BRAZIL LOOKS TO AFRICA: LUSOTROPICALISM IN THE BRAZILIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS AFRICA

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Introduction

When becoming President of Brazil, in January 31st 1961, Jânio Quadros set to execute a number of actions in the international stage, through what was called the Independent Foreign Policy (PEI)\(^2\). The foreign policy of this president intended to, among other measures interpreted as unexpected and original, pursue a continent long overlooked in the foreign relations portfolio of the country: Africa. Differently from his predecessor Juscelino Kubitschek, that defended a “rearguard foreign policy, in opposition to an advanced internal policy” (Rodrigues 1963, 392), Quadros will assume what can be considered an avant-garde position in the foreign scope, even though he developed an internal policy interpreted as conservative.

Despite Jânio Quadros representing a ludicrous character in the national historiography, the idealization of the Africanist strand of his foreign policy was based, overall, on pragmatism. It was about making Brazil’s foreign performance meet the demands of that time, an attempt to adjust its actions to the then undergoing set of modifications in the international relations. The way in which this inflexion towards Africa was executed can be criticized under different aspects, but the diagnosis of the necessity of an opening to Africa can be adduced as correct.

The economy dictated the paths to be followed by the foreign policy. In a rational perspective, the addition of the recognition of the independence of the African territories to the international action calculations of Brazil.

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2 Portuguese acronym, Política Externa Independente.
could bring significant marginal gains, when compared to the maintenance of a cultural diplomacy of sorts, of affective or sentimental tendencies with Portugal. It was opportune to reset the clock of the Brazilian foreign performance in relation to the changes happening in the international stage, and one of these issues related exactly to a stand towards the movement of decolonization in Africa. Even though hesitant in its behavior, the PEI succeeded in at least representing a protocol of intentions to be duly put into practice in time. There was, notwithstanding, the inauguration of a universalist perspective in the history of Brazil’s foreign policy, differing from the universality of JK’s “regionalizing vision”, in agreement with the interpretation of José Honório Rodrigues, which was predominant throughout the first half of the 20th century in the exercise of Brazil’s foreign policy. The draft of an African policy, indeed, would gain shape during the civil-military dictatorship established in the country in 1964, as will be seen below.

The PEI suggested a pragmatic logic, according to which it would be necessary to proceed with caution towards a diversification of partnerships. It was about a prospective analysis, a bet to the future, in which the rescue of Brazil’s South Atlantic dimension would be inserted in the dynamic of promotion of development, in an autonomous manner and not bound to the ideological orientation of its peers – be it capitalist or socialist, according to the polarization typical of the Cold War. The foreign policy of the last two governments of the populist-natured Liberal Republic defined a new stance to a new international panorama. A new frame was necessary, capable of admitting a new scenario that came to emerge in the international arena.

It is important to examine if the PEI represented a reaction or an innovation. One could argue that the movement of national diplomacy developed by Quadros and Arinos, his chancellor, was elaborated with some reactivity, as well as some innovativity. It was perceived, at last, that the alliance with the United States, which yielded many advantages throughout the Second World War and for a few years after that, had lost its meaning. What had already been pointed out by Raul Fernandes in his famous “memorandum of frustration” seemed to finally receive due attention. Furthermore, the limited results from the Pan-American Operation elaborated by his predecessor, president JK, would definitively bury the alignment with the United States. Alternatively, the PEI represented an adaptation to a new reality, in which new countries emerged and the increasing fragility of Portugal was recognized. It was thus instituted a path for the transition towards a new state of affairs.

It was not certain that this rapprochement with the African aspirations would yield good dividends. However, it was best to expect some gains than to continue promoting relations of a “historic and unconditional” (Salgado
character with a Portugal that maintained its “archaic world view” (Salgado 2009, 11). In addition, the rescue of the South Atlantic dimension of Brazil was underway, after being long relegated to a secondary importance, in a manner that proposed the modernization and updating of this path of which the apex was experienced by the Brazilian Northeast region from the colonial period until the first half of the 19th century.

If it is adequate to nickname Jânio Quadros the “wind sower” and João Goulart the “equilibrist president”, as done by Schwarcz and Starling (2015), it is hard to believe that both presidents had the ability and bargaining power to provide effectiveness to the initiatives they set out to advance in the international stage. And that is considering Quadros had obtained the largest amount of votes until then registered in the country for President of the Republic. After all, if foreign policy is also a public policy, it requires, as do all the others, legitimacy for it to be effectively implemented, keeping in mind that “the foreign policy does not begin where the domestic policy ends” (Milani 2015), instead configuring dimensions that relate to each other in a substantial way. As is the case with internal policies, foreign policies are not made only with proposals and good intentions, but with broad articulation and negotiations in various spaces of power.

In the case of Quadros, let us take into consideration, for example, his short mandate, interrupted by a resignation request presented unexpectedly less than seven months after his inauguration. In his case, Goulart had to live, during most of his mandate, with the so-called parliamentary solution, for him to be able to assume the government. In this context of turbulent domestic policy, the foreign policy was used by the public opinion and the Parliament to delegitimize the ticket that won the 1960 election. In summary, “the foreign policy would receive the influx of the internal tensions” (Saraiva 1996, 86).

As referred by Mario Gibson Barboza, who was chief of staff of Afonso Arinos in the UN and of San Tiago Dantas when he was State Minister for Foreign Relations, “once again it was configured that the frustrating mark which characterized our actions was the right foreign policy in the wrong administration” (Barboza 1992, 74). It must also be recognized that “the politicization related to the PEI was one of the factors that contributed to the Military Coup carried out by conservative sectors of Brazilian society, with explicit support from the United States” (Visentini 2016, 13).

There have been affirmations that “Brazil did not have and does not have an African policy”. The statement is penned by José Honório Rodrigues, in the preface of the second edition of his work Brasil e África: outro horizonte, which would be published in 1963. The first circulation of the book, released in 1961, pari passu the advent of the Independent Foreign
Policy, expressed optimism in relation to the foreign policy of Jânio Quadros, especially concerning its African aspect. Regarding this dimension of the foreign performance of the Quadros administration, he laments:

> It was thought it would be formulated in the beginning of the Jânio Quadros administration, but it stopped in its initial statements. In fact it was stillborn, when the Mission to Africa was completed with the Mission to Salazar, a thesis and an antithesis, with no synthesis. There also is not a policy on colonial matters, and it dances according to the firmness or laxity of the executors, of the transitory injustices, and as is the national politics the reign of indecision, also is the external one the domain of hesitation, masked as conciliation (Rodrigues 1982, 20).

Saraiva names this same characteristic the “zig-zagging movements or position of the independent foreign policy” or “pendular movement” (Saraiva 1993, 85). The PEI, in this sense, was no more than a draft, a protocol of intentions, a program that did not counted with the capacity to be implemented, considering the political moment. It was not viable to go beyond that, taking into account the internal context itself experienced by Brazil. Even so, it did not fail to approach important aspects, that would later be recuperated, in a more favorable and opportune scenario.

Those that held bright expectations regarding the initiatives presented by the PEI, as Honório Rodrigues, hoped for a more assertive posture of the Brazilian diplomacy in the matters related to the African continent, instead of a reticent position towards the Salazar government, in Portugal. However, what was observed were Brazil’s abstentions in the resolutions 1603/1961 of the UNGA on the independence of Angola (Silva 1995), and 1761/1962 against the apartheid regime in South Africa, which took place during Quadros successor’s mandate (Mallmann 2009).

Thus, Rodrigues clarifies that

> there was an initial push, a passionate interest for Africa, but, an adequate African policy itself was never formulated. [...] The African policy of the Quadros Administration, in its seven month tenure, did not birth anything other than abstention in the United Nations, against Algeria and Angola (...).

The change of the Brazilian foreign policy in its overture process to Africa in the 1960s can be considered an action coherent with what was happening gradually and simultaneously in the internal affairs of the country, namely, the search for identitary values that could explain the national formation.
of Brazil. It was therefore necessary to rescue what had been put aside, overall during the 19th century, when Europe represented the model to be followed by the local elites, and the 20th century, when the North-American values began to seem increasingly more like the ones to be adapted by the nationals.

The historical moment in which the recovery – in new molds, surely – of the African dimension happened cannot be denied, when the Afro-Asian decolonization was gaining importance, the Cold War was worsening, and there was a need to find new markets; however, the inexistence of a theoretical framework developed with the objective of supporting the official discourse would possibly impose new obstacles to such an initiative, which itself faced resistance from both Brazilians and Africans from different countries and territories. It is convenient to remember that, in 1939, Getúlio Vargas creates the “Race Day”, to be celebrated on June 10th, to commemorate the Brazilian miscegenation.

Continuing this effort of valorization of autochthone aspects that define the Brazilian people, in 1963 the “National Samba Day” is created, to be celebrated on December 2nd (Figueiredo 2009). As explains Visentini (2016, 11),

Vargas, from 1930 to 1945, created the basis for a national development project, that required a national identity. The search for Brasility, to which he recruited artists and intellectuals, rescued the Afro-descendants from the silence they had been relegated and this community’s forms of cultural and religious expression. The Brazilian, historically, was the result of a prolonged miscegenation, and this dimension was rescued as one of the basic elements of the national identity.

Lusotropicalism3 and “Pernambucanidade” in the Rescue of the South Atlantic as a Possible Horizon in the Brazilian Foreign Policy

The works of the Pernambuco sociologist Gilberto Freyre played a clear role in the way Brazil relates to its partners elsewhere, especially Portugal and the African continent, at first being intensely close with the former and, with the emergence of the anticolonial movements, approaching the latter, all the while attempting to maintain positive relations with the Portuguese state.

3 E/N: We chose to maintain the prefix “luso”, meaning “Portuguese” in that language, to maintain the best similarity possible with the concept coined by Freyre, explored in this session.
And, in that scenario, this position showed itself to be the one better suited to the national hopes, as well as the power project pursued by the country. It was necessary to carry out an overture to Africa, in a moment when the import substitution project gained traction and thus, an outlet for Brazilian production in new markets was convenient and, overall, urgent.

_The Masters and the Slaves_\(^4\), published in 1933, as well as titles that followed it exploring the lusotropicalism, sought to value the miscegenation of the Brazilian society, pinning its success to the characteristics of the Portuguese colonization. Amado Cervo (2000, 278) thus explains Freyre’s lusotropicalism concept, developed between the 1940s and 1950s: “the Brazilian sociologist conceived a Portuguese-Brazilian community based on what he called ‘lusotropicalism’, the original condition that had led the Portuguese people to promote the racial, linguistic and cultural interpenetration, combining the European culture with the tropical culture”.

While _The Masters and the Slaves_ paid more attention to an internal analysis of Brazil, researching its own social formation and seeking explanations to the functioning of the national society in the colonial era; _The World the Portuguese created_\(^5\), _A Brazilian man in Portuguese lands_\(^6\) and _Adventure and Routine_\(^7\) were presented related to an external logic, a manner and a discourse that could be explored by the country in its performance in the luso-tropical world.

Considering those who formulate Brazil’s foreign policy and the diplomats are part of the intellectual elite, it is no wonder they had contact, at the time, with the theories of those called interpreters of Brazil, among who were, besides Freyre, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda and Caio Prado Jr. In fact, taking into account the impact the ideas of the master of Apipucos had in the Brazilian society, as well as in the self-image the country held itself, it is hard not to assume that this way of interpreting the national formation of Brazil would not exert some influence in its foreign projection. Thus, “the engagement of the Ministry of Foreign Relations [in the African policy of Brazil] was made easier by the studies and approaches that were developing through the dissident voices of the diplomats, politicians and intellectuals that came from the 1950s and were now put in the spotlight” (Saraiva 1996, 64).

The biggest problem and, at the same time, most noteworthy accomplishment of _The Masters and the Slaves_ was generalizing a scheme

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4 Portuguese original, Casa Grande & Senzala.
5 Portuguese original, O mundo que o português criou.
6 Portuguese original, Um brasileiro em terras portuguesas.
7 Portuguese original, Aventura e Rotina.
identified strictly as a regional history perspective as a characteristic of national history, which led to unfocused interpretative logics, under a geographic point of view. When evoking his Pernambuco heritage, he seemed to reproduce a reasoning typical of the 17th century, namely, the word homeland bearing a “local, not national character” (Corrêa Martins apud Aldé 2008, s/n). What happened now was the opposite: a local analysis was assumed to be national.

In that triangular movement between Brazil, Africa and Portugal, the ideas introduced by the Pernambuco sociologist would be molded and adapted with the objective of coordinating with that which the Brazilian diplomacy meant to advocate, being it either the rapprochement of the Portuguese-Brazilian relationship, as explicitly defended by Freyre, or the right to self-determination of the African people. There was a cultural diplomacy with an affective aspect in the practice of Brazil’s foreign policy in its relationship with Portugal, using the lusotropicalist discourse. Thus, this needed only be adapted to Africa, in such a way that the axis would be altered, but the base maintained.

The lusotropicanism is a result of the cultural proximity between Pernambuco and Angola. Freyre recuperates links that faded in Brazil’s post-independence. As highlights José Honório Rodrigues,

Angola was more connected to Brazil than to Portugal. It was Rio de Janeiro that freed it from Dutch domain; of its three deputies to the Constituent Courts, two aligned with Brazil; in 1822 it was in Rio de Janeiro that the proclamations for ‘despised Angola’ were released and following them the rebel movements of Luanda and Benguela sought to join the country to Brazil (Rodrigues 1963, 24).

This bond is highlighted by Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, that describes that the travel time between Recife and Luanda in the first quarter of the 17th century took 35 days, while from Bahia the same trip to Angola took forty days, and from Rio, fifty (Alencastro 2000), in a way that conformed a “Brazilic Angola”, in the historian’s understanding. Furthermore, the years between 1648 and 1665 are known as “the Brazilian years of the history of Angola”, comprising the administrations of Salvador de Sá, João Fernandes Vieira and André Vidal de Negreiros (Silva Rego apud Alencastro 2000, 262).

The Freyrian stratagem is inserted in a tide of valorization of the nativist sentiment present in Pernambuco, known in our days as “Pernambucanidade” (Aldé 2008, s/n). According to this logic, this Northeastern Brazilian state would be identified as a model of resistance to the Portuguese colonization, even expelling the Dutch invaders. It is important to underline the story of
André Vidal de Negreiros, who, besides governing Pernambuco, would also become governor of Angola, being recognized by historian Francisco Adolfo Varnhagen as a “legitimate representative of the Brazilians in the glorious restoration of the Northeastern land to the whole of the nation” (Pessoa 2009, 8).

In short, the importance of the lusotropicalism was the recuperation of the South Atlantic dimension in the international relations of Brazil. The geography proved to be a fundamental prerequisite to the advent of the PEI. The geographic aspect and the lusotropicalism had to be seen as complementary in this process, justifying one another. A bond that had been severed in the 19th century was meant to be reestablished, in a process adequately described by Honório Rodrigues,

Made the rupture, around 1855, by British imposition with the acquiescence of Portugal, which from 1847 until 1895 denied us the establishment of a consulate in Angola, our policy was Latin-Americanized and the River Plate came to occupy a more relevant place, besides, evidently, the English prevalence and the increase of the North-American commercial exchange and cultural and political influence (Rodrigues 1963, 25).

It would be in the civil-military dictatorship that the African policy of Brazil would be effectively defined, with the “pioneering trip of Gibson Barboza to nine countries of West Africa – Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Dahomey (currently Benin), Zaire, Cameroon, Nigeria, Senegal and Gabon – in November 1972” (Laramao 2007, 46). A rapprochement was evident under both commercial and political terms with Africa, marking a “change in posture of the Brazilian government in regards to the Portuguese colonialism” (Laramao 2007, 46).

The trip of chancellor Gibson Barboza to nine countries of the Western coast of Africa, the Gulf of Guinea, shows the dedication of Brazil to strengthen ties with the continent. The African tour did not include territories that were engaged in bloody struggles against the Europeans, nor Portuguese territories. There was a personal effort by Barboza to convince the Portuguese to facilitate the independence of their ultramarine provinces. An encounter between the Brazilian diplomat and Marcelo Caetano even took place, in an attempt to convince his Portuguese counterpart.

It must still be wondered to what degree the so-called feeling of “Pernambucanidade” got to reflect in the need and importance of seeking Africa. One would have to look into the influence in the PEI of the thought
of the Pernambuco Gilberto Freyre, one of its possible “forgotten roots”. The concretization of the foreign policy to Africa, itself, must be identified with the performance of Mario Gibson Barboza, who carried out the African tour, and, according to Lamarão (2007, 43), “opened the doors to the country’s presence in Africa”. Thus, it must be asked if Barboza being native to Pernambuco would be mere coincidence, with him also having been research assistant to Gilberto Freyre, in the 1930s. As proposed by Alzira Abreu “the life trajectories can become object of analysis and historical interpretation, being possible to articulate the timeframe of one individual’s story and the socio-historic time, in other words the articulation between biography and history” (Abreu 2007, 8).

The direct and personal relationship between Mario Gibson Barboza and Gilberto Freyre is thus examined. When the diplomat was interviewed by the historian Jerry Dávila, he confided to the North-American researcher that he took part in encounters in the sociologist’s house, in the 1930s, which he refers to as actual sociology classes, opportunities in which the Africanism constant in the country was discussed. Barboza, at the time, was still a student in the Law School of the Federal University of Pernambuco and, with his academic peers, went on from these meetings to carry out research for the book *The Mansions and the Shanties* of 1938, that followed *The Masters and the Slaves*. Likewise, Gibson confessed to Dávila his participation in the I Afro-Brazilian Congress, organized by Freyre in 1934. He, who would become chancellor under general Emílio Gastarrazu Médici’s administration, registers maintaining a friendly relationship with Gilberto Freyre through all his life, with the latter taking part in the arrangements of the diplomatic mission that would be known as the African tour (Dávila 2011).

The historian Cíntia Vieira Souto, who also interviewed Gibson Barboza, confirms the information presented above, as well as including others. The researcher affirms that, in the interview granted to her, Barboza mentions being patron of Gilberto Freyre when he received, for the first time, the title of Doctor *honoris causa*, by the University of Pernambuco. Cíntia Souto also reports that the diplomat talked to Freyre about experiences he witnessed in Africa, attesting the proximity between Africa and Brazil – facts that were unknown to the Pernambuco sociologist. Finally, Barboza refers to his fellow countryman as “old and dear friend” (Barboza 1992, 301).

As Freyre, Mario Gibson Barboza always evoked his origins when presenting himself. In his classic *In diplomacy, the whole stroke of life*,

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8 Portuguese original, *Sobrados e Mucambos.*

9 Portuguese original, *Na diplomacia, o traço todo da vida.*
the diplomat, besides bringing in the title of the work a reference to the words attributed to his fellow countryman Joaquim Nabuco, reproduced in epigraph\(^\text{10}\), alludes in the second paragraph of the introductory note to his Pernambuco origin: “Primarily I was born in Olinda” (Barboza 1992, 7). In fact, the continuation itself of the space in which he exposes the idea of the “whole stroke of life”, Nabuco refers to Pernambuco as a factor always present in his experience:

> I went through this initial years [the first eight years of his life] so remote, however, more present than any other, in a sugarcane mill in Pernambuco, my home province. The land was one of the vastest and most picturesque of the Cabo zone... This background never removes itself from my sight, representing the last distances of my life (Nabuco apud Lafer 2002, 20).

One of the main crafters of the overture of Brazil’s foreign policy to Africa confesses: “I feel my deep-seated feeling of Brazility owes much to the very Brazilian character of the city where I was born and raised. On those days, my horizons were limited” (Barboza 1992, 7). When carrying out his African tour, Barboza notices the similarities between Brazil’s Northeast and those countries in the other side of the South Atlantic: “me, when visiting these countries, verified that, in certain places of Africa I felt like I was in Bahia or Pernambuco. The beach is the same, the sea is the same, the food is the same”. “It is not only a matter of paying a debt of a remorse; it is because the link between Brazil and Africa is unique”. And concludes: “and this policy, if you’ll allow me some vanity, I am proud to have inaugurated, because I think it is an important moment in Brazil’s foreign policy” (Barboza 1992, 28). [...]

> “This overture to Africa was something that marked my term. Let me say this, not only this, but this was one of the things I consider most important that I had the opportunity to do” (Barboza 1992, 29-30).

When he proposed to president Médici initiatives focused on the African continent, his arguments can be seen to coincide with ideas introduced by Gilberto Freyre:

> when I proposed to Médici beginning an overture of the Brazilian foreign policy to Africa, for the reasons that I explained in the presentations of reasons that I later made to him and that he approved, that is, that Brazil is not a black country, but a mixed country. We

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\(^{10}\) “The whole stroke of like is, for many, a child’s drawing forgotten by the man” (Joaquim Nabuco, *My Formation – Minha Formação*, “Massananga”).
have, to me, the advantage, the glory of being a mixed country, I think this grants a great richness to the Brazilian civilization. The African coefficient to the formation of our nationality was huge. When the abolition of slavery was declared in Brazil, two thirds of our population was made up of black slaves. This country was built by the black arm, by the arm of the black slave. It was made in the arm of the black slave. This is what built Brazil. We have, in this sense, a moral debt towards Africa (Barboza 1992, 29-30).

The root of the Africanist strand, identified in Freyre, would be recovered and put into effect by Barboza. The history repeated itself, as stated by the character Úrsula, immortalized by Gabriel García Marquez in One hundred years of solitude. Similarly to what occurred during the colonial period, when Recife and Angola shared a close bond, carefully and warily watched by Portugal, there was an attempt to recover this historic link, adapted to the modern times, but that still raised suspicions by the reluctant Portuguese colonial power.

Barboza, a central actor through the tenure of the Independent Foreign Policy, witnessed in a privileged position the lack of political tact of the last two presidents of the populist liberal Republic. The “wind sower” and the “equilibrist president” could have had good projects, but their inabilities to implement them were clear. These inabilities could be a result of factors of personal order, as was the case for Jânio, or the political-ideological tensions, in the case of Jango.

Regarding Jânio, Barboza claims that he even authorized the new Brazilian position of voting against the Portuguese colonialism, but that his posture changed when he talked to the president of Portugal. Barboza’s report on this episode became iconic:

- Yes, Minister, I did change. I already promised to the Ambassador that we will vote for Portugal. You know, Minister, the President of Portugal telephoned me, made an appeal, I cried on the phone, we both cried. We were left in tears. We cannot do this with Portugal. No, Minister, do not vote against Portugal”.

And reflected:

Is it true that the President of Portugal telephoned Jânio? I think so. Is it true that he cried? It could be, I don’t know. It is possible that he simply gave in to the pressure and decided to offer his Chancellor, well in his style, the appearance of a pathetic, dramatic gesture, in the manner of an explanation. With Jânio Quadros it was always difficult to really know where was the histrionics inserted (Barboza 1992, 237-238).
In turn, regarding Jango, Barboza explained that:

he had no ability to govern – zero government. I have never seen such inability. If that went on, I am not in favor of the military coup, but if that went on that would have turned into a unionist republic in which who gave orders wouldn’t even be him, but that did not agree with him, no. Now, his was a cordial presence (Barboza 2002, 32).

“The right foreign policy in the wrong government”, a “zero government”, could finally be set in motion, in a more favorable political and economic environment, as was the one in the first half of the 1970s, the years of the so-called economic miracle. The set of initiatives to be executed was well studied, waiting to integrate the foreign policy agenda in an adequate way. That privileged witness of the 1960s, came, in the following decade, to the position of main executor.

Final Considerations

The action of seeking Africa coincided with the effort itself of building the national identity, so very promoted in the first half of the 20th century. The Portuguese path had been well explored as a constitutive element of the Brazilian identity, even because of the strong presence of Portuguese nationals and their descendants, especially in the urban region of the city of Rio de Janeiro. It was necessary, in an alternative and concomitant way, without denying the Portuguese heritage present in the country, to recognize Africa in Brazil’s national formation, and that also reflected in the dimension of the foreign relations of the Brazilian state.

The luso-tropicalism of Gilberto Freyre did not cause misinterpretations only in Brazil, but also in Portugal, as evident by the testimony of Mário Soares, “in the presence of Gilberto Freyre himself, in Recife, in March 23rd 1987”:

This theory was badly used in the days of the former regime, but myself attempted to demonstrate that the work of Gilberto Freyre was admired in Portugal, not only by those that were aligned with colonialism, but also by the free, democratic and modern Portugal that I represent; [...] Portugal, regardless the regime, or regardless of political beliefs, is with Gilberto Freyre and understand the greatness of his work and his importance to Portugal, to Brazil, and to what we can call our Afro-Portuguese-Brazilian linguistic unity (Soares apud Chacon 2001, 112).
As did some Brazilian diplomats, active in the middle of the 20th century, Soares also understood “the possibility and necessity of readapting the lusotropicalism according to reasons of state” (Soares apud Chacon 2001, 112). Freyre, as attests Chacon (2001, 85), was target of “political accusations of conservatism and even reactionarism, ‘ideologue’ of a false ethnic democracy, ‘salazarist’, ‘defendant’ of the Brazilian military regime of 1964, ‘longing’ after all of the masters against the slaves etc. etc. etc.”.

Gilberto Freyre takes part in the process of building of Brazility, which would provoke external consequences, among which is the political projection of the country towards Africa, bringing a new aspect to Brazil’s foreign act. As was internally evidenced the contribution of a number of peoples, cultures and ethnicities to the national formation, it externally implied the diversification of partnerships – the notion that the Brazilian diplomacy, due to the diversified composition itself of the people it represented, could globalize or universalize its relationships portfolio.

If the “Pernambuco maestro” – as Fernando Henrique Cardoso (2013) refers to him – conducted a variety of musicians in the orchestra of Brazil’s social thinking, it can be said that he lost control of those he conducted when it came to the Brazilian foreign policy. Despite the existence of misinterpretations regarding his ideas, the valorization of autochthone identitary elements to the international projection of the country that followed is evident, in observance to Tolstoy’s (apud Chacon, 111) opinion, according to whom “if you want to be universal, talk of your village”. In the words of Cardoso (2013, 95), “all of Gilberto Freyre’s thought looked into the singularity of social and cultural forms of Brazil”. While Brazilians enjoyed the encounter with their own Brasility, they also learned they could universalize their foreign relations, without limitations of any nature, resulting, too, in the overture to Africa.

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This article aims to present the Brazilian foreign policy towards Africa, developed in the 1960s and conceived by Janio Quadros and João Goulart, but effectively implemented by Mario Gibson Barboza, during the Brazilian military regime, as being directly influenced by the thought of Gilberto Freyre, especially by the idea of “lusotropicalism”. Furthermore, it analyzes the presence of the so-called “pernambucanidade” in the undertaking of the South Atlantic as a dimension of the Brazilian foreign policy.

**KEYWORDS**

Brazilian foreign policy towards Africa; lusotropicalism; “pernambucanidade”.

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