracy. The reports also highlighted the concentration of power in the executive branch, especially in the figure of Xi Jinping, and the constant violation of human rights by the government party.

In relation to the ideas promoted through the cooperation initiatives supported by these countries, first, Japan bases its cooperation on the principles established in the ODA Charters (2015, 2023), such as sharing knowledge and best practices centered on Japan’s own development experience, freedom, democracy, and respect for fundamental human rights and the rule of law. Likewise, Japan embraced the principles promoted by OECD-DAC members. Moreover, when focusing specifically on the Latin American region, Japan bases its cooperation on the principles established in the “Together” initiative and the Free and Open-Indo Pacific Strategy.

It is fundamental to point out that the ideas promoted by Japan through its development cooperation, as stated in the ODA Charters (2015 and 2023), are intertwined with Japan’s national interest.

Similar to Japan, to some extent, South Korea, as an OECD-DAC member, embraces the principles and ideas agreed upon within this group. Therefore, when promoting cooperation abroad, the South Korean government supports the principles established in the 2005 Paris Declaration, the 2011 Busan Partnership, and the 2016 Nairobi Partnership such as country ownership, focus on results, inclusive partnership, transparency, and mutual accountability.

On the other hand, China has built its cooperation philosophy on the rhetoric of countries of the South, based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which are mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. The specific ideas promoted by the Chinese government in this region are established in China’s Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean.

The ideas that the three countries promote through their development cooperation initiatives are intrinsically linked to the interests they pursue in LAC. In this direction, Japan’s ODA to the region is driven primarily by economic and commercial interests linked to the consolidation of new markets for Japanese firms and the protection of the interests of its

financial institutions. However, Japan also aims to contribute to the region's poverty reduction, protect Japanese communities abroad, and promote democratization while maintaining the best possible relations with the U.S., its principal international ally and, historically, the most influential country in this region.

In the case of China, the country has promoted development cooperation in the LAC region primarily for the motivation of a developmental state. In this sense, China has sought access to natural resources and created new and alternative markets for Chinese goods and investment. Nevertheless, amidst the increasing global tensions, the country has also promoted its One China Policy and projected soft power in the region through the BRI.

Regarding South Korea, it has fostered engagement with the region by aiming to secure new markets for its firms through increased trade and investment, fulfill its duty as an OECD-DAC member by acting as a bridge between developed and developing countries and supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and guarantee its supply of natural resources from LAC, a region considered virtually free of geopolitical risks.

Based on the interests promoted by these three countries, and without denying the specific political interests and differences in their approaches, it is possible to say that East Asian approaches have prioritized economic and developmental interests in LAC.

At the national level, since 2008, with the launching of the new JICA, Japan has centered most of its ODA initiatives within this organization (Katada, 2020). Similarly, South Korea established KOICA as an agency to unify the fragmented aid programs previously implemented by various ministries. However, it is important to note that, in both countries, other institutions remain involved in the broader development cooperation architecture beyond these centralized bodies.

In China, three main organizations are involved in cooperation policies at the ministerial level: the MoFA, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Commerce. Additionally, CIDCA, Eximbank, and the Chinese Development Bank, among several other organizations, take part in the different stages of the policy-making process.

At the international level, Japan and South Korea have historically promoted cooperation initiatives in LAC through bilateral channels. However, when engaging with regional organizations, these countries prefer to partner with traditional institutions such as the UN, its agencies, and the IDB to establish regional cooperation projects.

Contrarily, since 2014, China has bet on the China-CELAC forum as

the primary regional organization to promote cooperation projects with the region. China has also used the AIIB to finance several developments in LAC.

Finally, about vectors/schemes, Japan has cooperated with LAC through the primary North-South Cooperation schemes established by the OECD, which include grants, loans, and technical cooperation. The country has also included other cooperation initiatives under the concept of OOF in recent years. This cooperation resulted in multiple projects addressing disaster risk reduction, environmental issues, climate change, economic and infrastructure development, medical and healthcare, education, and peacebuilding. Similarly, South Korea has implemented cooperation through grants, loans, technical assistance, consultancy services, capacity building, and knowledge-sharing programs.

Even though China considers itself a SSC practitioner, it has also promoted cooperation with the LAC region through grants, interest-free loans, concessional loans, and other activities of financial cooperation, replicating, to some extent, and without taking the payment conditions and field of investment into consideration, the approach used by Japan and South Korea.

7. Conclusion

Historically, Japan has been a proactive contributor to development cooperation. Although LAC is not the primary destination for Japan's ODA, the region has received consistent support during the post-2015 period. In contrast, China has emerged as a rising provider in the region, challenging the dominance of traditional donors such as the U.S., the E.U., and even Japan. While South Korea is a relatively recent donor, it is increasingly viewed as an alternative development partner for LAC countries, particularly in the context of growing geopolitical tensions between China and the U.S.

When comparing these three cases, we can observe both similarities and differences, as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Comparison of Development Cooperation Approaches

Dimension	Country		
	Japan	China	South Korea
Institutions	- Constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system (Democratic)	- Hybrid system (Authoritarian)	- Presidential system (Democratic)
Ideas	- OECD-DAC principles - ODA Charter - Juntos - Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy - Human Dignity	- Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence - Policy Paper on LAC - White Paper on Development Cooperation	- OECD-DAC principles - Mutual trust
Interests	- Seek new markets - Promote Sustainable Development - Protect its nationals - Reinforce U.S-Japan Alliance	- Seek new markets - Obtain natural resources - Achieve support for the One-China Policy - Increase political influence - Infrastructure connectivity	- Seek new markets - Promote Sustainable Development - Obtain natural resources
Organizations	JICA + other organizations	Complex Ministerial Architecture	KOICA + other organizations
Vectors	- ODA - OOF (Financial Cooperation)	- South-South Cooperation - Foreign Aid - FDI (Financial Cooperation)	- ODA (Financial Cooperation)
Regional Organizations	- IDB - UN Agencies	- CELAC-China Forum - AIIB	- IDB - UN Agencies

Source: Elaborated by the author (2024)

Beyond the similarities and differences among these countries, it is important to highlight the vast opportunities for cooperation in LAC, a region marked by significant disparities and development gaps. For example, recent reports by ECLAC (2022) and the IDB (2023) indicate that, in line with trends observed in other emerging economies, financial flows to LAC have declined in recent quarters. This trend is likely to continue and may even deepen with the ongoing reorganization of USAID promoted by the Trump administration. Furthermore, nearly 18% of the population lives on less than US\$3.10 per day,

pushing poverty levels above those recorded a decade ago. In addition, long-term economic growth is currently estimated at around 2%, a rate insufficient to meet the development goals of most countries in the region.

Amidst this reality, international agreements such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Paris Agreement provide a framework for traditional donors, emerging providers from the Global South, and other stakeholders to avoid overlapping initiatives and enhance the effectiveness of development cooperation.

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes and compares the development cooperation approaches promoted by Japan, China, and South Korea toward the Latin American and Caribbean region in the post 2015 period. The study applies the analytical frameworks of Lancaster (2007)—institutions, ideas, interests, and organizations—and Kragelund (2019)—vectors—relying on qualitative analysis of primary and secondary sources. The findings indicate that, while each country's cooperation approach has its own features—for instance, Japan and South Korea are OECD members, whereas China is a practitioner of South-South cooperation—all three prioritize financial cooperation over other forms of engagement.

KEYWORDS

Japan, China, South Korea, Latin America and the Caribbean, Development Cooperation

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ECOWAS FREEDOM OF MOBILITY AND ITS NATIONAL SECURITY IMPLICATIONS FOR NIGERIA

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Introduction

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established in 1975 through the Treaty of Lagos. This subregional framework was designed to advance economic integration, political cooperation, and sustainable development within the West Africa Subregion. Originally conceived as a regional response to underdevelopment and economic disintegration in West Africa, ECOWAS has over time come to include peace and security, and culminated in protocols encouraging the free movement of persons, goods, services, and capital (ECOWAS Treaty, 1993; Osadolor, 2011). One of the support beams of this agenda of integration is the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment, which attempts to reduce physical and legal hurdles among member states as well as promote a single West African space.

While this protocol has advanced the regional integration agenda by promoting mobility, it has equally been faulted for driving security concerns more so in Nigeria, the most economically significant and populous state in the region. Scholars have frequently attributed Nigeria's permeable borders, poor border control, and corruption as an entrenched way of life to being the key enablers of transnational crime and insecurity (Yacubu, 2005; Onuoha, 2013; Aduloju, 2017). These domestic factors have enabled the spread of small arms, human trafficking, drug trade, and illegal migration trends commonly

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traced to the liberal provisions of the Free Movement Protocol. But attributing Nigeria's national security crisis to porous borders and poor-quality domestic institutions is analytically limiting and the danger of oversimplifying a transnational and complex challenge.

This study argues that Nigeria's national security issues cannot be addressed in isolation without reference to the broader international and regional forces that shape the security context of West Africa. Transnational crime syndicates, shifting geopolitical balances, and global demand for illegal commodities as well as the ineffectiveness of multilateral enforcement institutions are all aspects of understanding threats to Nigeria. For instance, availability in Nigeria of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) is often traced to larger West African and Sahelian networks of arms trafficking, which are sustained through wars in countries like Libya and Mali (Bøås & Torheim, 2013; United Nations, 2006). Moreover, the ECOWAS bloc has increasingly become an international narcotics smuggling corridor, with Nigeria as a transit and destination country (Henrik, 2014; Kicing, 2004). The issue is not merely the movement of humans but the governance of such movements in an environment of low state capacity and transnational criminal economies. Here, ECOWAS' normative tools like the Protocol on Free Movement—articulate a tension between regional aspirations and local enforcement possibilities. The free movement ideal hinges on the assumption of functional border institutions, confidence between member states, and coordinated policy implementation (ECOWAS, 2006). But in practice, implementation has been piecemeal. As fieldwork and interview research in the Nigeria-Benin Seme border point out, corruption and institutional decay have undermined the Protocol (Aduloju, 2017). The lacuna that arises allows state and non-state actors alike to take advantage of loose enforcement and loopholes in law for illegalities.

Theoretically, this study uses the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) and Functionalism to describe West African interdependence of security as well as integration logic behind protocols such as free movement. While RSCT contends that regional security is very interdependent and that threats to security are most likely to cluster in specific geographic regions (Buzan & Wæver, 2003), Functionalism also claims cooperation in technical and economic aspects as a precursor to political integration and peace (Mitrany, 1943; Rosamond, 2000). Both, however, have their drawbacks in the African context. The assumption of functional institutions or rational regional dynamics is likely to collapse in postcolonial African states, where there is weak sovereignty, artificial borders, and historic suspicion that keeps integration at bay (Dunn & Shaw, 2001; McDonald, 2008). Therefore, while

ECOWAS may appear to be a security complex, it operates in a disintegrative regional environment with asymmetries in capacity and commitment.

It is also important to observe that security and integration are not complimentary in all cases.

The Free Movement Protocol, although aimed at advancing integration, can equally generate security externalities if poorly managed. The Protocol, according to Sofunwa of the Nigerian Immigration Service, has in reality acted as a cloak for criminals and uncontrolled migrants, some of whom pose health and security threats (Interview, 2023). This tension serves to emphasize the integration paradox with inadequate regulation, and the fact that ECOWAS member states cannot establish mutual surveillance and intelligence plans serves to compound this problem.

In total, this paper reexamines the national security implications of Nigeria's ECOWAS' Free Movement Protocol by moving beyond strictly domestic analysis. It instead situates Nigeria's border insecurity within a broader matrix of regional vulnerability, transnational criminal networks, and theoretical disjuncture between integrationist aspiration and enforcement reality. By linking empirical evidence with recent theoretical thinking, the research offers a more nuanced explanation for Nigeria's security crisis and proposes recommendations for improving cross-border governance and sub-regional security cooperation.

ECOWAS and Nigeria: Who Begat Whom?

The history and evolution of ECOWAS cannot be dissociated from Nigeria's hegemonic position and security interests in West Africa. It was born out of an increase in post-independence regionalism, spurred by the imperatives of economic independence, political integration, and collective development among the newly independent African nations (Osadolor, 2011). Though the group was formally initiated by a number of West African states, Nigeria's economic, political and organising influence put it in position to become the group's *de facto* driving force. Consequently, Nigeria's national interests have often intersected and, quite often, defined the agenda for ECOWAS's sub-regional integration (Obuoforibo, 2011; Fawole, 2003). Even so, it would remain reductionist to say that ECOWAS is a Nigerian creation. Rather, its origin must be seen as a component of the broader dynamics of post-colonial African aspirations, Cold War alignment, and global movement towards regional economic blocs during the 1970s.

As a regional hegemon, Nigeria had seen in ECOWAS both a vehicle

for integration and an antidote to foreign manipulation, and also as a vehicle through which it could project its geopolitical influence. During the Biafran War, Nigeria's borders were exploited by third parties to smuggle weapons, demonstrating vulnerability to internal collapse posed by ungoverned borders. This episode purportedly triggered Nigeria's zeal for a regional order to regulate cross-border affairs (Nwokedi, 1984; Aduloju, 2017). To this end, ECOWAS was a deliberate response to internal vulnerability as well as the need for expansive regional order. Nigeria's commitment to regionalism has generally rested on a twofold logic of idealism and pragmatism. On the one hand, its Pan-Africanist philosophy articulated in support of Kwame Nkrumah's continental integration schemes has provided the grounds for its normative claims to African leadership (Nkrumah, 1965; Ojo, 1974). On the other hand, Nigeria has utilized regional integration as a geopolitical device to challenge Francophone hegemony, specifically post-colonial French hegemony in West Africa. This regionalism corresponds to what analysts refer to as "regional realist integration," whereby the states pursue integration for the sake of increasing sovereignty, not dissolving it (Bach, 2016). Thus, Nigeria's participation in ECOWAS is neither altruistic regionalism nor sheer calculation but, instead, rational calculation to equilibrate regional disparities and maximize its national security through regional security.

The idea of regional integration as an extension of national security became particularly salient after the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol came into force in 1979. Nigeria's pivotal role in bringing this protocol into effect, coupled with its peacekeeping missions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia, is a reflection of its normative self-perception as a regional stabilizer (Aduloju and Pratt, 2014). These actions have, nevertheless, exposed the nation to cross-border threats. Though Nigeria invested in ECOWAS with a view to regional shared governance, the Community's institutional weakness has checkmated its ability to curb illegal migration, trans-border trafficking, and insurgent mobility transgressions which have spilled over into Nigeria's internal security domain (Henrik, 2014; Ochoga et. al., 2025). The final result paradox is that Nigeria's investment in regionalism has, in some cases, produced its national insecurity.

Furthermore, the Nigeria-ECOWAS dynamics must be theorized as a two-way constitution and not a one-way process. Nigeria previously had a leadership and financial role, but ECOWAS now intrudes on Nigeria's policy space, legal requirement, and global standing. For example, Nigeria's use of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) and Common External Tariff (CET) has had far-reaching effects on its sub-regional economic matters. Similarly, its participation in regional peace and security initiatives,

like the 2008 ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), has also rooted it firmly in regional decision-making circles (Aning and Bah, 2009). Institutional embeddedness means that Nigeria cannot dictate and withdraw entirely from ECOWAS even when regional decisions go against national interests. Worthy of mention here is that current scholarship has stressed that regional organizations such as ECOWAS are not only tools of state collaboration but also arenas in which power differentials are negotiated and reproduced (Bischoff, 2021; Hartmann, 2017). Nigeria's dominance in ECOWAS manifested in its unequal financial contribution and deployment of troops has at times bred suspicion and hostility from less powerful member states. This has, at times, narrowed consensus and compromised the adoption of protocols, like those on security cooperation and free movement. Thus, while Nigeria might have originated ECOWAS, it has no absolute discretion over its course.

Secondly, the growing convergence of global and regional security challenges such as, climate-induced displacement, terrorism, organized crime, and cyber threats calls for a re-evaluation of Nigeria's ECOWAS policy. The assumption that regional integration automatically enhances security has proven simplistic. Integration, instead, can produce complex security spillovers unless it is supported by institutional control and good governance. The more Nigeria deepens regional integration, the more it must move beyond border-focused thinking to a multi-faceted security paradigm that includes human security, institutional transformation, and transnational cooperation (ISS, 2024; Gawi & Abdullahi, 2024). The question of "Who begat whom?" hides a more complex relational dynamic. Although Nigeria was the pacesetter in founding ECOWAS, the institution has been progressively making its own imprint and has influenced Nigeria's foreign and domestic policy choices. This dialectic is typical of the broader evolution of regionalism on the continent, where regional institutions are forged by hegemonic states but end up disciplining and socializing them in broader normative, economic, and security spaces. Ultimately, ECOWAS and Nigeria have reciprocally given birth to each other in the crucible of regional politics, mutual weaknesses, and common aspirations.

Theoretical Foundations for Understanding Regional Mobility and Security in West Africa

This study uses two principal theoretical frameworks, i.e.; Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) and Functionalism theories to explore

the academic interface between the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol and Nigeria's national security issues. Though these were developed in the Western epistemological schools, their critical localisation in the African context offers a more context-specific understanding of the institutional, spatial, and security-related imperatives of the West African sub-region. Functionalist theory, founded upon the interwar study of David Mitrany (1933), presumes that integration is the result of the incremental transfer of functional activities to the international level from the national level. As Mitrany articulated, the logic of integration is in the shared technical demands such as transport, communication, trade, and welfare, which create spillover effects to induce cooperation in other than politically sensitive areas. Mitrany's vision assumes that rational calculation and technocratic problem-solving would ultimately erode the salience of state sovereignty at the expense of transnational governance.

This direction acquired fresh meaning in post-colonial Africa, where political elites embraced regional integration both for the economic benefits but also as a device of peace and mutual sovereignty (Okolie, 2006). The ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement adheres to this trend by promoting the progressive harmonisation of migration and mobility regimes across member states. As Rosamond (2000) further elaborates, functionalism has a focus on interdependence and common interests in preference to nationalist interests, predicting that states are likely to have an interest in integration if reciprocally benefiting. Such hopes are contingent upon the supposition of good and uncorrupted institutions, not always present within West African governments. Within Nigeria, for instance, implementation of ECOWAS mobility protocols has been weakened through institutionalized corruption, porous frontiers, and poor surveillance installations (Aduloju, 2017). These realities create an incongruence between functionalism's integrative assumptions and the governance challenges on the ground. As Fayomi (2013) warns, the functionalist assumption that states will not destabilize integrative processes falls apart in scenarios where political instability, illegal economies, and institutional incapacity sabotage regional cooperation.

The argument is corroborated by recent research work. Moses (2024) argues that the ECOWAS integration model fails to identify informal economies and identity politics that generate dissonance for policy harmonization in West Africa. Similarly, Teye and Oucho (2024) explain that even though ECOWAS promotes normative systems of mobility, implementation deficits are actualized through the disconnect between state-centric governance and regional ideals. Functionalism is, as such, the right lens through which to judge the aspirational goals of ECOWAS but is limited when confronted with the

structural and political dysfunctions of postcolonial states. As a complement to functionalism's emphasis on integration, the current research uses the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), conceptualized by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver (2003), to describe the regional security enmeshments Nigeria finds itself within. RSCT argues that security interdependence is strongest between states that are geographically close to one another whose national securities are inextricably linked. In these regions, the security of one state cannot be fully explained independently from the activities and circumstances of others. West Africa is a contextual example of this arrangement.

The sub-region is marked by porous borders, transnational insurgencies, and weak regulatory institutions, all of which make the states extremely susceptible to external shocks. Buzan and Wæver (2003) argue that security complexes are shaped by historical enmities, amities, and securitisation patterns and thereby increase mutual vulnerabilities. To Nigeria, security threats such as terrorism, arms dealing, and smuggling of people are not only events that are localized but are promoted by the fact that neighbouring states are unable to secure their boundaries. McDonald (2008) expands on this in the sense that he underlines securitisation as a discursive process whereby the states identify some events as constituting an existential threat. Nigeria, in securitizing migration and border fluidity, enunciates ECOWAS mobility as a threat to national security, even while it is participating in regional cooperation through foreign policy simultaneously. Such a duality points to the contradictions between normative integrationist rhetoric and hard facts of disaggregated and under-funded state security infrastructures.

Subsequent research highlights that the security environment of West Africa is characterized by the convergence of regional fragility and global geopolitical trends. Ismail (2015) argues that external forces namely arms traffickers, diaspora groups, and foreign insurgents exploit the territory's weak border control, thus rendering it challenging to secure countries like Nigeria. Rega et. al. (2023) also contend that Swahilisation of West African insecurity has created cross-border dynamics that cannot be addressed by national-level policies. RSCT offers a framework through which policymakers can move beyond state-centric analysis and instead observe the relational dynamics of the region. This is critical to understanding why unidirectional efforts by Nigeria to close its borders or block the way are failing to mitigate security threats because insecurity determinants are rooted structurally in the regional configuration. Although both RSCT and functionalism are helpful, scholars have increasingly challenged their unmodified usage in African settings.

Dunn and Shaw (2001) argue that Western theory is inclined to

obscure rather than illuminate political realities in Africa, especially if they do not consider informal power relations, patronage regimes, and colonial inheritances of fragmentation. There is therefore a requirement for a critical hybridization of the theories that locates their findings in the wealth of West African integration's political economy. For example, Walsh (2020) offers a "neo-regionalist" framework that integrates elements of RSCT with African-centered institutional theory in an attempt to explain the role of non-state actors, informal economies, and hybridized forms of governance. Applying this to the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol would mean that security outcomes are not necessarily a product of policy action, but of broader socio-political environments that act as mediating variables on implementation and enforcement. On the whole, the theoretical framework of this research has a twin foundation. Functionalism illuminates the integrative purpose behind ECOWAS regimes of mobility, while RSCT captures the inter-influencing security impacts that occur in an unstable regional context. But to move from theory to application, these theories must be critically recalibrated urgently to fit the empirical circumstances of West African states such as Nigeria.

Rethinking the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol: Aspirations, Realities, and Regional Security Dilemmas

The Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment, signed by the ECOWAS in 1979, is a pillar of the region's broader vision for economic and political integration. Ideationally grounded in the vision of a unified West Africa, the Protocol emerged out of the course of postcolonial efforts to transcend artificial colonial borders and achieve regional development (ECOWAS, 1979; ECOWAS, 1990). This goal is embodied in the broader African integration agenda promoted in Agenda like the African Union's Agenda 2063, which makes priority the free movement of people, goods, and services as the key source of development and security. The ECOWAS Protocol was to be effective in three implementation phases: the right of entry and the elimination of visas (Phase I), the right of residence (Phase II), and the right of establishment (Phase III). By 1992, the three phases were operational, with varying degrees of states' ratification and implementation (ECOWAS, 1990). Ancillary measures, such as the ECOWAS Travel Certificate, joining emigration and immigration forms and providing the ECOWAS passport in 2000, also evidenced political will to create mobility within the region (ECOWAS, 2006). All the legal instruments as mentioned were therefore designed to eliminate barriers to mobility while promoting the spirit of regional citizenship.

However, for all its grand conception, the Protocol has been plagued by ongoing challenges that test basic questions about its efficient enforcement and security implications. At its heart lies a contradiction between normative ideals of free movement and fragile state institutions that control borders. Although legally enforceable, the implementation of the Protocol hinges on national capacities, a number of which are weak due to institutional loopholes, corruption, and inadequate inter-agency collaboration (Henrik, 2014). Nigerian border institutions are more likely to hinder than promote regional protocols primarily due to pervasive corruption and operational absence of synergy among security agencies, noted by Aduloju (2017). More importantly, such a protocol should be questioned when it comes to contemporary transnational security concerns. Although the aim as articulated is economic integration, its entanglement with a subregional security phenomenon of armed non-state actors, networks of smugglers, terrorism, and organized crime cannot be discounted (Yacubu, 2005; Aduloju & Okwechime, 2016). Current studies indicate that the sub-region's security vulnerabilities have become exponentially diverse from the time when the protocol was formulated. The expansion of jihadist networks across the Sahel and their incursions into West African states such as Burkina Faso, Niger, and northern Nigeria indicate the danger of a disorganized system of mobility (Fatokun & Ibitoye, 2019; Garba & Yeboah, 2022; Nsaibia, 2025).

The Protocol's free mobility provisions incidentally establish facilitative conditions under which non-state armed groups and transnational criminals can move around with impunity. It has been argued by scholars that such freedom of movement in the absence of harmonized security policies and mechanisms for intelligence-sharing erodes national security while opening up vulnerable states like Nigeria to external risks (Walsh, 2020; Lindell and Mattsson, 2014). These security gaps are not merely the byproduct of porous borders, but are linked to structural gaps in state capacity across the region, asymmetrical mechanisms of enforcement, and selective enforcement of provisions under protocols. The borderless regionalist vision also assumes that there are effective and cooperative institutions that can address the complex dynamics of mobility and security. But ECOWAS states have unevenly implemented the protocol. For example, Nigeria has alternated between open-door and unilateral shut-downs, citing national security as justification. This paradox reflects what Fawole (2003) described as Nigeria's foreign policy paradox—when desire for regional leadership is at odds with need for internal security.

Moreover, theoretically, the protocol reveals the contradictions between the functionalist discourse of integration and the complex realities

of regional security. Functionalists such as Mitrany and Haas have contended that cooperation in one dimension (e.g., economic integration) would spill over into other dimensions, including political unity and security cooperation. Yet, in West Africa, the lack of consistent institutional integration within the security sector has limited such spillovers to occur. Instead, convergence is substituted with institutional fragmentation where institutional security dimensions of integration remain underdeveloped compared to economic desires (Rosamond, 2000; Fayomi, 2013). In addition, using the lens of Regional Security Complex Theory, ECOWAS mobility protocol must also be examined as not only a legal or economic instrument but as a securitizing space. Since Buzan and Wæver (2003) theorized, security dynamics within a region are highly interconnected, and the actors also tend to externalize regional insecurities as regional frameworks. To that extent, the Nigerian reaction to the Free Movement Protocol as threat reveals more about their failure to create a regional security mechanism which would be in a position to address the effects of heightened mobility than an outright fear or belief of threat.

In essence, the problem is not free movement per se but the regulation of the same. ECOWAS migration, according to Ochoga et. al. (2025), is largely informal and occurs through unregulated channels due to inefficiencies within the bureaucracy as well as corruption at the border posts. The informality thereof complicates monitoring people or accounting for commodities, rendering criminal networks' incursion into the mobility system easier. In these contexts, academics and policymakers increasingly advocate for a modification of the Protocol to balance liberal mobility and proactive regional security cooperation. This would involve the investment in trans-border surveillance centres, harmonizing legal standards in migration and crime, and institution-building co-operation in the region (Ismail, 2015). In addition, as recent regional security summits have highlighted, ECOWAS must move from rhetoric to action in implementing coordinated security task forces that can address the security threats fuelled by mobility. While the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol is a symbol of regional unity and economic integration, it is also a serious security governance challenge. The Nigerian situation brings out the need to reimagine regional mobility not as a pure gain, but as a complex policy landscape that must be based on collective, institutionally rooted, and security-conscious regionalism.

Reassessing the Security Implications of the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol for Nigeria's National Sovereignty

Since gaining independence in 1960, maintaining national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and safeguarding its citizens has been at the center of its statecraft. These have shaped its foreign policy role within the West African sub-region. Its security policy has been described by Fawole (2003) as having multiple dimensions that range from guarding its borders to providing leadership on regional political stability. The integration of sub-regional security into Nigeria's national security agenda is strategic and is an indication of a realization that turmoil in the neighbouring states has deep implications within Nigeria's own borders. Beyond these general goals, however, current security issues in Nigeria have increased in complexity. The country's position as a key actor in ECOWAS, its economic dominance, population, and extensive geography put it at the center of both integration efforts and new transnational threats (Henrik, 2014). This has increasingly placed Nigeria at risk of the unintended consequences of regional integration, most notably under the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment.

The ECOWAS Protocol, intended to provide economic integration and mobility, has generated security externalities that are exacerbated by Nigeria's institutional weakness and regional geopolitics. While the Protocol provides legal basis for West African citizens to move freely across borders, its application has been patchy and often poorly regulated. Studies by Aduloju (2017) and Onuoha (2013) show that Nigeria's borders are still critically open, having more than 1,499 irregular crossing points that are in constant use by traffickers, insurgents, and smugglers. In such a scenario, freedom of movement is a double-edged sword—it increases trade and social integration, while simultaneously empowering the invasion of criminal and terror groups. The paradox is nothing new, nor is it surprising. It is a reflection of what analysts such as Eke (in Ahmed & Chilaka, 2013) recognize as Nigeria's historical involvement in border insecurity. The transnational character of Nigerian insecurity today is not merely a matter of movement but an interdependence between weak enforcement, institutionalized corruption, and geopolitics. For instance, Boko Haram militants and other military forces use these governance vulnerabilities to smuggle weapons, finance, and personnel across the borders of nations (Edeko, 2011). The Nigerian Custom Service, as per field interviews, usually grapples with instances where criminal syndicates exploit the rights accorded by the Protocol to carry out illegal activities under the guise of legal mobility.

Furthermore, the sociopolitical impacts of uncontrolled migration are dire. While the Protocol seeks to enhance economic synergy among ECOWAS member states, its operationalization has seen the influx of unskilled migrants

into Nigeria. These illegal aliens, who mainly comprise illegal immigrants, fight for limited employment opportunities, overwork public amenities, and kindle rising social unrest (Kicing, 2004; Teye and Oucho, 2024). The lack of a regional credentials verification program or biometric information exchange makes things worse. Throughout some Nigerian towns, heightened xenophobic sentiment has emerged in reaction to mounting crime blamed—accurately or inaccurately—on foreigners. It is necessary, though, to break beyond the overly simple explanation of blame laid against the Protocol itself. As Osita Agwu pointed out during an interview at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, the Protocol “may not necessarily be the cause of heightened security challenges confronting Nigeria; but it could be an additional impulse for criminal actors.” This view corresponds with that of Walsh (2020), who posits that insecurity results less from the presence of the Protocol and more from the state’s failure to monitor, manage, and enforce the provisions that are assigned to it. That is, the Protocol becomes vulnerable to abuse in scenarios where state institutions lack operational integrity and coherence.

Moreover, the ECOWAS Protocol functions in a broader international environment of threats and regional gaps in governance. The international system of security faces numerous challenges—ranging from climate displacement and pandemics to cybercrime and illicit small arms proliferation. In West Africa, these trends meet national vulnerabilities. Nigeria in particular has been victim to the spillover effects of regional violence in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d’Ivoire, which all contributed to the flow of ex-combatants and arms into its borders (Omede, 2013). Such regionalization of violence is in line with what Buzan and Wæver (2003) have termed “regional security complexes,” in which the insecurity of one state automatically influences the security of others. The Nigerian state has sought to respond to these matters in reactive, even diametrical terms. It is illustrative, for instance, how border closure in 2019, allegedly aimed at blocking smuggling and irregular migration, contravened the letter of the ECOWAS Protocol and exacerbated tensions with surrounding nations. As Ismail (2015) argues, these one-sided measures undermine faith in regional initiatives and foretell distrust in collective security measures. They also reveal the limitations of Nigeria’s capacity to balance national security and regional obligations. Empirical data from interviews and field observations along the Nigeria-Benin border also further detail the institutional complicity in undermining border management. Officers consistently take bribes to allow undocumented persons and uninspected goods to cross through the border. Despite official ECOWAS documents, the majority of tourists are daunted by officials at borders, who respectively greet

bribe-bidden travellers to be let through regardless of documents (Aduloju, 2017). Such corruption negates the purpose of the Protocol as well as degrades Nigeria's ability for the performance of any substance of viable risk assessment across its borders. Its human cost is even prohibitive. The Protocol, which is meant to protect the rights of migrants, has, in turn, been abused by traffickers who exploit loopholes in the law and administrative failures. It has been established through several studies, including those by Ezeilo (2015), that human trafficking networks often traffic children from Benin, Togo, and Niger into Nigeria for exploitation as laborers, prostitutes, and drug peddlers. The Nigerian security authorities, whose members are themselves accused of being involved in these rackets, make the issue even more complicated. This emphasizes the necessity of reframing national security in terms of including human security aspects, especially because trafficking victims are often not included in state-focused definitions of security. With these human and institutional issues, environmental and health threats are taking on greater prominence. The COVID-19 pandemic brought to the forefront the dangers of unregulated cross-border movements in a region with little public health infrastructure. As Fatokun & Ibitoye (2019) argued, the inability to monitor or track cross-border movements during health crises poses existential risks, especially when added to pre-existing governance failure. Indeed, several recent West African epidemics of transnational diseases have been traced back to weak border surveillance mechanisms.

Moreover, the multiplicity of entry points, as Abba Moro highlighted, remains a structural vulnerability. There are more than 25 illegal border crossings in Adamawa State alone, making it practically impossible to manage mobility without the employment of sophisticated surveillance technologies (Onuoha, 2013). The fact that such routes exist allows not only criminals but also terror cells to be found in border communities. The Boko Haram insurgency has consistently demonstrated the strategic worth of such borderlands by utilizing them as arms and movement logistical corridors (Edeko, 2011). In the context of these challenges, it is clear that Nigeria's security crisis under the ECOWAS Protocol needs to be severed from broader issues of state capacity, regional solidarity, and international cooperation. The remedy is not the abandonment of the Protocol, but reconsideration of its operationalisation. As Farrell (2013) suggests, effective regional integration requires "a dual-track approach" building national institutions in addition to cross-border cooperation. All of this collaboration needs to go beyond signature agreements to include intelligence sharing, joint border patrols, and coordination of biometric and migration information systems.

There have indeed been some grassroots efforts to address these

problems. ECOWAS has over recent years set steps for upgrading border control, like the ECOWAS Biometric Identity Card (ECOWAS ID), which is presently being rolled out in an effort to increase traceability and reduce identity fraud. Yet, as Ismail (2015) warns, the success of such an initiative depends on member states' political will and administrative readiness. Nigeria, as the hub of the region, has the responsibility to set the tone for such a cooperative security system. The ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol was conceptualized in consideration of promoting economic integration and regional coherence, its operationalization in Nigeria has been bedevilled by institutional fragility, corruption, and geopolitics. The Protocol itself is not inherently flawed, but it has become entangled in a complicated web of national and transnational vulnerabilities that amplify insecurity. It is a challenge that requires a multi-scalar response—one that links border management to broader issues of institutional change, regional integration, and citizen security. Only through such an integrated approach can Nigeria transform the challenges of free movement into the dividends of sustainable peace and development.

Beyond Borders: Institutional Fragility, External Influences, and the Limits of ECOWAS Security Governance

The above analysis has set the stage for the internal vulnerabilities of the Nigerian state and the localized implications of the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol. However, a better understanding of regional integration's security implications must account for factors that transcend borders and domestic policy. Most importantly, this chapter addresses two interrelated questions that have only been raised in a cursory way by previous sections: the organizational weakness of ECOWAS as a regional security actor, and the international geopolitics shaping insecurity in Nigeria and West Africa at large. Despite decades of functioning, ECOWAS remains a regional organization with significant structural drawbacks. Though it has produced an enormous amount of normative tools ranging from peace and security frameworks to elections and governance guidelines, it is often not endowed with the institutional coherence, compliance structures, and financial autonomy essential for acting purposefully in security crises. As Fawole (2003) observes, ECOWAS is conceptually over-ambitious but uneven in practice, an observation borne out by later assessments that rate the body as rhetorically powerful but operationally weak.

This vulnerability is most evident in the security sector. ECOWAS has a standby force under the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) arrangement,

and has conducted interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and recently in The Gambia. Yet, such interventions have been largely ad hoc, reactive, and highly dependent on Nigerian military and financial leadership. As Ezeilo (2015) confirms, Nigeria has historically been the de facto power behind ECOWAS military operations, a responsibility that creates asymmetrical burdens and causes dependency to precede burden-sharing in the region. The ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement also suffers from the same operational shortfalls. Even though the protocol provides inspirational principles of movement and integration, it is not backed by integrated regional policing or watching out at the border. There is no unified ECOWAS security intelligence database, no uniform biometric system, and no substantive cross-national cooperation between national immigration agencies. As Walsh (2020) argues, this implies that the region lacks regional enforcement capacity though there is policy. Without institutional innovation, ECOWAS protocols will be advisory documents rather than operating guidelines.

No less important, though still not adequately dealt with, is the role of non-African players in shaping the security environment of West Africa. The national security interests of Nigeria are not only the product of domestic or sub-regional factors, but also of international factors. The international market for arms, for instance, has been the main arbiter of the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in West Africa. The majority of the illicit firearms that fuel West Africa's instability are imported from outside the continent through transnational criminal networks that thrive on weak border regimes, a report in 2023 from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Wezeman et. al. 2023). Foreign interventions in Libya following the 2011 overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi by NATO-backed forces further destabilized the Sahel, unleashing arsenals of weapons and battle-tested fighters into bordering states. This has produced profound ripple effects in Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, and deeper into northern Nigeria. Boko Haram, ISWAP, and other extremist movements have all benefited from such regional fault lines (Garba & Yeboah, 2022; Nsaibia, 2025). The ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol here becomes a facilitator of mobility for actors with networks not strictly limited to West Africa but branching out into global illegal circuits.

Additionally, foreign economic manipulation indirectly feeds insecurity as well. Chinese, European, and American interests in extractive industries—most prominently oil, gas, and mines—heightened competition over national resources. The dynamics tend to politicise local grievances, cause elite capture, and trigger vicious struggle by disgruntled groups. As Oshewolo et. al. (2023) states, West Africa's strategic economic interactions with foreign capital

must be seen as a component of the regional security environment. Another relatively under-researched dimension is the politicization of migration by African and European states. In the past decade, migration has been used as a strategic negotiating tool in Nigeria–EU relations. The European Union’s border externalisation policy has resulted in African countries assuming the responsibility of implementing European border management in exchange for aid, technical cooperation, and trade regimes (Oluyemi, 2024). These external drivers of migration management often clash with ECOWAS’s internal commitment of mobility that poses conflicting duties to countries like Nigeria.

The securitisation of migration in this international context also risks criminalising movement and undermining the human rights of migrants. As Fayomi (2013) suggests, ECOWAS citizens are entitled to freedom of movement under law, but in practice are themselves branded as security threats, especially when external powers pressure ECOWAS to raise controls. This establishes a mobility hierarchy where resource holders or privileged identities are the only ones who really enjoy the integration dividends. All of these dynamics mean that the ECOWAS security structure needs to be radically transformed. Regional security cannot be addressed merely through enhanced border policing or technological investments. It requires political will for institutional reform in ECOWAS, greater accountability between members, and a clear strategy for bargaining with outside actors on a basis of equality. It requires a reconceptualization of security to include economic justice, political inclusiveness, and ecologically sustainable development. Strategically placed as Nigeria is, it must lead this conversation. It must push ECOWAS away from protocolism where it makes declarations but without the capacity to follow through—and towards working integration. This encompasses harmonization of migration systems, developing combined training for border security officers, the creation of a regional security data centre, and the development of transnational justice mechanisms for prosecuting cross-border crimes.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement and Nigeria’s long-standing national security challenges. It did not address the subject in a purely legal or operational manner, but from an interdisciplinary and multilevel approach drawing on international relations theory, empirical field observation, regional political economy, and subnational institutional dynamics. From Functionalism and Regional

Security Complex Theory conceptual frameworks, the current study did research of the promise and contradiction of regional integration in the circumstances of weak institutions, open borders, and regime securitised rule. The observations indicate that while the Free Movement Protocol was originally conceived as a mechanism for regional economic integration and solidarity, its implementation in Nigeria has revealed glaring contradictions. The protocol itself is not necessarily to be faulted for the security issues Nigeria faces. Rather, it is caused by previous vulnerabilities of border management, institutional corruption of enforcement agencies, and a lack of collective security intelligence information sharing among ECOWAS countries. These institutional weaknesses have made it possible for criminal syndicates, rebels, arms traffickers, and human traffickers to exploit legally authorized mobility patterns under the guise of regional integration.

Moreover, the study illuminated the broader geopolitical and transnational forces that shape Nigeria's security environment. These include the diffusion of armed actors from the conflict zones of the Sahel, the spillover effects of the international arms trade, and the externalisation of European migration control agendas, all of which intersect with ECOWAS's internal governance deficits. By integrating such global dynamics into the analysis, the study fills a critical void found in existing literature that overemphasizes localized accounts of insecurity. Through this study, a more advanced understanding has therefore been constructed regarding how regional pacts function within broader power systems of capability and world influence. It calls for reconceptualizing security not only as the absence of violence but also as the presence of good institutions, good leadership, regional stability, and people-centered development policies.

In order to move ahead, Nigeria must rethink its dual function as regional hegemon and vulnerable state. It must step forward in ECOWAS to set up an integrated border management regional system of biometric surveillance, trans-border patrols, and inter-agency data standardization. Country-level reforms aimed at fighting corruption and instituting institutional congruence are the preconditions for the effective enforcement of regional protocols. The ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol is both a potential benefit and a potential danger. It will function as an integrative tool only when supported by robust national and regional capabilities to manage mobility, address insecurities at their roots, and defend the rights and dignity of citizens across borders. West African future integration is more an issue of political will and institutional readiness of its strongest member states—headed by Nigeria—than of legal frameworks.

Appendix: Interviews

Interview conducted at the Nigerian Immigration Service, Lagos, Nigeria.

Interview conducted at the Nigerian Custom Service, Lagos, Nigeria.

Interview conducted at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos, Nigeria.

Interview conducted at the ECOWAS Commission Headquarters, Abuja, Nigeria.

Interview conducted at the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Abuja, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol on national security in Nigeria in the context of a wider regional and global security landscape. From primary data drawn from structured interviews and fieldwork, combined with secondary sources, the research argues that while the Protocol facilitates regional integration and regional trade, at the same time it interacts with Nigeria's narrow institutional capacity, insecure borders, and corruption and hence amplifies security vulnerabilities. However, blaming insecurity on the porousness of borders in isolation could miss the intricacy of interaction among transnational criminal networks, weak multilateral enforcement institutions, and the inherent gap between the ECOWAS integration vision and domestic enforcement realities. This study employs both functionalism and the regional security complex theory to place Nigeria's national security issues within the frameworks of regional interdependence and international systemic processes. The findings of the study propose that effective security governance in Nigeria requires not just better management of the borders but also regional coordination and institutional reforms to address both internal and external drivers of insecurity.

KEYWORDS

Border Governance, ECOWAS, Nigeria, Free Movement Protocol, Regional Security, Sub-regional Integration, Transnational Crime

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POLITICAL IMPASSE AND UN INTERVENTION IN COTE D'IVOIRE

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Introduction

From the late 1990s to early 2000 a series of civil wars and political crises affected several West African countries including Cote d'Ivoire. As a result, state authority was virtually dissolved, governing institutions collapsed, millions became internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugees. There was to say the least political chaos in several West African countries.² When Alassane Dramane Ouattara's candidacy for president was rejected in 2000 on the basis of a contested identity, dissident groups emerged and launched coordinated attacks on various army bases in the cities of Bouaké, Korhogo and Abidjan on September 19, 2002. They demanded for new presidential elections with Ouattara as a candidate. President Laurent Gbagbo responded to their posturing against the state in equal measure. The result was the compounding of a dire political, social, religious, and economic situation of Cote D'Ivoire which threatened internal peace.

The 2002 rebellion, otherwise a failed coup against Gbagbo, eventually paved the way for the establishment of UNOCI (Novosseloff, June 2018). Although the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) established a *groupe de contact* in collaboration with the African Union (AU) to address the situation before it spiralled out of control, this was unsuccessful. France surged forward and urged Senegal to present the matter to the UN Security Council where France is a permanent member. The Linas-Marcoussis Peace Agreement that followed the crisis compelled all parties to accept the holding of an election sooner than later. To keep the

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² Jean-Pierre Lacroix, "Peace, Progress and Potential: The Legacy of UN Peacekeeping in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone," <https://medium.com/@UNPeacekeeping/peace-progress-and-potential-the-legacy-of-un-peacekeeping-in-liberia-c%C3%B4te-divoire-and-sierra-696ef83cb165>, accessed on November 18 2020.

peace, a national unity government would be created and Laurent Gbagbo would remain in power until new elections were organised. In the midst of this, the UN Security Council on May 13 2003 adopted resolution 1479 to establish a United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) to monitor respect for a cease-fire by warring parties until the holding of new elections.

Things rather unfolded rapidly because the *Forces Nouvelles*, an armed opposition group operating in the northern part of the country backed out of the national reconciliation government sooner than later. Faced with a more serious crisis, ECOWAS asked the UN Security Council to enlarge the mission of MINUCI by converting it into a peacekeeping operation. It was in response to this call that the Council on February 27, 2004 through resolution 1528 established the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) to facilitate the implementation of peace agreements and to end the civil war.³

The UNOCI with a force of over 6000 from the very beginning was to oversee disarmament of militia groups and to conduct presidential elections scheduled in October 2005. The Secretary General of the United Nations was mandated to transform the authority of MINUCI and ECOWAS into UNOCI. The Security Council resolution also authorised French forces of *Operation Licorne* to give support to UNOCI. All these developments were in the midst of a very tense political atmosphere. To make matters even worse, the *Parti Démocratique de la Cote d'Ivoire* (PDCI) withdrew from the national reconciliation government in 2004. This was followed by violent clashes between pro-government and pro-opposition forces leading to several deaths. Other opposition parties also withdrew from the government and accused Gbagbo of jeopardising the peace process. It was thanks to external pressure that the parties in conflict signed the Accra peace agreement on 31 July 2004. The agreement, like others before, was not recognised soon afterwards. This was due to the entrenched position of belligerents.

In reaction to increasing differences between belligerents, the AU appointed Thabo Mbeki to broker peace between them and this culminated in the Pretoria peace agreement. This agreement obliged all sides to the conflict to immediately cease hostilities and reaffirm participation in the presidential elections of October 2005. The election had not taken place because of the need to sort out sticky electoral issues and logistical problems to ensure free, fair and transparent elections. The impasse led to another agreement, the

3 Agossou Lucien Ahouangan, "Conflict Resolution and the UN Peacekeeping Operation in Côte d'Ivoire," <https://www.e-ir.info/2019/02/25/conflict-resolution-and-the-un-peacekeeping-operation-in-cote-divoire/>, accessed on November 17, 2020; Role of the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire Special Report of the Secretary General United Nations Security Council, S/2018/968.

Ouagadougou agreement of March 4 2007. The UN Security Council was present to ensure compliance. When the warring parties settled on October 31 2010 for elections to take place, the Council passed resolution S/RES/1942 which authorised 500 additional peacekeepers to be sent to Cote d'Ivoire to help keep the peace through to a successful election.⁴ The elections failed to broker peace and the UN Security Council increased the mandate of UNOCI. The number of peacekeepers was increased to 12000.⁵ The Security Council recognised the country's progress after thirteen years and in April renewed UNOCI for one final period until June 30, 2017 when all uniformed and civilian components of UNOCI would have been withdrawn for authorities to once again take full control of their country. This UN mission in Cote d'Ivoire cost the organisation a lot as over 150 peacekeepers lost their lives (Editor, 2017).

Spheres of UNOCI Intervention

The UNOCI mission was to address and bring about durable peace in Cote d'Ivoire, an economic giant of West Africa upon whom countries like Burkina Faso and Mali relied for survival. Among its key areas of intervention were to accompany Ivorian parties as part of the Ouagadougou Agreement, build social cohesion among the people, promote national reconciliation, fight against gender-based violence, ensure maintenance of the rule of law, human rights, transitional justice, build community security, seek a peaceful solution to the post-electoral crisis, assist government to disarm, demobilise and reintegrate former combatants, implement security sector reforms and relaunch the Ivorian economy as soon as it was possible (Cissé 2019; Traugher 2017).⁶

One core assignment of UNOCI was to build social harmony among the people. It was also to ensure protection of all civilians during conflict no matter their political persuasion and ethnic affiliation. Mr Alain Le Roy, Head of UN peacekeeping operations on a visit to Cote d'Ivoire in December 2010, in the heat of the disputed presidential elections, praised UNOCI for its success in this direction. However, he regretted the worrisome disturbances in the

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ UN to End Peacekeeping Mission in Ivory Coast, <https://www.dw.com/en/un-to-end-peacekeeping-mission-in-ivory-coast/a-19223843>, accessed on November 18 2020.

⁶ UNOCI Reaffirms its Military Impartiality, Press Release UNOCI -971; Transcript of an Interview Given to Afreelection by the Spokesman of UNOCI, Hamadoun Touré, Abidjan 14 February 2011.

western and northern parts of the country (Summary of Press Conference, 29 November 2010).⁷ Still in line with ensuring that social harmony and confidence was bestowed on the Ivorian people, UNOCI office insisted that the will of the Ivorian people must be upheld following the October 31 2010 presidential elections. This statement was made by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Cote-d'Ivoire Mr Y.J. Choi (Introductory Remarks, 1 November 2010). He assured the people of UN protection and certification of the vote of the winner in the second round of elections.

The UNOCI also protected the population through regular dissuasive patrols,⁸ medical assistance (Summary of UNOCI, 10 February 2011),⁹ monitoring, documenting and conducting inquiries into human rights abuses. This was to curb impunity (Summary of Press Conference, 13 December 2010). It also provided potable water and medical care to patients in times of crisis. Day and night patrols were organised in very sensitive and potentially violent areas. These actions protected civilians and humanitarian workers who were in immediate danger. In addition, UNOCI meticulously recorded and investigated all cases of human rights abuses that were reported to it and ensured or threatened that instigators and perpetrators would be held accountable. This was especially so for those who used heavy weapons against civilians after the post-electoral crisis of 2010 (Summary of UNOCI, 24 March 2011; Summary of UNOCI, 21 April 2011).¹⁰ In one such instance, Gbagbo security forces fired 81mm mortar shells into a market and the surrounding Abobo area which killed or maimed over 100 persons.¹¹ The UNOCI also comforted IDPs and assured them of the restoration of normal life. On a visit to an IDP camp in Cocody Abidjan on May 22 2011, UN Secretary General Ban-Ki-moon said that "I am very happy to meet you but also very sad because you have witnessed and lived through terrible things. But my heart is with you and I am here to show my solidarity and give you hope of a normal life."¹²

One other mission of UNOCI was to help build stable and acceptable

7 Head of UN Peacekeeping Operations Visits Cote d'Ivoire. Press Release UNOCI 952.

8 UNOCI Intensifies its Patrols, Press Release UNOCI – 947.

9 UNOCI Condemns Deadly Violence in Cote d'Ivoire, Press Release UNOCI – 981.

10 General Hafiz Looks Back with Pride at his Record as Head of UNOCI's Force, Press Release UNOCI – 986; UNOCI Concerned about the Use of Heavy Weapons against the Civilian Population in Abidjan, Press Release UNOCI – 985; UNOCI Deplores the Level of Post-Electoral Violence, Press Release UNOCI – 972.

11 81mm Shells Fired on Abobo Claimed about a Hundred Victims, UNOCI Says, Press Release UNOCI- 984.

12 United Nations Secretary General Visits Camp for Internally Displaced Persons, Press Release UNOCI, - 1020.

democratic institutions although this remained a serious problem during the elections of 2010. Mr Y. J. Choi, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, was unhappy with the Ivorian *Commission Electorale Indépendante* or the Independent Electoral Commission for not promptly releasing the results of the Presidential election of 2010 because of internal division among its members. As certifier of the elections on behalf of the UN Security Council and as was recognised by the Ivorian government, the tally sheets or the *procès verbaux* from all over the country showed that Alassane Ouattara defeated incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo. Explaining further, Mr Choi said that three methods of data were used to prove impartiality and professionalism in the certification of results according to the will of Ivorian people (Statement on the Second Round, 8 December 2010).¹³

Earlier on, Mr Choi assured a delegation of the Rally of Houphouetists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP) that UNOCI would take appropriate measures to correct any errors of the first round of voting for a successful second round (UNOCI Chief Discusses, 24 November 2010). He added that even if the complaints of the *Majorité Présidentielle* or Presidential Majority were taken into consideration, the winner was still the opposition candidate. This was in spite of the fact that a group of political actors wanted to thwart it for their own reasons (Retranscription du point de presse, 3 December 2010).¹⁴ Through the UN Special Representative therefore, it was clear that the president of the *Conseil Constitutionnelle* or Constitutional Council of Cote d'Ivoire, Mr Paul Yao N'Dre was not right in rejecting the results as proclaimed by the President of the Independent Electoral Commission Youssouf Bakayoko though belatedly.

The close supervision and certification of the 2010 presidential elections results in Cote d'Ivoire by UNOCI was appreciated in several quarters. For example, a delegation of the High Council of Kings and Traditional Chiefs of the country under the leadership of His Majesty Agnini Bilé of Djablin met on May 31 2011 to congratulate UNOCI for a job well done. The international community also supported the winner of the 2010 elections and traditional rulers expressed gratitude to UNOCI "for having saved democracy in the country" through patience, endurance, dedication and courage. This was against a background of many difficulties in the second round of voting. The UNOCI Special Representative of the UN Secretary General was also lauded by traditional rulers for UNOCI logistical support.

¹³ Y.J. Choi Responds to Questions on the Post-Electoral crisis from the Media in New York, Press Release UNOCI- 965.

¹⁴ UNOCI will Help Cote d'Ivoire Close the Post-Election Parenthesis, Press Release UNOCI – 956; UNOCI Chief Meets President Alassane Ouattara, Press Release UNOCI – 944.

It enabled kings and traditional chiefs to meet one another and for council members to attend many seminars.¹⁵ In fact, UNOCI gave full support to the Independent Electoral Commission by providing them with logistical, material and security support for smooth presidential elections in 2010. After elections, the Golf Hotel where Alassane Ouattara lodged and all his cabinet members were protected by UNOCI forces.¹⁶ On 21 May 2011 when he was inaugurated President, a glowing tribute was paid to the entire world and the United Nations in particular for solidarity and protection of democracy.¹⁷ Thanks to certification of this election by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General that the international community respected the November polls. This led to crisis recovery and the gradual stabilisation of Cote d'Ivoire.¹⁸

The restoration of peace was a core mission of UNOCI. Member countries of the United Nations that contributed troops and police promised to support the mission's effort to restore durable peace in Cote d'Ivoire after the second round of presidential elections in 2010. They also pledged material support for UNOCI to succeed in maintaining peace, security and protection of the population.¹⁹ This mandate would have succeeded more if Kings and traditional chiefs harkened to the call of UNOCI by asking their people to surrender many weapons in their keeping to relevant authorities. In this way peace and security would be guaranteed in the volatile Abidjan and other parts of the country.²⁰

Following the defeat of incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo, UNOCI played a pivotal role in convincing public opinion and the diplomatic community to recognise the verdict of the ballot box.²¹ It was also at the centre of security measures taken before and during the installation of Dramane Alassane Ouattara on May 21 2011. Peacekeepers were deployed to secure the airport and main routes in Yamoussoukro. They also provided security at the Houphouet Boigny Foundation, venue of the installation ceremony. The

15 UNOCI Chief Receives Kings and Traditional Leaders, Press Release UNOCI – 1027.

16 General Hafiz Looks Back with Pride at his Record as Head of UNOCI's Force, Press Release UNOCI – 986.

17 UN Secretary General Meets with President Ouattara after his Inauguration, Press Release UNOCI – 1017.

18 "Cote d'Ivoire: A Success Story for UN Peacekeeping Missions," <https://reliefweb.int/report/c-te-divoire/cote-d-ivoire-success-story-un-peacekeeping-missions>, accessed on November 18 2020.

19 Troops and Police Contributing Countries Welcome the Work Done by UNOCI. Press Release UNOCI 968.

20 UNOCI Chief Receives Kings and Traditional Leaders, Press Release UNOCI – 1027.

21 Déclaration de l'ONUCI a l'occasion des marches du RHDP.

overall responsibility of UNOCI was to ensure the success of the event. Other preventive measures prior to the installation were air and ground patrols and mixed patrols with the *Forces Republicaine de Cote d'Ivoire* (FRCI) (Summary of UN Weekly Press, 19 May 2011).²² This support was necessary for a hitch free installation ceremony.

Determined to preserve the lives of people in insecure areas because of ethnic origin, political leaning, religion or region, UNOCI remained in permanent contact with all active forces in Cote d'Ivoire. This was also motivated by a humanitarian catastrophe in Western Cote D'Ivoire following the disputed elections of 2010. The UNOCI deployed troops in Duékoué to protect over 10,000 IDPs in the Catholic Mission. It also provided protection for IDPs in camps at the Union of Evangelical Churches, Nazareth and St Joseph (Summary of UNOCI, 5 May 2011). Through intervention of UNOCI forces, lives of many local populations and foreign nationals were spared during fighting in different parts of the country. One hundred and fifty priests regained freedom in Abobo because of UNOCI intervention (Summary of UNOCI, 13 March 2011).²³ Regular patrols to protect the population were also carried out in places like Abobo, the main area of tension in the Ivorian commercial capital.²⁴ Preservation of lives remained a problem because of the absence of collaboration between UNOCI officials, security and political authorities. In one such instance in Abidjan in December 2010, security forces prevented these officials from investigating mass grave allegations (Summary of UNOCI, 20 December 2010). The UNOCI Head of Human Rights Division Simon Munzu expressed his disenchantment with this and argued that only UNOCI could tell the international community the truth about whether there was a mass grave or not.

It was also the responsibility of UNOCI to support civil society, grassroots groups and exchange views with political party representatives in order to build peace after the presidential election turmoil of 2010 (Summary of UNOCI, 12 May 2011). In one such instance, UNOCI supported the *Union generale des femmes de Bondoukou* peace crusade to reinforce social cohesion. It also supported the *Collectif des ONG et Associations de Bondoukou* in sensitisation sessions in the North East of Abidjan aimed at encouraging the population

22 Impartial Forces Prepare President Ouattara Investiture, Press Release UNOCI – 1013.

23 Inter-Agency Mission in the Western Cote d'Ivoire, More than 16000 Internally Displaced Persons, Press Release UNOCI – 958.

24 Ivorian Crisis at the Centre of Meeting of Heads of Peacekeeping Missions, Press Release UNOCI - 977

to preserve the peace.²⁵ It also organised awareness sessions for women to preserve peaceful post-election in Nagnenefoun (UNOCI Runs Awareness, 9 January 2011). Similarly, UNOCI programmed activities with youths of different political parties in different parts of the country in collaboration with all civil society sections (Summary of UNOCI, 27 January 2011) to build trust and re-engage people in peaceful co-existence. In addition, UNOCI was involved in sensitisation campaigns for example in the Worodougou region and Odienné to prepare the population for an end to the crisis, national reconciliation and social cohesion (Summary of UNOCI, 17 February 2011).

Besides, UNOCI was engaged in the disarmament and peace parade after the post-election violence of 2010. This was to defuse political impasse and return the country to normalcy. Apart from disarmament in army camps in the wake of Laurent Gbagbo's fall, 50 light weapons and 3000 ammunition were recovered including communication equipment by April 2011. The UNOCI clearance team was also involved in demining in Cocody to save the population. The exercise was extended throughout Cote d'Ivoire to diffuse explosive devices (Summary of UNOCI, 21 April 2011; Summary of UNOCI, 5 May 2011; Summary of UNOCI, 2 June 2011). The UNOCI organised on 14 April 2011 a peace parade across the streets of Abidjan, one of the cities where fighting and killing was a regular occurrence. It consisted of a caravan of a dozen cars. The aim was to pay homage to the Ivorian people yearning for an end to the political impasse and an improvement of security in the country.²⁶

Following the careful management of the post-electoral crisis of 2010, UNOCI through the Special Representative of UN Secretary General Y.J. Choi chose to protect the Golf Hotel and keep close to the population no matter the circumstance. The hotel's protection was to ensure that the government of elected President Ouattara should not relocate to Bouake which would further confirm the partition of Cote D'Ivoire into two.²⁷ In a meeting with the elected president, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General emphasised in clear terms that the mission of UNOCI was to protect the population at all cost and ensure the security of the new government trapped in the Golf Hotel.

Efforts to tone down the political climate in Cote d'Ivoire made UNOCI to consult different personalities including the Archbishop of Abidjan and

²⁵ UNOCI, NGOs Conduct Sensitisation for a Peaceful Post-Election Environment in Soko and Wélékéhi, Information Note 1030.

²⁶ UNOCI Organises Peace Parade through the Streets of Abidjan, Press Release UNOCI – 1007.

²⁷ Le Chef de L'ONUCI échange avec le Président Ouattara, Communiqué de Presse ONUCI – 970.

other religious authorities. Following the meeting with Archbishop Cardinal Jean Pierre Kutwa, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General intimated that “I came in search of spiritual guidance of the Cardinal during these difficult moments.”²⁸ Such was really a difficult moment because of heightened insecurity in many towns and cities of the country. On his part, the Archbishop of Abidjan told the press that “We tried, with the Special Representative, to see what could be done to save this nation. For us we are asking God to help us find what needs to be done. In this kind of situation, we have to look to God.”²⁹ The religious leaders of Cote d’Ivoire had generally established synergy in their action to ensure that candidates to the presidential elections of 2010 did not make any inflammatory statements (Summary of Press Conference, 4 November 2010). Unfortunately, this was not respected because the leaders were more concerned with power at whatever cost.

The UNOCI was also involved in security sector reforms with its peacekeeping forces once the threat posed by the post-election violence of 2010 was over and smooth presidential elections took place in 2015. It was a ten-year plan intended to help the Ivorian government to modernise its security services and keep abreast with new security challenges that might prop up in the future. Responsibilities were handed over to the ministries of Defense, Interior, and Solidarity and Social Cohesion, as well as the National Commission on Human Rights, National Police, and National Security Council by UNOCI.³⁰ This was to make them effectively implement and follow up security reforms to help contribute to the stability of the country.

Through various election-education efforts UNOCI was able to counter disinformation from politicians and other sectarian groups during electoral periods in Cote d’Ivoire. The information disseminated through its radio helped to reduce violence in one way or the other. It also contributed to forestall the spread of rumour by politicians and interest groups. There was also anti-immigration rhetoric and threats of eviction of aliens from ancestral land³¹ and UNOCI intervened through its educational programmes to counter these. Its other educational programmes encouraged Ivorians to forget

28 UNOCI Chiefs Discusses Post-Electoral Situation with Archbishop of Abidjan, Press Release UNOCI -946.

29 Ibid.

30 Colleen Traughber, “A Peacekeeping Success Story in Côte d’Ivoire,” <http://2007-2017-blogs.state.gov/stories/2016/12/08/peacekeeping-success-story-c-te-d-ivoire.html>, accessed on November 18 2020.

31 Hannah Smidt, “Mitigating election violence locally: UN peacekeepers’ election-education campaigns in Côte d’Ivoire,” <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0022343319884993>, accessed on November 18 2020.

grudges and promote forgiveness prior to the 2015 elections. UNOCI officials educated Ivorians on the importance of peaceful co-existence that would lead to development of their villages. All these continued to nurture the climate of peace and stability which was necessary for the people's collective good.

Following efforts to resolve the Ivorian crisis, the Security Council engaged in various strategies including diplomatic engagement through regional mediation efforts of ECOWAS and the AU. It also ensured the deployment of a regional force as well as supported simultaneous deployment of a French force (*Opération Licorne*) to work in cooperation to bring about peace in Cote d'Ivoire and protect the population. There was also implementation of an arms and diamonds embargo and targeted sanctions against troublemakers causing mayhem across the country. A commission of inquiry for human rights abuses was established and defaulters were promised extradition to the International Criminal Court.³² These combined measures helped to ease tension but also fuelled a tension of its own kind.

The mellowing down of post-election violence and firm installation of Ouattara as President, made UNOCI to turn attention towards disarming ex-combatants especially in Abobo and Yopougon. It equally accompanied the Ivorian people in handling sticky issues like national identity which brought about the crisis. This was done in the first two weeks of June by the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Division of the mission. During this time, ex-combatants handed over weapons to UNOCI. The collection of arms all over the country was to build confidence in the security sector of Cote d'Ivoire during the post-crisis period. It would also facilitate reconstruction and revival of the economy for everyone's good (Summary of UNOCI, 16 June 2011). UNOCI accompanied the country in the organisation of a constitutional referendum on the identity issue which was at the root of the Ivorian crisis.³³ These lofty intervention measures of UNOCI notwithstanding, the challenges and criticisms to overcome were overwhelming and frustrating to say the least.

Challenges and Criticisms

32 "Cote d'Ivoire: A Success Story for UN Peacekeeping Missions," <https://reliefweb.int/report/c-te-divoire/cote-d-ivoire-success-story-un-peacekeeping-missions>, accessed on November 18 2020.

33 Role of the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire Special Report of the Secretary General, United Nations Security Council S/2018/958; Ivory Coast United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) African Politics, African Peace, World Peace Foundation, 6.

In spite of UNOCI intervention to avert a political impasse and make Cote d'Ivoire secure for all its citizens there were challenges to overcome. One of these were accusations and attacks on the Blue Helmets by the people and government of Gbagbo. On 29 December 2010 for instance, angry youths attacked the Blue Helmets in Abobo Abidjan. These peacekeepers fired shots in the air to safely return to base. The *Radio Television Ivoirienne* (RTI) gave a different picture of what actually happened. Similarly, while stationed at the entrance to the Pullman Hotel and waiting to receive the Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga on a peace mission to Cote d'Ivoire on behalf of the African Union (AU), UNOCI forces were shot at by pro-Gbagbo youths. The same radio station carried a distorted version of things in the evening of the same day.³⁴ Similarly, on 10 January 2011, a food convoy to the Golf Hotel accompanied by an UNOCI escort was attacked by a group of youths from the Gbagbo camp. Several such provocative attacks took place between 10 and 13 January 2011 and beyond and forced UNOCI forces to fire back.³⁵ UNOCI was disappointed with the RTI and untoward attitude of Gbagbo boys. This state owned media house propagated a hate campaign and anti UNOCI-propaganda which made a segment of the population to discredit its activities.

Furthermore, some hostile segments of the population and political leaders were against UNOCI because it certified the results of the second round of voting to favour the opposition candidate Alassane Ouattara instead of the incumbent Laurent Gbagbo (Summary of Press Conference, 29 December 2010; Summary of Press Conference, 9 December 2010). UNOCI was accused of siding with one camp therefore becoming partial in the case (Transcript of an Interview, 14 February 2011). Leaders of the UN operation appealed for calm and categorically stated that UNOCI would bring lasting peace to Cote d'Ivoire because that was the mission.³⁶ This appeal notwithstanding, attacks multiplied against UNOCI, one of which was from the Gbagbo camp. It accused it of killing a policeman at Daloa, transporting, equipping and accommodating non-UN troops and setting up a television channel for President Ouattara's camp. These accusations were roundly condemned by UNOCI whose authorities in Cote d'Ivoire reiterated their determination to protect civilians and help the country find a permanent solution to the post-election crisis.³⁷

34 Forces from President Gbagbo's Camp Shoot at UNOCI Peacekeepers in charge of Security of Kenyan's Prime Minister's Delegation, Press Release UNOCI – 964.

35 Physical Attack against UNOCI Personnel and Property, Press Release UNOCI – 961; A New Media Campaign against UNOCI, Press Release UNOCI – 957.

36 UNOCI Peacekeepers did not shoot at the crowd at Abobo, Press Release UNOCI – 955.

37 UNOCI Denounces the Gbagbo Camp's New Propaganda Phase, Press Release UNOCI –

Other challenges for UNOCI to execute its mission were in the humanitarian domain in places like the Abidjan neighbourhoods of Yopougon and Abobo and parts of the western region. Human rights abuses were also common (Summary of UNOCI, 28 April 2011). In Duékoué for example, the Catholic parish was overwhelmed with numbers of displaced persons especially women and children. It barely provided them with water and electricity. Girls resorted to prostitution to survive (Information Note, 30 March 2011). This was the aftermath of the presidential elections of 2010. Following post-election violence, some pro-Gbagbo youths attacked and killed others. In one such instance in the Riviera area of Abidjan, a young boy had a tyre put on his neck and burnt. They also unleashed attacks on UNOCI staff. While on a reconnaissance flight above Duékoué in March 2011, a UN helicopter was fired at by the *Forces Republicaines de Cote d'Ivoire* (FRCI) although it did not hit it.³⁸ Faced by this, UNOCI continuously reminded those who were engaged in impunity that the time was coming when they would pay for their crimes.³⁹

Several attempts were made to prevent movement of UNOCI forces and its headquarters was attacked. This affected the efficacy of its work. There were also repeated acts of aggression against UNOCI troops and officials which were handled with tact (Summary of UNOCI, 11 March 2011).⁴⁰ Regular clashes between competing forces acted as a bulwark to the success of UNOCI in Cote d'Ivoire. Civilians blocked its forces from free movement. UNOCI peacekeepers laboriously dismantled barricades and dispersed excited young people. They used teargas to move on like on 26 and 27 January 2011 when getting into Abidjan.⁴¹ Communal violent clashes between Defence and Security Forces, militia, mercenaries on the one hand and Republican Forces of Cote d'Ivoire (FRCI) and *dozos* (traditional rulers) on the other hand (Summary of UNOCI, 26 May 2011) often set the hand of the clock backwards. It took tact, diplomacy and other intervention measures for UNOCI to bring the situation under control. The headquarters of UNOCI was also attacked by pro-Gbagbo Special Forces in April 2011 with consequences on the neighbouring Attecoubé settlement which was condemned by the

975.

³⁸ UNOCI Condemns Attack on its Helicopter by the Forces Republicaines, Press Release UNOCI – 987.

³⁹ UNOCI Denounces the Killing of Innocent Civilians, Press Release UNOCI – 988.

⁴⁰ Video-Conference by Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cote d'Ivoire; UNOCI Deplores Ambush on Peacekeepers in Abidjan, Press Release UNOCI – 959.

⁴¹ UNOCI Deplores Continuous Attempts to Hinder its Movements, Press Release UNOCI-967.

UNOCI leadership in Cote d'Ivoire.⁴²

Another challenge and difficulty for UNOCI was misinterpretation of its recognition of matches organised by the *Rassemblement des Houphouetistes pour la democratie et de la paix* (RHDP) and certification of presidential results of 2010. There was also competition in claims of military support. The UN Secretary General's Special Representative argued that contesting parties misconstrued the role of UNOCI to safeguard results of elections so that only the person declared President of Cote d'Ivoire became President. One of the camps claimed that UNOCI did not help it with military force and the other said that it was supporting the other camp militarily. This led to frequent attacks on UNOCI patrol teams as well as erection of checkpoints by President Gbagbo uniform officers on the access road to the Golf Hotel to block UN vehicles including UNOCI ambulance carrying medical personnel. These checkpoints were to deny access to food and water supply trucks to the Golf Hotel and probably staff the people to death. Blue Helmets and civilians were deprived of food and medicines. In addition, the public media accused UNOCI of supporting marches of the RHDP. These claims were denied by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General. There were also intimidations on UN staff asking them to leave Cote d'Ivoire (Summary of Press Conference, 20 December 2010).

A serious challenge that persistently undermined the restoration of peace and protection of Ivorians was the distribution of arms among the population, intransigence of political actors and irresponsible actions of the public and private media (Summary of UNOCI, 13 January 2011). The proliferation of arms frustrated attempts at restoring lasting peace in Cote d'Ivoire. Young boys used these to terrorise the population and this increased the number of IDPs especially in the western and northern parts of the country. The intransigence of the Gbagbo and Ouattara camps delayed the peace process and national reconciliation in Cote d'Ivoire. Marches of the RHDP became a time boom and pro-Gbagbo militia attacked UNOCI troops. The media did not also help matters because while the pro-government RTI became the government's mouthpiece, the private media sympathised with RHDP. This made the press not to play the role of the fourth arm of power in a crisis situation.

In several quarters UNOCI was accused of partiality. The intervention of its forces in the post-electoral crisis in April 2011 together with French military forces and forces loyal to Ouattara to arrest Laurent Gbagbo and

⁴² UNOCI HG Continues to Come under Fire from Gbagbo's Special Forces, Press Release UNOCI – 998.

disgrace him in public was roundly confirmed by militants of Gbagbo's party, the *Front Populaire Ivoirien* (FPI). They questioned UNOCI's impartiality in the political crisis in Cote d'Ivoire. As militants and sympathisers of the FPI chastised UNOCI, adherents of the *Rassemblement des Republicains* (RDR) of Alassane Ouattara and its allied partner the PDCI, were in jubilation.⁴³ The intensity of violence was exacerbated by support for Ouattara working with France, former coloniser of Cote d'Ivoire whose ties with her former colonies were always in the spotlight.

Virulent criticisms notwithstanding, UNOCI defended its action against Gbagbo's compound and weaponry. It argued that this was a proactive measure to protect civilians in Abidjan from the indiscriminate shooting of Gbagbo forces. Besides, his party violated the peace agreement and UNOCI could not stand by and compromise peace. The Security Council in Resolution 1975 gave UNOCI a stronger mandate and with support of French troops tried to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. In clarifying UNOCI involvement on 11 April 2011, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon intimated that "The United Nations, together with [French] forces, have... been trying to prevent heavy weapons from killing the civilian population, and we really had to defend the United Nations peacekeepers' safety and security... This is exactly what we did in accordance with the Security Council mandate."⁴⁴ However, this was condemned by the Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov who thought that the peacekeepers went too far in their operation.

After the closure of UN operations in Cote d'Ivoire on 30 June 2017, the security situation remained fragile. Although post-war revival was rapid, withdrawal took place amidst impunity, a fractured and mutiny-prone army which threatened the long-term stability of this economic giant of French West Africa. It was a sign that peace remained tentative (Novosseloff 2018). Although Ouattara brought about fast economic recovery with international investors streaming into the country, there were problems of a different kind. A wave of army mutinies spelled doom for the country. It clearly exposed the government inability to have a grip on the military put together in the wake of war. It was also clear that the government needed to address the pervasive immunity and army lack of discipline. Former rebels in the army asked for bonuses and on two occasions forced the government to bend backwards as

43 Hannah Smidt, "Mitigating election violence locally: UN peacekeepers' election-education campaigns in Côte d'Ivoire," <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0022343319884993>, accessed on November 18 2020.

44 Rebecca Friedrichs, "Côte D'Ivoire: UN Peacekeeping, Impartiality and Protection of Civilians," <https://www.stimson.org/2011/cote-divoire-un-peacekeeping-impartiality-and-protection-civilians/>, accessed on November 18 2020.

violence spread across towns and cities. The 2007 peace deal that brought key rebel leaders into the administration still showed that deep divisions remained even with the departure of the UN peace operations in Cote d'Ivoire.

In expression of fear about the future of Cote d'Ivoire after UNOCI, a student in Abidjan argued that "The U.N. mission should stay in place a few more years during the process of reconciliation and restructuring the army." To buttress his argument, he said that "The seeds that led to the previous crisis are gradually re-emerging."⁴⁵ This incident revealed that Cote d'Ivoire was still grappling with a longstanding culture of impunity, needing to reform security services, strengthen the rule of law and heal political wounds that divided the country into the rebel controlled north and government controlled south. Army commanders and leaders implicated in a decade of serious human rights violations on both sides of the military-political divide had not been held to account for their acts at the time UNOCI was leaving the country.⁴⁶ It was therefore not a surprise when the 2020 elections led to many deaths. Ouattara defied all odds, modified the constitution and ran for a third term in office. The country's security services remain highly polarised and a time boom. Were any lessons learnt from the UN operations in Cote d'Ivoire for over thirteen years?

Lessons Learnt?

The UNOCI was in Cote d'Ivoire from 2004 to 2017 lasting over thirteen years during which period it tried to ensure free and fair elections in the country, strengthened the country's fragile institutions, protected the civilian population and built some level of trust among the Ivorian people. Prior to the downsizing and eventual departure of UNOCI, several issues were raised based essentially on the experience in the field. These issues were meant to keep the peace in the country especially after the successful and peaceful presidential elections of 2015 and legislative elections of 2016. The country had been transformed into a peace haven so to speak and there was a seeming need for opportunity and prosperity for all. UNOCI was also proud to have built trust with civil society organisations in Cote d'Ivoire and the government which they hoped would continue after its mission would have

45 "UN Ends Peacekeeping Mission in Ivory Coast," <https://www.voanews.com/africa/un-ends-peacekeeping-mission-ivory-coast>, accessed on November 18 2020.

46 Joe Bavier, "U.N. Closes Ivory Coast Mission, Security Remains Fragile," <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ivorycoast-un-peacekeepers-idUSKBN19LiVK>, accessed on November 18 2020.

ended in the country. The stability of the country came at an enormous cost among which was the death of over one hundred and fifty military and civilian personnel of the United Nations.

The authorities of Cote d'Ivoire were called upon to sustain the peace to avert such from happening again. The economy of Cote d'Ivoire had been rebuilt and the citizens of the country should feel the benefit brought by peace for social development. There was an appeal for a smooth power alternation in the presidential elections of 2020 if the country was to remain on the path of peace and prosperity and to strengthen its democratic institutions.⁴⁷ Other issues UNOCI advised Ivorian authorities to take into consideration were the opportunity to focus on social cohesion, transitional justice, and inclusive economic growth. It was also time to use the hard-won peace and stability to focus on long-term development in the country.⁴⁸

After the announcement of the UN withdrawal of over 6000 peacekeepers in Cote d'Ivoire, a flurry of statements were made to the effect that all had been well and that the country was going to do well. The French Ambassador to the UN opined that the lifting of sanctions showed "the amazing path taken by Ivory Coast on the way to peace, reconciliation and security."⁴⁹ On his part, the Ivorian Ambassador to the UN Bouah-Kamon said that his "country would now focus on implementing military modernization and security reforms."⁵⁰ The question that arises today is how far has the country gone in this direction. Ouattara heated the political atmosphere again with his penchant to cling on to power. The cracks between the north and south are still visible and political hawks continue to play with the people of Cote d'Ivoire through their age-old grievances against one another. The security sector is still volatile and if not properly handled may spell greater doom for the country. Therefore, there is a need to build on the foundation that was established by UNOCI and learn from its mistakes so that Cote d'Ivoire might regain its stability of the yesteryears once and for all.

47 Statement by Ambassador Peter Wilson, UK Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on the situation in Cote d'Ivoire, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-united-nations-operation-in-cote-divoire-will-close-after-13-years-of-service-in-that-time-cote-divoire-has-been-transformed>, accessed on November 18 2020.

48 Colleen Traughber, "A Peacekeeping Success Story in Côte d'Ivoire," <http://2007-2017-blogs.state.gov/stories/2016/12/08/peacekeeping-success-story-c-te-d-ivoire.html>, accessed on November 18 2020.

49 UN to End Peacekeeping Mission in Ivory Coast, <https://www.dw.com/en/un-to-end-peacekeeping-mission-in-ivory-coast/a-19223843>, accessed on November 18 2020.

50 Ibid

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have examined the role that the UN through its peacekeeping operations played in contributing to the return to peace by addressing the socio-political problems of Cote d'Ivoire though not without serious challenges and criticisms. Through its numerous activities, UNOCI tried to protect the population, build a viable civil society, provide humanitarian assistance, security sector reforms, voter education among others. The mission was set up in Cote d'Ivoire because of the failure of parties to respect a cease-fire agreement and the selfish and egotistical disposition of political actors in the country among other issues. The UN establishment of a peace mission saw it address a number of things and by the time that its mandate was over, a lot had been done and the Ivorian authorities were made to understand that there were still sticky issues to be addressed and followed up. The recent crisis following Ouattara's re-election contrary to the constitution which he modified shows that the country is at the brink of a precipice and it would take courage for the political class to sink differences and truly call for national reconciliation which provide an enabling socio-political climate congenial for Cote d'Ivoire to truly bounce back to the enviable position of the economic giant of West Africa putting Nigeria aside.

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we argue that the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Cote D'Ivoire contributed to the return of peace in the country but encountered enormous challenges and scathing criticisms. The mission was established in April 2004 with the aim of normalising the tense political atmosphere in a divided country where rebel forces (*Forces Nouvelles*) controlled Northern Cote D'Ivoire and government forces controlled the Southern part of the country. The mission was to build community security, trust in the people and institutions and protect human rights in a country torn apart by civil war. Prior to the 2002-2003 cease-fire agreement between belligerents, Cote D'Ivoire's political terrain was heavily polluted with no agreement on almost every sticky issue. This widened regional and political cracks in the country and the despicable human rights situation re-ignited political violence. Besides, prior electoral concertation fuelled mistrust among politicians and indiscipline reigned supreme in the army threatening peace. Army commanders had soiled their hands in illicit natural resource exploitation and soldiers erected clandestine checkpoints to extort money from the population. Gender-based violence was rife and mercilessly gullible political hawks did not protect the population. Through a content analysis of essentially documents produced by the UN operations in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) we conclude that it was able to navigate through numerous hurdles amidst accusations, counter accusations and virulent criticisms.

KEYWORDS

UNOCI, Cote D'Ivoire, Peacekeeping Operations, Civil War, Human Rights

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CAN SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM IN IR SHAPE FOREIGN POLICIES? A CASE OF NORTH KOREA-CHINA RELATIONS

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Introduction

Why are North Korea and China still considered blood brothers in Northeast Asian politics? The answer to this question lies in the symbolic relations this paper addresses. North Korea lies as a buffer zone in Northeast Asia, with an area of only 120,540 sq km, smaller than the Jilin Province of China, which shares most of its border with the estuary of the Yalu River. It is important to understand North Korean culture, which is distinctive in its history and its strong connection to China when it comes to the “Korean War” (1950-53), rather than how realists perceive material factors, using a ‘balance of power’ or ‘threat’ assumption. Observing these North Korean relations through material factors leads to incomplete understanding because it ignores the social and cultural connection that persists between the DPRK (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea or North Korea) and the PRC (People’s Republic of China or China), which may be attributable to longstanding historical and symbolic connections. The DPRK and the PRC share ‘lips and teeth’ relations, especially from the Korean War of 1950-1953. In North Korea, this friendship is referred to as young ch’inson (Korean-Chinese friendship), and in China, this relationship is referred to as the Chinese-DPRK youyi (友谊) or Kunshan (親善) (Kwon, Heonik 2013). About 2 million ethnic Koreans live in and around China’s Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture (Kim, 2003, p. 103). North Korea and China have had a common symbolic understanding of “blood-brothers” since the 1950s (Yoon & Lee, 2013, p. 19). The denomination of “blood-brothers” originates from their military alliance during the Korean War. Officially, the relationship between these two states also symbolizes “lips

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and teeth relations,” addressing North Korea and China’s deep bond.²

The Korean War started with the North Korean forces at 4 a.m. on Sunday marching toward South Korea from the Uijongbu Corridor on June 25, 1950, in an attempt to reunite Korea (Thomas & Abbott, 1986, p. 3). The South Korean army, on the other hand, was, however, successful in pushing back North Korean soldiers, not on their own, but with the help of the US. This led China to be active on its borders, aiming to sweep out any foreign hegemony in Northeast Asia. During the night of October 19, 1950, more than 360,000 Chinese People Volunteers crossed the Yalu River to rescue their symbolic North Korean brothers. Lee Kwon-mu reports in the newspaper *Rodong Sinmun*, with the title “Invincible Ties between the Korean and Chinese Peoples Cemented with Blood,” highlighting the friendship and solidarity during the patriotic liberation war of the Korean people.³ Many analysts, however, fail to elaborate on explaining North Korea-China relations as an alliance or assume from the realist model of a ‘balance of power’ and ‘balance of threats.’ The realist further views that the state is self-interested and motivated by the desire for survival and security (Slaughter, 2011, pp. 1-2). The existing literature has extensive work on North Korea-China relations as an “Asymmetric Alliance” or “Comradeship” or “Special Relationship” (Dwivedi, 2012; Cho, 2021; Hoshino & Hiraiwa, 2020). This literature has focused on the “problem of economics,” “problem of war,” or “problem of communism versus capitalism,” which leads the state to group up in their support. All these issues also contribute to understanding North Korea’s symbolic relations, but they fall short of explaining the stronger ties that are the product of social construction. Ignoring social differences has led to a lack of understanding at many levels: social categorization, ethnic violence, migration problems, and, most importantly, cultural-based politics etc.

According to Jonathan Corrado (2021), Western (mainly US) policymakers failed to predict China’s interest in the Korean War and North Korea’s socio-cultural connection with China (Corrado, 2021, p. 1). Asmolov (2020) asserts that the Chinese government recalls the Korean War as China nobly defending North Korea from external invasion. Moreover, the Korean War was perceived as a war against China itself, which the West assisted in terms of escalation of the war against the entire communist world. He argues that China’s entry into the Korean War was thus reflected not as a conflict

2 Xinhua News, Liu Yushan visits North Korea. October 9, 2015. URL: <http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/cnleaders/liuyunshan/lys201510chx/yw.htm> (accessed: 21.06.2021).

3 FBIS Daily Report, Foreign Radio Broadcasts, FBIS-FRB-55-062 on 1955-03-30, under the heading (s): North Korea (1955: FFF3). URL: http://phwo1.newsbank.com/cache//fbis2/fullsize/sp_1315B186B9EBAAD0.pdf (accessed: 23.02.2018).

but as a preventive measure toward World War III.⁴ It was perceived as a defensive measure that gradually constructed the idea of comradeship.

I argue that the constructivist explanation can be suitable for explaining the dynamics of North Korean and China relations because they look at the history and social dynamics within states for its outcome. Social constructivists view “anarchy as what the State makes of it” as the normative factors that lead the State to demonstrate its actions. The constant social interactions between North Korean and Chinese leaders throughout the Chinese Civil War (1927-49) and Korean War (1950-53) pushed them to gain a deeper understanding of assimilation with each other’s culture, ideas, and ideology than compared to a less interacted world. Mutual trust and cooperation through exchanging ideas and interests amongst states further developed to pursue peace. The constructivist explanation can better explain the dynamism of relations between North Korea and China by looking at the state’s history and social dynamics.

Conceptual Framework

The constructivist approach to international relations differs from the realist and liberal approaches in asserting that it rejects the material foundation of social interaction. Instead, it claims that social interactions create a shared understanding and shape material reality. In the larger spectrum, Social Constructivism in International Relations explains the epistemological claim that knowledge is socially constructed, the ontological claim that social reality is constructed, and the reflexive claim that knowledge and reality are mutually constitutive (Jung, 2019, p. 2). According to Alexander Wendt (1999), international relations is a socially constructed reality based on two basic constructivist tenets: 1) human association is determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and 2) an actor’s identities and interests are constructed by shared ideas rather than pre-given nature (Wendt, 1999, p. 1).

Constructivist theories look at social science, viewing how ‘reality,’ including the ‘interests’ that partly define the actor’s identity, is socially constructed (Katzenstein et al., 1998, p. 646). Robin O. Andreasen (2000), in his study, highlights race (Korean race, Yellow race, etc.) as socially constructed (Andreasen, 2000, p. 654). Social interactions create a shared understanding of daily life’s material reality or structures. In turn, those

4 Asmolv, K., “How Truthful is China’s Stance on the Korean War?”, *New Eastern Outlook*. Nov. 16, 2020. URL: <https://journal-neo.org/2020/11/16/how-truthful-is-china-s-stance-on-the-korean-war/> (accessed: 06.05.2022)

structures help reinforce or weaken new shared understanding. Wendt's (1992) article "Anarchy is what the State makes of it" suggests that anarchy in the international system is not a constructivist given but inherited by the system itself. Similarly, a state's existence is founded not on material foundations but on shared understanding and belief that gives meaning to those foundations. For example, the US maintains a nuclear stockpile of about 7,500 warheads, and Russia has a similar number; France has about 300 warheads, China about 250 warheads, the US about 200 warheads, India 100 warheads, Pakistan 100 warheads, Israel 80 warheads, and North Korea has approximately eight warheads. Each of these nuclear warheads could cause immense damage, quickly destroying a city like New York or San Francisco. However, why is it that we view North Korea's eight nuclear warheads as an existential crisis to the security of the US but express no concern over the UK's 200? Why is it that the US is so preoccupied with the threat posed by Iran's potential development of nuclear weapons but not with Israel's actual possession of them? Wendt offers a possible explanation: States act differently toward enemies than they do toward friends because enemies are threatening and friends are not. Each country's foreign policy can be seen in part, at least as a reflection of the nation's history and shared understanding of it.

A constructivist argues that these ideas and interests matter in international relations. They reject realist assertions about the nature of the international system being a given and the self-help and survival requirements that flow from that claim. They are also critical of liberal assertions about the inherent possibility of cooperation and the overriding concern with protecting human rights and establishing a liberal international order. Indeed, constructivists argue that ideas and identities shape national identities, foreign policy goals, and all international relations. Political culture, the nature of government, history, and domestic politics can all shape national identities, which can be unique to specific countries. The state has identities, and nation-states are not all alike. North Korea and China look very different from the identities of South Korea and the US. Moreover, as a result, the state behaves in different ways.

Constructivism also gives us a way to think about the role of norms in global politics. Norms are standards of appropriate behavior for specific actors in international relations, which lead to how actors ought to behave. Norms are not necessarily codified in international law, and norms serve as a guide for the behavior of a state. Norms emerge with individual actors promoting ideas about how the international system should function and what it ought to be. Through persuasion, they can convince other actors, eventually states and international organizations, of the importance of those norms. The

norms became operationalized through practice, and norms of “lips and teeth relations” or “blood brother” encouraged North Korea and China to support each other during the Korean War.

Thus, collective meaning constitutes the structures around which we organize our actions. Such shared understanding also plays out domestically, affecting foreign policy and decision-making. Following are the takeaways regarding social constructivism: 1) First, identity matters, and beliefs about the international system shape its function and structure, as well as its reality. 2) The interests of actors should not be taken as a given; instead, they should be viewed as reflections of their identities and based on perceptions that can change over time. 3) Interest is not there to be discovered; it is constructed through social interaction. 3) Norms are important; shared understanding, that is, norms of expected behavior, can shape or constrain the behavior of actors in the international system. This paper will use the constructivist approach and focuses on the following basic assumptions in North Korean relations: i) North Korean and Chinese interaction is not shaped by material factors but primarily by ideational ones; ii) the most significant ideational factors in this context are the inter-subjective belief of ‘blood brothers’ or “lips and teeth relations”; iii) and these beliefs construct the actor’s identities and interest.

The ideational factors in the transition of North Korea and China relations. A constructivist has no single design or method for interpreting inter-subjective discourse. They choose the method and analytical tools best suited to the research question with the help of process tracing, interviews, participation observation, content analysis, etc., to capture intersubjective meanings (Finnemore & Sikkink, 2001). Conventional constructivism traditionally focuses on historical junctures, where new structural arrangements and interactions between existing structures and agents develop. For example, Iain Johnston developed a constructivist argument to explain China’s consistent militant security strategy (Katzenstein et al., 1998, p. 676). Conventional constructivists follow the methodological tasks of nationalist or utilitarian camps, gathering evidence and asserting it with an explanation. The paper will explain North Korean and Chinese relations, highlighting social and cultural meanings through the lens of conventional constructivism (Startt & Sloan, 2003). The Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) reports and the *Pyongyang Times* newspaper (weekly newspaper) are contextually studied to collect the data and follow the pattern. It helps us to link why North Korea and China were considered the “blood-brother” or “lips and teeth relations” from the social constructivism approach.

State as Socially Constructed

To understand North Korea as a social construct, we need to understand how States are socially constructed. The material factor of a State primarily is its territory, population, economy, etc., but States are also created by ideas (communism), culture (secular, ethnic), and norms (rule of law). What makes North Korea – the North Korea? Is it the infrastructure? Or is it the military? Or is it the system of government? Constructivists argue that it is the shared sense of identity claimed by North Koreans. Moreover, it is a shared belief that comes from North Korean existence. In the international system, a state could not exist without its territory or territory without the state. However, when the international system changes, state borders also change, and people inside it adopt or find new identities and cultures based on its norms. This can be reflected in the translation biography of Kim Il Sung published from Pyongyang, which shows that he attended his secondary school in Jilin (Northeast China), known as the “Second Shanghai,” where Korean revolutionaries gathered. He gradually learned how to conduct and organize the peasants’ union in Xinantun, Jiangdong village, Kalun Dahuanggou, etc. (Foreign et al., 2008). Gradually, North Korean society officially adopted communist ideology after gaining its independence from Japanese rule, but before the revolutionary society was introduced in the 1920s. Most Koreans adopted the communist ideology with a background of peasants and freedom movement, who mainly had encountered the Russian and Chinese communist groups. For example, the Bolsheviks came to power in Russia (former USSR) in October 1917. The ‘Bolshevik Revolution’ gave the first impression of re-constructing identity through revolution upon the Korean peasants under ‘Japanese rule’ (1910-1945). Gradually, the new politically communist identity was seen as the identity of Korean society. Two communist parties amongst Korean groups were formed in the same year. In January 1918, the Korean Bolshevik Party (KBP) was formed in Irkutsk, Western Siberia, and in June 1918, the Korean Socialist Party (KSP) was formed in Khabarovsk, located in Eastern Siberia. Both Parties aimed at national liberation from the Japanese imperialist rule and searching for the construction of their own identity. The latter group moved to Shanghai in 1919, joining with other Korean nationals, and in 1925, the Korean Communist Party was formed (KCP) in Seoul (Kwon, 2010, pp. 286-287). In 1927, the KCP formed a united front of nationalists. In 1930, communist ideology amongst Koreans spread throughout the countryside, mobilizing the peasant and labor groups with the same interests of freedom and class struggle. In this event, Kim Il Sung (the first President of North Korea) was fighting against the Japanese ‘imperialist’ power under the

direction of the Chinese Communist Party. Throughout the years of the late 1930s and early 1940s, a group of Korean Communist comrades, other than Kim, including Il Yu, who would later become North Korea's Deputy Prime Minister, traveled to Yan-an (the "Red Capital" of the Chinese Communist Party), to join Chinese "War of Resistance" (China's freedom movement, 1937-1945) against imperialist Japan.

The existence of North Korea, in other words, rests not on any material foundations but on shared understanding and belief that gives those material foundations meaning. After the freedom struggle movement against Japanese rule, the Northern part of Korea was under Soviet occupation from 1945 to 1948, giving a victorious mark to communist ideology. However, after the establishment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on September 9, 1948, communist ideologies flourished in North Korea. In June 1949, the idea of a unified communist party, the Korean Workers Party (KWP), was established with the plan to merge North and South communist parties. Kim Il Sung was unanimously elected as Chairman, and Pak Hon Young was the Vice-Chairman of North Korea (Kwon, 2010, p. 288). The party membership increased dramatically from 0.0005 percent (4,530 members) in 1945 to 8 percent in the year 1948 (725,762 members) (ibid. 290). Most KWP members were peasants without previous political experience (Kwon, 2010, pp. 288-291). There were altogether five major political factions noticed: 1) the indigenous nationalists, 2) the domestic communists, 3) returnees from China, known as the Yan-an faction, 4) returnees from the Soviet Union, called the Soviet faction, and 5) Kim Il Sung's followers who had participated in guerrilla activities, called the Kapsan faction or the Partisan group. Many policy disputes and controversial reports were circulated by the party newspaper *Rodong Sinmun*, the mouthpiece of KWP (Kim, 1975, pp. 65-76). Kim Il Sung eliminated the Yan-an group in 1956, the Soviet group between 1957 and 1959, and his Kapsan group in 1967 in the power struggle (Lee, 1995, pp. 17-19). Social constructivism explains how leaders construct ideas and make decisions that become a reality. With this view, reality itself is constructed over time. When the leader comes up with a contested idea, and if it survives, it becomes the reality of the State. Also, the construction of any political party is accomplished by ideas accepted by a vast majority of society (Horton, 2020, p. 13). Social Constructivism defines this idea as a concept developed over time through an 'intersection' of material, historical, and institutional factors (ibid).

North Korea and China in the Lens of Social Constructivism

In a systemic approach, a State allows cooperation in the “Prisoner’s Dilemma” context to avoid conflicts. Suppose these actors believe that cooperation is not only possible but beneficial. In that case, they will act accordingly to protect their interests (Binding, 2017, p. 19). Social constructivists have taken these views as constitutive of conflicts and peace or choosing friends throughout history, focusing on cultural aspects. Such explanations may help constructivists understand the pressure for political reform or radical political change. However, they do not explain why North Korea and China were closely connected during the Korean War. Timothy Hildebrandt (2003), in his report on “Uneasy Allies,” says that the “closer than lips and teeth” proverb was once used in propaganda to propagate stronger North Korea-China relations. For example, there are many similarities between the development of the Korean and Chinese communist movements. Korean communist movement development was seen in pre-1945, while the Chinese communist movement was seen before the emergence of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. Communist activities in both countries began between the late 1910s and early 1920s, when Korea was under Japanese colonial rule and China under semi-colonial rule. Both countries had traditional agricultural societies during that period and needed to modernize their semi-feudal societies. In both countries, revolutionary movements were led by the rural and peasant base, and intellectuals introduced the communist ideology. Ideology and norms emerge in a context of mutually constituted understanding. Norms emerge with individual actors promoting ideas (ideology) about how the international system should function and what it ought to be. Constructivists argue that North Korea and China eventually believed that they were communists. Alternatively, more importantly, they started acting as if communism was a struggle for them to achieve their goal. Freed from the structural constraints, individuals chose to identify as communists, and the power of identity and ideas for constructivists led to the formation of the “blood brother” metaphor in each other’s relations.

Two of the most cherished revolutionary songs in North Korea in the metaphorical song are *Song of Comradely Love* (1980) and *The Song of Korean-Chinese Friendship*, show well the morality of revolutionary comradeship arising from the hardship of anticolonial partisan struggles:

No matter how arduous the way may be, We shall climb over the hills of hardship.

No matter how strong the wind of fire may be, We shall stay together in life and death.

You cannot purchase, even with tons of gold, The boundless love of

comrades.

Let our resolve live forever, Looking up at the Single Star” (Kwon, 2013).

The Song of Korean-Chinese Friendship says

We are faithful brothers, blood-sharing comrades.

Our heart keeps intensely the amity of Korean-Chinese Friendship.

For our common purpose, hand in hand,

We march in step, singing our friendship song (ibid).

One of the essential cultural criteria is ‘ideology,’ which drives states to choose their friends and enemies. A person or group manufactures ideology to function and make decisions (Freeden, 2006, p. 20). Social constructivism reflects that ideology plays a pivotal role in a leader’s perception of threats and in shaping their interests (Jung, 2019, p. 6). It is remarked that Kim Il Sung and Mao Zedong’s friendship was based on the ideology of ‘Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.’ To this, Kim Il Sung calls it a ‘fighting alliance between class brothers’ (ibid). When neither the UN nor Chinese forces were willing to leave Korean soil, Zhou Enlai reiterated that ‘China now prepares itself for the Third World War.’ Daily Intelligence Summary (DIS) showed that 116,000 Chinese troops were present in Manchuria, followed by 217,000 to 246,000 in late September, with a possible strength of 450,000 men ready to fight as a rapid reaction force if needed.⁵ During the Korean War, the NKDP declassified documents showing China was also offering tactical instruction from September to October 1950 to Kim Il Sung to win a “protracted war.” This period resulted in a series of exchanges between Zhou and Ambassador Ni Zhiliang, who was also responsible for conveying Zhou’s remarks to Kim Il Sung. Zhou then sent a Chinese military observer to Korea and invited the North Korean leader, Pak Il-u, to China to get a detailed report from the ground.⁶ On February 11, 1950, Mao Zedong supported Kim’s army with additional equipment, such as aircraft and engines, aviation tools, ammunition, and

5 Cohen, E. A., “The Chinese Intervention in Korea”, Unclassified CIA Historical Review Program. 1950: page.56. URL: http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/44/1988-11-01.pdf (accessed: 24.06.2016).

6 Kraus, C. Zhou, “Enlai and China’s Response to the Korean War”, North Korea International Documentation Project, E-DOSSIER 9, 2012. URL www.wilsoncenter.org/nkidp (accessed: 21.05.2019).

models for making aircraft wheels. For the student's involvement in the fighting, the requisition paper signed by Mao Zedong on February 15, 1950, included 42 aircraft (20 IA 18, 10 R9, and 12 T2), 24 engines, 200 parachutes, and 10,000 rounds of ammunition, which General Liu Yalou ordered from General Shtemenko.⁷

There were 169 official visits between 1953 and 2019 among North Korean and Chinese delegates. A series of North Korean-level political visits were witnessed after the Korean War: five visits in the 1950s, two visits in the 1960s, six visits in the 1970s, and eighteen visits in the 1980s were recorded. These contacts indicated eleven 'friendly visits' (six from China), 20 'official visits' (with official friendly visits); five 'unofficial visits' were made (North Korea making three visits), including Kim Il Sung in a 1982 'state visit' and so on. *The Pyongyang Times* (Sep. 4, 2010) headline "Kim Jong Il pays unofficial visit to China" highlighted the visit of Kim to China accompanied by Vice Chairman of North Korea Kim Yong Chun, Kim Ki Nam, Thae Jong Su, Kang Sok Ju, Jang Song Thaek, Hong Sok Hyong, Kim Yok Il, Kim Yang Gon, Choe Ryong Hae, Kim Phyong Hae and Pak to Chun. On the Chinese side was Hu Jintao, accompanied by Ling Juhua, Dai Bingguo, Wang Jiarui, Yang Jiechi, Zhang Ping, Chen Deming, Liu Jieyi, and Liu Hongcai. The news reported that Kim Jong Il focused on the North Korean friendship during this visit, highlighting the unchanged ties despite the passage of time and generation. *The Pyongyang Times* reflects Hu Jintao's friendly relationship with North Korea. This period opened many doors for trade and commerce, education, and exchanging ideas and culture between the two states.

The delegations between the DPRK and PRC during the 1950s included 35 visits to China and 44 to North Korea, of which Kim Il Sung accompanied six essential visits. Social constructivists claim it as inter-subjectivity, where a shared understanding is developed among individuals whose interaction is based on shared interests that form their communication. This inter-subjectivity provides the platform for communication and supports each other in extending their understanding of new information and activities. Thus, knowledge of 'friendship,' 'partners,' or 'brotherhood' is derived from cultural interactions. This construction of knowledge is influenced by inter-subjectivity formed by cultural and historical factors of the community.

7 Document No. 1. Telegram from Zhou Enlai to Bulganin), (Source: Jianguoyilai Zhou Enlaiwengao (Zhou Enlai's Manuscripts since the Founding of the PRC), vol. 2, Zhonggongzhongyangwenxianyanjiushi (CPC Central Historical Documents Research Office) and Zhongyangdang'anguan (Central Archives), eds., (Beijing: Zhongyangwenxianchubanshe, 2008: 299-300. Translated by Jingxia Yang and Douglas Stiffler), NKIDP e-Dossier no. 9, April 13, 1950. URL www.wilsoncenter.org/nkidp (accessed: 20.09.2018).

The Korean War came to an end with the signing of an armistice on July 27, 1953, between the US, China, North Korea, and South Korea. However, it also marked a victory for the “blood brothers,” giving meaning to their social bonding. In his New Year message, Kim Il Sung addressed “all men and officers of the Chinese volunteer units” as ‘blood brothers.’⁸ His New Year message was widely broadcast from January 1-9, 1951.⁹ Likewise, the International Women’s Day message was addressed to leaders such as Stalin, Mao, and Kim Il Sung with heartfelt gratitude for the support and pledge, culminating in the final victory.¹⁰ Thus, leader’s images were portrayed as heroic symbols with a connection to each other cultures in the forms of “Beijing Operas” (*yangbanxi*) in the PRC and “revolutionary operas” (*hukmyung kageuk*) in the case of the DPRK (Kim, 2005, pp. 2-3). Mustapha Fersi (1983), in his work published from Pyongyang (the capital of North Korea), highlights the excerpt of Kim Il Sung’s interview with the Xinhua News Agency on April 23, 1981. In his own words, Kim says, “North Korea and China are neighbors linked by the same mountain and river. For ages, people have been close to comrades in arms and class brothers whose destinies are bound to each other in the socialist revolution and the construction of an example of proletarian internationalism.” He further says, “No force on earth can destroy the great friendship between the North Korea and Chinese people, which is sealed in blood in the flames of arduous revolutionary struggle” (Fersi, 1983, pp. 207-8). When the state councilor and minister of Public Security of China Meng Jianzhu visited North Korea in February 2011, he wrote in the visitors’ book, “Kim Il Sung will live in the hearts of the Chinese people” (*The Pyongyang Times*, Feb. 19, 2011)

North Korea and China in the Present Context

Even in the present context, DPRK leader Kim Jong Un and PRC President Xi Jinping vowed to strengthen cooperation on the anniversary of their treaty of friendship, which was signed on July 11, 1961. This friendship treaty was earlier signed due to South Korea’s installation of a military government in May 1961, which North Korea speculated as South Korea’s

8 Far East Survey, North Korea: “Fight on to attain the Final Victory,” January 5, 1951. URL: <https://archive.org/details/KoreanWarCIA> (accessed: 15.02.2018).

9 Far East Survey, North Korea: “Fight on to attain the Final Victory” (Continued), January 18, 1951. URL: <https://archive.org/details/KoreanWarCIA>. (accessed: 17.02.2018)

10 Far East Survey, North Korea: Continuing Faith in Ultimate Victory. March 15, 1951. URL: <https://archive.org/details/KoreanWarCIA> (accessed: 17.02.2018)

stronger ties with the US (Hoshino & Hiriwa, 2020, p. 20). According to the Seoul-based Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), bilateral trade increased between 2000 and 2015, whereas in 2014, it was at 6.86 billion USD (Albert, 2019).

The trade between North Korea and China has not been steady since the UN sanctions. However, a significant portion of North Korea's trade with third countries is hugely routed through China, which makes them rely on each other. Hoshino and Hiriwa (2020) further write that Beijing and Pyongyang have become more dependent on each other. They categorize dependency into four factors: national security, socialist ideology, traditional ties, and economic relations. On June 20, 2019, Xi Jinping visited Pyongyang, marking his first trip to North Korea. During his visit, he promised to build the new Yalu River Bridge, which was earlier promised by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in 2009 and stopped after only completing a 3 km span in 2015 at the cost of 350 million USD to China.¹¹

Despite North Korea getting economic benefits, the Pyongyang nuclear test in October 2006 moved Beijing to back the UN Security Council's decision on Resolution 1718 sanctions (ibid, 2019). With China's equal closer moves toward South Korea, continuous Pyongyang nuclear testing, etc., some have even predicted that North Korea and China no longer have "lips and teeth" relations.¹² Since the 2016 North Korea nuclear testing, South Korea became proactive in receiving THAAD (American anti-ballistic missile defense system) and worked close ties with the US. This was also because of China's reluctance to pressure North Korea while the former urged the international community to step in. China objected strongly when it viewed the deployment of THAAD in South Korea, which was seen as a threat to the Korean peninsula (Hoshino & Hiriwa, 2020, p. 26). This further assisted in continuing the ties' historical legacy in the geopolitical scenario.

Analysis of the Korean War

The Korean War is not just a part of political history; many war historians are still interested in socio-cultural factors and remember it

¹¹ Wertz, D., China-North Korea Relations, The National Committee on North Korea. Nov. 2019. URL: <https://www.ncnk.org/resources/briefing-papers/all-briefing-papers/china-north-korea-relations> (accessed: 4.10.2021)

¹² Wen, P. and Shepherd, C. 'Lips and teeth' no more as China's ties with North Korea fray, Reuters, September 8, 2017. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-missiles-china-idUSKCN1BJoIN> (accessed: 27.01.2022)

as psychological warfare, which further constructed the ideas of cultural relations (Hong, 2018, pp. 244-245). Both North and South Korea circulated approximately 2.5 million propaganda leaflets or flyers during the Korean War, reflecting the views of cultural-historical connections, but this is also another part of 'ideational' studies. Hong (2018) asserts that it was the first time the US army met Communist propaganda, which led multidisciplinary scholars to investigate the Korean War history and DPRK and PRC ties (ibid). Furthermore, earlier research, including governmental reports, has provided significant information about psychological warfare, though most of it is from Western perspectives, primarily from the United States (Kim & Haley, 2018, p. 938). Others who studied from a cultural perspective understood that the communist propaganda was far better than the UN propaganda. Chung (2004) divided the information offered in the Korean War propaganda into two broad categories: i) personal interests and ii) politics and ideologies. This earlier research provides some insight into Korean War propaganda regarding its themes. Schneider and Ingram (1993) assert that social constructions influence the policy agenda, tools, and rationale that legitimizes policy choices. They claim that communists tried to focus more on building their soldiers' faith and staying focused. At the same time, the UN propaganda centered more on presenting information of their superiority based on their advanced weapons (ibid).

From the *Pyongyang Times*, through the lens of constructivism, one can see that the relations between North Korea and China are seen as socially constructed. Social constructivism illustrates the social reality as those 350 Chinese nuclear weapons are less threatening to North Korea than five American THAAD acquired by South Korea. These reflect that it is not about the nuclear weapon or ballistic missile (material power) but rather by giving meaning to the material structure (ideational structure). In this view, the social relationship between North Korea and China and the US and South Korea is perceived in the shared understanding (inter-subjectivity) based on their interactions. Thus, it shows that nuclear weapons or missiles do not have meaning unless we understand them through social context, and it changes over time depending upon the ideas and beliefs of an actor.

This agency and structure are mutually constructed, which implies that structure influences agency and agency influences structure. From the lens of constructivism, the social reality of "lips and teeth relations" or "blood brothers" between North Korea and China represents the inter-subjective structure (shared ideas and beliefs of both states), where North Korea and China are the actors who can change the existing structure or social relationship of friendship. This change depends upon the beliefs and ideas

of States. This belief system is, however, constructed constantly through the cultural industry. For example, the *Pyongyang Times* (Aug. 28, 2010) reports that the Chinese businessman Zhang Joangrong, who was working in North Korea, noticed three Korean girls drifting near the seashore of Rason City (Kwanbuk region of North Korea). He and his friend Yuan Xinwang rushed to rescue the girls but unfortunately lost their own lives. This incident marked Zhang as a heroic figure in North Korea and praised the legacy of North Korea and China's friendship from generation to generation. In North Korea, this friendship content is called young chains (Korean-Chinese friendship); in China, this relationship is called the "youyi or Kunshan" (PRC-DPRK ties). The role of ideas is crucial in constructing social life, and it is centrally concerned with the social rather than the material (Cho, 2009, p. 79). The history of the Chinese soldiers in the Korean War is continuously remembered through postal stamps issued in North Korea. The State Stamp Bureau issued official stamps marking the 60th anniversary of Chinese people's volunteers in the Korean War to keep the two sides' history alive (*The Pyongyang Times*, Sept. 18, 2010). The construction of the Sino-North Korean Friendship Bridge at the Yalu River between North Korea and China sets another symbolic example of a constructed image of friendship. This place bustles with the fast-growing traffic of goods and raw materials between the two countries. This bridge connects the city of Dandong (former Andong), China's border town in Liaoning Province, and Sinuiju, one of North Korea's northernmost towns. Others commemorate symbolic points, like Pyongyang's 'Friendship Tower' (Uuitap). Its primary function is to keep it as a war memorial dedicated to the Chinese martyrs who fought in the Korean War. Inside this thirty-meter-high granite tower, the memorial has kept the records of 22,700 fallen Chinese soldiers. Social Constructivism asserts that "war" is a social construct phenomenon. This means that actors can maneuver warfare by influencing the agent structure system (Binding 2017: 19). This view differs from the realist view, which argues that anarchical structure determines the behavior of states. Constructivists argue that "anarchy is what states make of it," and it depends on the meaning that actors assign to it.

The identities and interests of actors are other central factors in relations between North Korea and China. Constructivism argues that identities are created through social interaction with other actors and constitute interests and actions. The identity of a small state implies a set of interests that are different from the identity of a more significant state. Suppose the tiny state's focus is on survival. In that case, the more significant state is concerned with influence over it in political, economic, and military affairs (Theys 2018: 2). During the 'Chinese Civil War' (1927-1949), between the Chinese Communist

Party (CCP) and the Nationalists, 100,000 ethnic Korean residents were persuaded to join the Chinese Communist forces, where they served as a strategic supporting base to the CCP in Manchuria. The 156th, 164th, and 166th divisions of the best combat units of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) were mainly composed of these ethnic Korean soldiers who engaged in the battle. Thus, identities are also constructed with the engagement of various actors based on their interests and interactions.

Others, like the social norm, are equally important to social constructivism. Social norms play an essential part in shaping identities. In other words, State identities and interests are shaped by norms that imply preferences and consequent actions (Hopf, 1998, p. 175). State identity must comply with the norms social constructivists call 'logic of appropriateness,' believing that their behaviors are appropriate. According to social constructivism, relevant states must adopt these norms and be internalized in their practices. For example, the Korean Central News Agency is a state-run media outlet in North Korea. It was established on December 5, 1946, and has continually played an essential role in supporting its regime. Similarly, Chinese news outlets, such as Xinhua Agency and People's Daily Online, are run by the military government and, at the same time, are known for being highly paid for their work. The state runs official newspapers in North Korea, such as the Workers Party Newspaper (Minju Choson) (Oh & Hassing, 2000, pp. 4-12). Closely examining through content analysis, the *Pyeongyang Times* (from June 2010 to June 2011) shows 16 headlines dedicated to Kim Il Sung and 25 headlines praising the relations between North Korea and China during the Korean War. The fine arts and photo exhibition artists have reported the most creative practices in their dedication to their leaders, Mao and Kim. This newspaper is thought-provoking regarding foreign relations objectives, as the state continually articulates the idea of "superiority" or "allies" as propaganda to safeguard its interests. It indicates that propaganda constructs ideas and becomes reality when they are accepted by society. In international politics, propaganda is usually directed to target audiences of opinion leaders (Newman, 1951, p. 60). The word "propaganda" (*Xuan Quan*) itself does not necessarily carry the same negative connotation in Chinese culture but is seen as an authored-centered approach (West, 1992, p. 386). Thus, the interflows of ideas shaped by the state media environment and through this representation into everyday interaction simultaneously construct the social reality. The case of North Korean devoted relations has thus been successful and survived in the history of world politics.

Conclusion

The ideational factors between North Korea and China were essential in creating state identity and cooperation throughout the Korean War. The “ideational factors” (culture and identity), which are opposed to the “materialist” (power and technology), stress the role of ideas and identity in giving meaning to the material structures. The Social Constructivist sees shared knowledge and national identity in North Korean relations as distinct due to their shared ideas rather than material factors. The cultural values rooted in Confucius’s ideas, common ‘interest’ to stand against imperialism, the adoption of communist ideology by both Mao Zedong and Kim Il Sung, and the perceived image of “blood-brothers” throughout the Korean War shaped the two countries’ friendship to an extraordinary level.

It is not only the distribution of power and wealth and geographical conditions that explain state behavior but also ideas, identities, and norms. Anarchy and the distribution of power are insufficient to tell us which. For example, China’s military power had a different structural significance for North Korea than for South Korea despite their structural positions. North Korea’s missiles had a different significance for China than for the US. Power distribution may impact state calculations, but how it does so is determined by the inter-subjective understanding and expectation of the distribution of knowledge that comprises their conception of self and others. Assuming North Korea and South Korea decide that they are the actual blood brothers, the Korean War is over. The collective meanings constitute the structure around which we organize our actions. Such shared understanding also plays out domestically, affecting foreign policy and decision-making.

Since the end of the Cold War, North Korea has stood as a buffer state for China, and it is the only country in Northeast Asia to be known as more than a partner. This buffer state lies between China and the US alliances with South Korea and Japan. Constructivism distinguishes between the actual international situation and what important actors knew then. The behavior of multiple states can be different at one time, or the behavior of one state can be different at different times. The North Korean issue looks different from Beijing’s eyes than it does from Washington’s. China, along with the US, does not prefer a nuclear North Korea, but Chinese strategic interests are different from the United States’ objectives. Instead of the US hegemony in Northeast Asia, China is more concerned about the regime’s survival, which is run by the family legacy of the Kim dynasty in North Korea after the Kim Il Sung era. As reality is subjective, the state-controlled media in North Korea and China will continue to create camaraderie through cultural industries, reenergizing

their citizens' ideas, interests, and ideology from generation to generation.

However, Social Constructivism stresses that symbolic “blood brothers” or “lips and teeth” relations between North Korea and China are not fixed but “subject to change.” China has shown more interest in cultivating critical economic relations with South Korea than rejuvenating its ideological partnership with North Korea. China also stood against North Korea during its nuclear tests in 2006 and approved the UNSC Resolution sanctions, which marked the decline in the relationship until Kim Jong Un visited Beijing. A tipping point exists between each stage. Some norms failed to gain traction, and others never emerged from the emergent stage. Others begin to cascade but lose momentum and are never operationalized. North Korea and China remembered brotherhood in October 2019, which led both countries again to celebrate the 70th year of “invincible friendship.”

Thus, the norm life cycle continues with their growth and influence. The norms emerge when individual actors promote ideas about how the international system should function and what it ought to be. Through persuasion, they can continue other actors' eventual states of the importance of those norms, such as “eternal friendship.” This leads to the cascade when more and more actors adopt the norm and behave as though it is true. The region is that they seek to enhance their legitimacy, or a state leader may desire to be seen as acting on a topic of importance on the international stage or the internal or external pressure on stage to confirm it. North Korea and China behave according to the principles outlined in the norms. China has always been a supporter of North Korea in economic aid, and North Korea has always backed China in terms of sovereignty and territorial issues. China aspires to be the next superpower, while North Korea has fallen behind and is constantly fighting for survival. However, as long as the norms continue, North Korea and China's “blood-brother” relations will remain manufactured within the construct of knowledge, which is still unique in the socio-political history of the 21st century.

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ABSTRACT

From time to time, North Korea and China's relations have been analyzed by different scholars as a byproduct or satellite state of China. We often debate power, war, and allies from a realist understanding. However, the constructivist approach has not been addressed much. The significant developments during the Korean War were symbolic, shared ideas, and the creation of identities, which were crucial to understanding the state's choice and preference in foreign policy decision-making. In this article, I draw on the work of the constructivist approach to argue the North Korean and China relations during the Korean War. In this way, the constructivist explanation can be suitable for explaining the dynamics of North Korean and China ties because they look at the history and social dynamics within states for its outcome.

KEYWORDS

North Korea, China, Korean War

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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.

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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.

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In March 2012, CESUL was expanded into CEBRAFRICA. At the same time, the South African series, which published five books, was transformed into the African Series, with new titles. The Centre's main objectives remain the same as before: to conduct research, support the development of memoirs, thesis and undergraduate works, congregate research groups on Africa, organize seminars, promote student and professor exchanges with other institutions, establish research networks and joint projects with African and Africanist institutions, publish national and translated works on the field, and expand the specialized library made available by FUNAG.

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