

## **Brazilian New Foreign Policy and Implications within BRICS: A Discourse Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

On the dawn of the 2008 financial crisis, Brazil, Russia, India, and China celebrated the first BRIC's Summit, in 2009, till the bloc foundation in 2006. At that time, the four countries were responsible for 65 percent of the world's total economic growth and was aimed at the reform of the international institutions so that they would reflect the emerging countries' economic rise in international politics. The group was directly related to each of the members' goals of development, which was a historical purpose of Brazilian foreign policy articulated at that time in Celso Amorim's "Active and Generous Foreign Policy." Nevertheless, the election of Jair Bolsonaro for the Brazilian presidency in 2018 brought a revision of the country's foreign policy. Since Ernesto Araujo took office as Brazil's current Minister of Foreign, in January 2019, he proposed a rebrand under the name of "New Foreign Policy," reformulating basic principles as a return to the concepts of Americanism over the previous Multilateralism, a denouncement of "Globalism," and a strong defense of Christianity. This article will provide a discourse analysis of the first year of this mandate to observe how Brazil's "New Foreign Policy" could affect the BRICS bloc. The preliminary evidence points to the retraction of the BRICS agenda in Brazilian external actions due to the new Brazilian political approach.

**Keywords:** Brazilian Foreign Policy, BRICS, Americanism, Multilateralism

### **Introduction**

As an observer watches today's news regarding Brazilian domestic and foreign policies, it may seem that the recent past of leadership and proactivity the country became known for in the 2000s is part of another dimension reality. In 2001, a Goldman Sachs report (O'Neil, 2001) indicated that the country—along with Russia, India, and China—would become a prominent player in international politics in the course of the next 30 years, a period during which they would exceed the G7 in size of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Ten years after the publication of Jim O'Neill's report, Brazilian international agencies managed to change other developing countries' perceptions regarding Brazil. The South American country assumed significant roles in regards to addressing issues previously exclusive to great powers, at the same time as it diversified its partnerships with the Global

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South, actions that accredited its plea of reform of the international institutions and that seemed to grant it the desired leadership position.

The building of the BRICS took place in 2009 at a summit meeting in Yekaterinburg in Russia, bringing together countries such as Brazil, Russia, India and China. In 2010, South Africa joined the same bloc. Unlike most blocks with a regional integration model, the BRICS does not have as many political, cultural, geopolitical, economic or even historical similarities.

In 2019, the Brazilian foreign policy seemed much more aligned to the United States' interests than to the goal of becoming a significant international player. Under Jair Bolsonaro's presidency, and with Ernesto Araujo as the Foreign Minister, the Itamaraty (the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) unfolded the "New Foreign Policy," imposing a profound change in the guidance it was following.

Considering the changes in the external agenda, this paper aims to introduce the new features of the Brazilian foreign policy, identifying the possible implications for multilateralism and the BRICS bloc. In order to guide this study, a literature review will be carried out in the first section focusing on the historical contextualization of the elements that shape the Brazilian international identity and the tradition of its foreign policy. Following on from this, the aspects that characterize Brazilian participation and engagement in the BRICS will be approached. In the last section, we will present the empirical elements and the methods employed in this study. The analysis of the recent speeches of Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs brings forward evidence that points to the decrease in the degree of priority given in the south-south cooperation and consequently in the BRICS, despite some turn backs on some of the public discourses after the 11<sup>th</sup> Summit of the BRICS in Brasilia.

### **Brazilian Foreign Policy in historical perspective**

Since the beginning of the 20th century, Brazil has aspired to achieve international recognition as a "great country", and as a consequence, to have greater influence in the formulation of rules and regimes on a global scale. In the face of such an aspiration, Brazilian foreign policy has been shaped in such a way as to allow the international insertion of a "second-order" country and it is thus not surprising that this action would enhance the chances of reaching the Brazilian objectives. In general, Brazilian foreign policy has favored the use of *softpower* as well as respect for international law and multilateral action.

During the Cold War, according to Gelson da Fonseca (1998), Brazil had historically used three different forms of action at the international level. Although the country adopted a

capitalist ideological position, a closer or lesser approach to Washington depended on the political dynamics and ideological orientation of the internal bloc. In the period immediately following World War II, under the Dutra government, Brazil traced a strategic alliance with the United States, meaning that it adhered to Western values; this model became known as the 'Western Pure'.

Furthering on from this, from the second Vargas government to the administration of Jânio Quadros, a developmental regime was built that combined economic activism and trade protectionism. At that time, even though Brazil continued to be aligned with Western ideologies, the approach to the United States suffered a differentiation which proved to be quite significant. Thus, the 'Qualified Western' paradigm was inaugurated (Fonseca, 1998).

The third and last model is the 'Autonomous Western'. An international identity for Brazil was designed which led to the diversification of political and economic relations. This paradigm was used at very different times from our foreign policy. The first one occurred under the democratic government of João Goulart, which resulted in the creation of the Independent Foreign Policy (PEI). This policy aimed at diversifying relations between countries as opposed to automatic alignment with the United States and the countries of the North, which implied the creation of a third-world identity. The second instance was led by the Geisel government. During this period, known as responsible pragmatism, in addition to forming a closer relationship with the countries of the South, a project was added that aimed at shaping Brazil as a power (Fonseca, 1998).

It is possible to verify that the Brazilian relations of the center-periphery order have changed according to the paradigm of international insertion adopted by the governments that assumed power. These, in turn, were shaped by the desire for economic development and political autonomy. In any case, Brazilian external conduct expresses some elements of continuity: the struggle for self-determination and non-intervention, the promotion of cooperative and non-confrontational nationalism, preferences for multilateralism, respect for international norms and rules, and preference for the peaceful solution of controversies (Lafer, 2001; Pinheiro, 2002; Lima, 2010).

The context of the end of the Cold War led to the crisis of international insertion paradigms in the early 1990s. According to Maria Regina S. Lima (2010), the systemic transformation brought about by the end of bipolarity has generated great consequences for countries like Brazil. First, with the removal of political and geographic obstacles that allowed the global expansion of capitalism, this phenomenon was called globalization. The second

consequence generated by the disappearance of the socialist model was the Third World crisis, which was aggravated by the external debt crisis, the fiscal crisis and the exhaustion of the import substitution industrialization model (ISI). This new conjuncture eroded the third-world regimes that guided Brazilian diplomacy throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

We must highlight that the combined effect of globalization and the Third World crisis caused a structural asymmetry between the countries that comprised this group. On the one hand, some countries have integrated themselves more actively into the global economy through the creation of productive chains in peripheral countries, leading to the formation of the emerging economies that makes up BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, for example). On the other hand, we see that the current stage of globalization has led to the economic and political decline of some countries, which have become part of the group of “Failed States” (Lima, 2010).

Ergo, Brazil assumed a rational attitude that led to a gradual convergence—after all, we must not forget that the country underwent a scenario of redemocratization and crises—of Brazilian foreign policy in order to maximize the new opportunities presented by economic globalization from the implementation of a new paradigm. (Pinheiro, 2002). The pragmatic institutionalism, as defined by Pinheiro (2002), is the hallmark of the President Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration (1994-1998 / 1999-2002). The consolidation of this new foreign policy model dates back to this period. But even so, President Collor's government (1990-1992) was already undergoing a significant shift in vision toward the traditional and relatively conservative standards of diplomacy at that time. For this administration, Brazil already enjoyed the status of a developing country. In addition, this period was marked by “unconditional adherence to emerging trade rules and unilateral opening of trade.” (Lima, 2010)

Brazilian political redemocratization can be understood as an important factor that propelled the country towards better visibility at the international level since it made possible, both symbolically and materially, the universalization of Brazilian international relations, in addition to implying a less defensive stance in the multilateral bodies that negotiated human rights and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation (NPT) issues. The unprecedented rapprochement with Argentina and the creation of Mercosur both represent such universalization. During Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government, Brazil led a process of economic liberalization. This administration favored the use of presidential diplomacy and focused on economic gains to the detriment of politics.

Brazil has clearly demonstrated its intention to expand its role and assume greater responsibilities, whether regionally, in the Third World agenda or in multilateral institutions. We take as an example the initiatives towards the creation of the South American Community, its policies and active positions in hemispheric and global trade negotiations; the construction of South-South axis of cooperation, especially with India and South Africa; and, last but not least, the campaign for reform of the UN Security Council and the plea for a permanent member seat (Hirst, 2008).

The uncertainties created by the end of bipolarity and the consequent discussions about the construction of a new global order aroused the interest of Brazilian elites for the construction of a more influential role in international relations. We can identify two new forms of strategic insertion for medium powers that are able to mitigate the excessive unipolarity of this new scenario. In 2000, a study (Sousa, 2008) elaborated on the vision of the Brazilian elite and it was found that this had a consensus regarding the valorization of a leading role for the country. However, members of the elite did not agree on the form of insertion that should be used by Brazil. Thus, we point to the existence of two main models.

The first of them aims to seek credibility in the international sphere, focusing from the outside in. In this context, globalization is seen as a parameter for the elaboration of external action, however, the success of this enterprise depends on reforms in the country's internal structures, especially in relation to the market economy and enabling international competition (Lima, 2010). For this aspect, Brazil has to reinforce multilateralism, as it does not have surplus power resources. This means that the country should adopt a more cautious stance and should only commit itself to issues that are consistent with its real capacity. National autonomy is seen as a result of the country's collaboration on global governance issues through cooperation in the creation of international standards and institutions.

The alternative model to the previous one, which is usually called autonomist, proposes the construction of a more flexible foreign policy in order to achieve a large-scale international projection. The defenders of this paradigm defend the use of a more active development and the construction of a national project to reduce domestic asymmetries and imbalances. In addition, they criticize the fruits of trade liberalization and unrestricted participation in international regimes. The alliance with countries whose interests are similar, and which are willing to face the impositions of the Global North, is seen as a strategic insertion option. This perspective is contrary to the model previously presented, as it does not believe that there is any

kind of power insufficiency and, therefore, it is not necessary to adopt a defensive posture (Hirst, Lima; 2003; Hirst, 2008).

The autonomists are very concerned about the fact that Brazil does not have elements of military deterrence, nor veto power in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) that support relations with the powers. The sovereign dimension is prevalent in this chain, so multilateral agreements are viewed with some fear as they imply the loss of state authority in favor of supranational bodies. Roughly speaking, we believe that foreign policy management in the era of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso came closer to the “credibility for participation in order” model, while that of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of the “autonomy for order change” paradigm (Vigevani, Cepalune, 2007).

The debate between autonomy and freedom focuses on Brazil's ability to eventually expand the possibilities of choosing partners, which is also a way to guarantee decision-making autonomy for agendas that have a strategic character. Among the foreign policy paradigms, according to Letícia Pinheiro (2000), a more globalist and a more North Americanist view took turns as dominant proposals based on the characterization of professional diplomacy, which also expanded the space for diversification and multilateralism that characterized Brazilian diplomatic history (Pinheiro, 2000; Lacerda, Nóbrega, 2015).

### **Brazil and the BRICS**

In 2001, when Jim O'Neil published the report “Building Better Global Economic BRIC,” Brazil was perceived as an emerging power that, together with China, Russia, and India, would play a defining role in the world economy for the years to come. At that time, Brazil was the country that in the 1990s managed to stabilize its economy and design its foreign policy to diversify its partnerships, while its neighboring countries in South America dived in instability.

Under the Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration, Brazil managed to stabilize the economy and review its foreign policy to pursue the goal of becoming a global player. For that, the government employed a series of efforts to change the country's image from that built during the military government through cooperation and participation in international regimes, especially those of human rights, environmental policies and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

To increase its recognition as a global player, Itamaraty defined five priority axes to focus its foreign policy. Three of them were addressed to traditional partners in Mercosur, the United States, and Europe, including the Pacific (focused on Japan) and other regional powers

(in which the countries that later constituted the BRICS forum would be a part) on the list of its main partners (Lessa, 1998). Brazil realized that, as a regional power, it had to join forces with countries at the same level to defend common interests and to increase its influence.

As a matter of fact, the relationship between Brazil and some of the other BRICS countries preclude the 1990s. China was already a growing partner since the 1980s, after the two countries established diplomatic relations on August 15th, 1974 during the Geisel administration. In 1988, they joined forces to develop the aerospace industry, celebrating the China-Brazil Earth Resources Satellite (CBERS) program which was responsible for the launch of five satellites, and with the sixth programmed for launch until the end of 2019.

Brazil was the first country to celebrate a strategic partnership with China in 1993, and throughout the following two decades, they increased their cooperation until 2009, when the Asian country became Brazil's most significant trade partner. Cooperation between the two countries focuses on areas such as infrastructure, energy, raw material, heavy industry, and aerospace (LESSA, 1998). In 2012, the relations between the two countries had an upgrade to a global strategic partnership, and in 2017 they established the Brazil-China Cooperation Fund for the Expansion of Production Capacity, with US\$20bi invested for infrastructure and industrial modernization projects.

Despite the maxi-devaluation of the Real (Brazilian currency) and the internal uncertainty in 2002 caused by the fear that Lula could affect the macroeconomic stability achieved, the early 2000s brought new basis for the foreign policy with a diversification of partnerships, such as when the country engaged in the approach of those who would form in the future; along with it was the BRICS. The reduction of Brazilian embassies abroad during the 1990s reflected the country's new focus in areas it believed to be vital to the expansion of its international recognition, establishing five priority axes.

The strategic partnership with Russia has been deepened since 1994, having the foreign minister at the time, Celso Amorim, as its biggest articulator. However, it was only in October 1997, with the visit of Primakov—Russian foreign minister at the time—to Brazil that the two countries were able to deepen their relationship and sign an agreement for the establishment of the Brazilian-Russian Commission of High-Level Cooperation. According to Bacigalupo, Primakov "pondered that the resumption of the relation with Brazil was important not only because of the country's 'leading' position in Latin America, but also because of the current conditions of globalization after many years of Cold War" (Bacigalupo, 2000: 66).

During the same period, India had become an important ally in multilateral forums, particularly with regard to the regulation of international trade. As NAM's historic leader, India established a foreign policy strategy, that had been effective since the 1960s, which was guided by the ideals of economic development, combating poverty and the struggle for decolonization. During the start of the negotiations on agriculture within the Doha Round World Trade Organization (WTO), launched in November 2001, Brazil and India were skilled in articulating developing countries around a single group, the G20, in order to contain the United States' and Europe's proposals, though the two countries disagreed regarding the liberalization of markets for agricultural products. The joint effort of the Global South countries influenced the way that the Doha Work Programme presented a social dimension of trade, expressing its dissatisfaction with the way that international trade reflected the interests of developed countries.

Finally, South Africa became an important ally of Brazil in Africa after the end of apartheid and the democratization of the country. Its importance was enhanced by the perception of the South Atlantic as a strategic area to Brazilian interests, becoming part of its strategy for security. Africa became considered the Western border of South America and the growing concern over the presence of external actors in the region meant the rise, in 1986, of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS). More recently, under the Dialogue Forum IBSA, the three countries began in 2008 a series of naval operations called IBSAMAR (India-Brazil-South Africa Maritime) in order to monitor dangerous cargoes in the Atlantic South.

According to Monica Hirst, "the economic expectations that led to the creation of this bloc [BRIC] are the central reason why China and Brazil share interests in select multilateral forums, reinforcing the idea that both are perceived by the North as significant players in the global economic agenda" (Hirst, 2008, p. 92-3). Nevertheless, the interaction with these countries would be expanded with the consolidation of the political arrangement inspired by the predictions that the four countries, that later would include the African member, would be the bricks to build the new world order.

The first BRIC Summit occurred on June 16th, 2009, raising skepticism by some international analysts who saw the arrangement as artificial and uneven and that it would have taken advantage of a concept created by an investment bank to obtain visibility, while others believed in the possibility of "re-balancing and democratizing the international order" as expressed by the Brazilian government itself.

The summit planned to address issues related to the international economic crisis, pleading for a reform of international financial institutions, including in the agenda the Chinese proposal of working toward an alternative to the dollar. Yet, the joint statement was restricted to target a “stable, predictable and more diversified international monetary system” (BRICS, 2009). It has become clear that the leading role in the international system had as a background the economic interests of each country.

The conditions that make Brazil an important link for the BRICS are also associated with the common development needs among developing countries. Prerogatives of economic domination and of the international system on the part of great powers of the West were strongly shaken with the growth of countries of the axis of the BRICS, turning these great markets into a new front yet to create opportunities of all kinds. An important part of these demands associated with development are part of the financing mechanisms available to the economies of less developed or booming countries.

As of 2015, with the creation of the Bank of the BRICS, renamed as the New Development Bank more recently, the projects associated with these needs for the development of institutions and programs in the countries that are members of the BRICS took place through widely available resources, mainly through Chinese capital (Abdenur, Folly, 2015).

Adriana Abdenur and Mayara Folly point out that the infrastructure demands of BRICS countries increased significantly in the final decades of the 21st century, mainly because the availability of capital for this purpose decreased significantly during this time among Bretton Woods institutions (Abdenur, Folly, 2015). Between 2017 and 2018 alone, the NDB (New Development Bank) increased the number of operations it was carrying out in the form of direct financing by approximately 120% (Annual Report, NDB, 2018).

Ramos et al. (2018) argue that areas such as economic and development policy, as well as international security, could suffer a great impact given the bloc pressures arising from domestic political changes as in Brazil, as well as in the generation of a Russian-Chinese relationship for different reasons to the United States. For the authors, the Russian interests associated with security and the Chinese economic interests, in creating this opposition between the BRICS project and the United States, could see the densification of institutions and partnerships within the BRICS diminished.

For Abdenur & Folly (2018; 2015), the creation of the New Development Bank points to an institutionalization process that normatively empowers the project and deepens it. Otherwise, the creation of the project also faces the hegemonic manifestation of the West in the

matter, however, this does not make the project anti-Western. But, if the Bank's project seems to have strengthened the commitment in question, the BRICS still have the presence of a series of narratives that invoke disputes of all kinds and, for that reason, manifest domestic political transitions in the bloc. In this regard, the influence of development projects is less than that of foreign policy narratives.

The relevant link between foreign policy and development is centered on the eventual autonomy that the actors retain in terms of negotiating power and reliability in the international system. Thus, development demands are of the utmost importance to the various ways a state actor could negotiate inside an international system and, as so, they are an imperative condition of autonomy. At this point, the creation of a robust international policy, through its own funds and alternatives to the prevailing capital of great powers on the western axis, seems to be in line with the historical pragmatism that traced Brazil through a professional profile of its diplomacy.

At the same time, it is possible to observe that, among the other countries of the bloc, the expansion of collaboration axes, especially those related to the respective regions, also stand out as a foreign policy project. As in Brazil, the experimentation of the last decades of focus in the South Atlantic and in South America, South Africa, India, China and Russia, significantly increased the number of agreements and the diversity of interests of establishment and regional projection. In this regard, Southeast Asia and the South Atlantic drew attention to the propulsion of projects both associated with commercial collaboration and international governance structures in matters such as security and defense.

### **BRICS on the Brazilian “New Foreign Policy” agenda**

Faced with a new Brazilian conjuncture in terms of its foreign policy, this topic of the article seeks to carry out a discourse analysis of official speeches from Ernesto Araújo in order to understand the “paths” of the new Brazilian foreign policy agenda and the capacity for negotiation given to its partners in the BRICS group. Therefore, we have as an initiative a brief analysis about Brazil-BRICS relations and the new agenda proposed by the newly elected government (mandate from 2019) in order to verify new demands, new partnerships and the deepening |(or not) of this relationship.

The greatest approximation of these countries at that time would be the need to break with the international order established in the main forums of economic and political power,

where there is still the focus of power and influence of developed countries and also where the process of making decisions occurs.

This process of implementing and presenting the BRICS to the international community demonstrated the support and common interest of the group's countries in breaking with the rigidity of developed countries in international decision-making forums. In this case, it is not a question of breaking with these countries, since they are recognized for their great economic impact, but instead a matter of “forcing” international institutions and bodies to have more dynamic and democratic structures.

Since its creation, BRICS members have established bilateral and trilateral partnerships with the purpose of strengthening institutional and commercial relations. The commercial and financial agreements and the proposal to create a bank that gave rise to the New Development Bank (NBD) in 2014 were some cooperation mechanisms on the BRICS agenda. In terms of strengthening institutional and commercial relations and the economic impact of such changes, the NBD has so far approved 46 projects worth US \$12.8 billion in member countries, according to a report available after the 11th BRICS Summit in Brasilia. (NBD, 2019)

Neuman (2008) pointed out that the discourse analysis of social actors aims to highlight the characteristics that promote the formal character of representations through a post-structuralist lens. In the field of politics, especially foreign policy, the meaning of this type of analysis is linked to the narrative we want to emphasize, constituting the represented subject and the entity exposed by his speech. In the case of official speeches present at formal meetings, it has a different repercussion from those speeches whose treatment is diverse, given that it is diffused by the media in the spontaneous form of its unstructured outlines. Among structured and unstructured speeches, Brazilian foreign policy is a project historically endowed with the professionalism and formalism of the diplomats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil (Itamaraty), which is accompanied by presidential participation in non-formal speeches and guided by ordinary dynamics.

In the case of the New Foreign Policy, inaugurated in Jair Bolsonaro's presidency under Ernesto Araujo's coordination, the dynamics of deconstruction of speeches from the previous paradigm which was dominated by the Workers' Party for 12 years were intensified in the first year of mandate (2019). Considering the desire to align with the United States and to maintain Brazilian foreign policy on this trend, subsequent choices in the matter ended up being influenced by the interpretations derived from this alignment, since the other choices could not subdue the first.

This alignment reflects the impersonation of the administration's perspective on national identity. In opposition to what he calls as "globalist ideology," Ernesto Araujo expressed in his inauguration speech the version of "Nationalist" foreign policy that Brazil would pursue starting from 2019, enumerating some of its dearest allies.

So we admire those who fight, we admire those who fight for their homeland and those who love each other as a people, so we admire, for example, Israel, which never stopped being a nation, even when it had no soil—in contrast to some nations today, that even though they have their soil, their churches and their castles they no longer want to be a nation. That is why we admire the United States of America: those people who fly their flag and worship their heroes. We admire the Latin American countries that freed themselves from the regimes of the São Paulo Forum. We admire our brothers on the other side of the Atlantic, who are building a vibrant and free Africa. We admire those who struggle against tyranny in Venezuela and elsewhere. That is why we admire the new Italy, why we admire Hungary and Poland, we admire those who assert themselves and not those who deny themselves. (Araujo, 2019).

This nationalism that welcomes Western principles is directly linked to the merge of economic freedom and moral values. In this sense, the new Brazilian nationalism that arose from the 2018 election has its foundation based on principles brought by conservative Christianity. According to this version of national identity, everything that represents diversity and plurality in society seems like a menace for the prosperity and the longevity of the humankind. All of that is labeled as "globalism", an ideology that the government claims it has beaten in the polls.

In Brazil, voters chose a path that combines economic freedom with a strong sense of national identity and its values. We are convinced that these two dimensions—that of economic freedom and that of values—are mutually reinforcing. The only reliable basis for a competitive liberal economy is a coherent, authentic, and free society. (Araujo, 2019b).

The New Brazilian Foreign Policy and the approach to the United States in terms of the agenda are experiencing a new conjuncture about foreign relations. In international forums, the narrative of this new perspective, seen under the leadership of Ernesto de Araújo, has addressed issues such as nationalism, national identity, the Brazilian people, values and morals that the new government considers "lost". This new discourse, aimed at the binomial democracy and freedom, has permeated the agenda in several government presentation meetings to countries in the region and others.

For verification, below is an excerpt from the speech of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ernesto de Araújo, on the New Foreign Policy of Brazil and its commercial aspect at Firjan in August 2019.<sup>4</sup>

I would like to talk a little more about trade policy and our foreign policy as a whole. Sometimes, we see our foreign policy not having a structure. Once I was making a stopover at Madrid airport and I saw a sign: “Spain is not in the city”. Nor is Brazil covered by the hand, Brazil's foreign policy is not covered by the hand either. It requires a little effort to understand what you are trying to do: try to open up democracy, economic openness, sovereignty, the defense of values with one hand and to demand everything, the concept of freedom. I think any of the actions that we are trying to take, like things that we are changing, like things that we are deepening, fit into some of these domains, which fit together. Democracy, openness, sovereignty, values. (Araujo, 2019c)

However, speeches that address realism and the need to look at the demands of the people and interests of Brazil can cause strangeness with a plural and multilateral agenda of foreign policy that has always been used with the cooperative parameter, especially with our strategic environment and other partners and multilateral groups. The strand of discourse based on nationalism and, at the same time, on trade openness and the use of private capital demonstrates a government that shares its internal agenda and priorities with those of the Brazilian foreign policy.

Despite the automatic alignment with the United States, which made the president announce his son as a possible United States Ambassador (later withdrawn nomination by opposing public pressure), his government's electoral support was great in relation to the liberal and focused growth, centered on the Minister of Economy, Paulo Guedes. Hence, economic pressures demonstrated that such an alignment should not be made by creating ruptures or splits with relevant commercial partners, especially in relation to China (the main Brazilian trading partner in the current situation), which would also be the case for the BRICS.

Thus, it is possible to perceive a progressive change over the first year in terms of pronouncements and positions until the summit meeting in Brasilia, for which his coordination was admittedly more pragmatic. In January, Ernesto Araujo expressed critique that seemed addressed to China, in the Informal Ministerial Meeting of the WTO, saying that "trade can also function as a force that leads to the opposite of liberal democracy. It is up to us to make

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/pt-BR/discursos-artigos-e-entrevistas-categoria/ministro-das-relacoes-exteriores-discursos/20749-palestra-do-ministro-de-estado-das-relacoes-exteriores-sobre-a-nova-politica-externa-do-brasil-e-sua-vertente-comercial-firjan-28-8-2019>.

trade a force for good, freedom, and human progress" (2019b). Over time, his speech became less critical towards China.

The pragmatism that was strong during the military regime in Brazil is also part of the influence of the military professional corps that keep the government from less moderate and more dichotomic options in sectors such as defense, energy and foreign policy. Not surprisingly, the 2019 BRICS Summit had as its agenda the expansion of cooperation between members.

The agenda focused on the commercial partnership and mainly on development in strategic areas. This made the Development Bank invest in sectors of great interest in the member countries. The projects which are to be implemented in the 2020 agenda of the BRICS bank are related across a wide range of different niches, from infrastructure sectors and logistics hubs in Brazil to investments in energy and water resources in South Africa. Other projects are focused on environmental issues, digital systems and greater accessibility in remote accesses and investment in transport. Some of these examples are demonstrations of a cooperation agenda in strategic sectors in view of the development needs of the BRICS countries.

Faced with a new model of foreign policy and the prioritization of commercial issues on the PEB agenda, the BRICS started to play a major role in Brazil. In 2019, Brazil led the group under the motto "BRICS: economic growth for an innovative future," emphasizing the promotion of science, technology and innovation, digital access and the increase of relations between the productive sector and the NDB.

At an informal meeting of the BRICS at the G20 meeting in June 2019 in Japan, member countries reiterated the importance of the group for global economic growth, stating that structural changes would further strengthen countries' potential growth. They also emphasized the need to invest in innovation to promote development to expand the areas of science and technology, to deepen cooperation and exchange of experiences to reduce poverty and to increase digital access in remote regions.

This joint agenda of the BRICS countries was defended in a speech by President Jair Bolsonaro at the Plenary Session of the 11th BRICS Summit, reaffirming the group's economic potential, the importance of intra-BRICS partnership, the need to implement science and innovation as a driving force development, and that "in international trade, we adopt a realistic and pragmatic perspective. We celebrated a Memorandum of Understanding between our trade and investment promotion agencies, which will help each of our countries to learn from the best

practices of other BRICS members” (Bolsonaro, 2019), when addressing the vision and role of Brazil.

Even though Bolsonaro's administration managed to move closer to pragmatism during the BRICS Summit, it did not mean that it changed the roots of its foreign policy. In a discourse addressed to Angola's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in December 2019, Ernesto Araujo once again repeated his interpretation on Brazil as an integral part of the West:

We will return to ourselves, and in this return to ourself, the Brazilian people want to recover their roots, want to live again as part of the West, as part of the great adventure that begins there with the Greeks and Romans. And sometimes, when I say that, they call me Eurocentric, but it is just the opposite; it is to say that Europe does not have a monopoly on this Western adventure; we are as much or more part of that story. Precisely, I say that the West does not end in Europe. (Araujo, 2019.d)

In the process of identifying Brazil's New Foreign Policy as funded on Western principles, Araújo compared the movement observed in the United Kingdom for Brexit with the process started in Brazil since Bolsonaro's election. According to him, both events are symbols of nations claiming for a kind of freedom that goes beyond the democratic system, one that is directly linked to the national sentiment. This argument is deeply embedded with a religious component with messianic elements that associate the President as shepherd to its people.

The book, which many of us believe, says, in the Gospel of Matthew: “Do not be afraid!”, “Μὴ φοβεῖσθε” (Μὴ φοβεῖσθε) in Greek. This is an inspiring phrase, which inspires those who believe in President Jair Bolsonaro's project, which is not an electoral project, but a political project; and that it is not just a political project, but a nation project, a project of the Brazilian nation that chose President Jair Bolsonaro as its vehicle. (Araújo, 2019.d).

In this sense, notwithstanding that the New Foreign Policy changed its approach to a more pragmatic one on the eve and throughout the BRICS Summit, it does not mean it abandoned the focus on the economic freedom and the moral values linked to the Western principles that act as the foundation for this version of Nationalism. Back to Gelson da Fonseca's classification for the different types of Brazilian foreign policy from a historical perspective, the current New Foreign Policy can be directly associated with the "Western Pure" form.

In addition to the return to a model of foreign policy that identifies the country as an integral part of Western culture, and that justifies all its actions corresponding to it when it comes to the model of insertion, the New Foreign Policy seems to have abandoned the autonomy that led to the creation of the BRICS. Brazil should accept the absence of surplus

power resources and embrace the liberalization of its economy following the American prescripts.

This return to an Americanist approach to the foreign policy identifies the interests of the Northern partner as being similar to its own. In the name of the alignment, the New Foreign Policy seems to renounce the basic principles that have governed the Brazilian foreign policy for years. From the Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration onward, we attested a widening in the variety of Brazilian partnerships. Now we see a return to the focus on the Western countries, especially the USA. This does not mean that Brazil abandoned all the multilateral initiatives it had with other developing countries, such as other BRICS members, but that it underwent a significant decrease in the importance it had.

From assuming the Western values, including Christianity, the New Foreign Policy assumes an ideological position that can harm long-term partnerships with countries that are not part of this group. That is not only the case for China—Brazil's most important trade partner—but also of some of the Middle Eastern countries with whom Brazil has maintained relationships with since colonial times, and that could interpret this movement as a support to a new cultural Crusade.

### **Final Remarks**

When the BRICS were first brought together in 2009, it was a symbol of the rise of a group of emerging countries that wanted to reform the international institutions for them to reflect the new configuration of economic and political power. The Brazilian autonomous "Active and Generous Foreign Policy" believed that the country could achieve international projection through the diversification of partnerships and the assertiveness in international forums, which are elements that would grant it the position of leadership within the developing countries.

After the 2018 election and the nomination of Ernesto Araújo for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil inaugurated the New Foreign Policy, reframing its international insertion from autonomy to alignment to the United States. This revision expressed a shift in the country's perception of who should be its priority partners, a change represented in images of Eduardo Bolsonaro using a Donald Trump 2020 campaign cap where one could read "Make America great."

The article aimed to understand how the "New Foreign Policy" could affect the BRICS bloc. To achieve this goal, it started with a literature review that focused on understanding the elements that influenced Brazil's international identity and action. The second section

addressed, through a historical analysis of the BRICS bloc, how it symbolized to Brazil an opportunity to become a leader for the developing countries. In the third part of the article, we conducted a discourse analysis of Ernesto Araújo's speeches in the first year of the "New Foreign Policy".

Through the discourse analysis of Ernesto Araújo's speeches, we could identify a focus on two major themes: the claim of a type of nationalism and the advocacy for trade liberalization. Through the nationalism, the New Foreign Policy merged Western values with conservative Christianity to differentiate itself from the previous multilateralist foreign policy; meanwhile, through the commercial liberalism, it aligned itself with the procedures recommended by the Western international institutions.

Those movements repositioned the Brazilian foreign policy closer to the United States' interests, in a similar strategy to what was once deployed by Dutra and Castelo Branco, and that Gerson da Fonseca calls "Western." Nonetheless, it did not mean that this rebranding came as prejudice toward the BRICS Summit of 2019, where Brazil occupied the rotative presidency of the bloc. The "New Foreign Policy" was pragmatic to what it brings to the group's summit, choosing as the motto "BRICS: economic growth for an innovative future," even though the full embrace of Western principles could have an impact on how other developing countries perceive Brasil.

In any case, the trade of the "Building BRICS" policy focused on multilateralism for "Make America[nism] great again," a reference to Trump's campaign motto mixed with the new "Americanist" orientation for Brazilian foreign policy. However, this new policy and motto could harm the country's relations with traditional partners, not only in the BRICS bloc but all over the Global South.

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