

LATINO-AMERICAN AND EURO-ATLANTIC AXIS

A multidimensional analysis



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Authors:

Alice Almeida
Chiara Gonçalves
Francisca Moura
Isabela Gama
Israel Goldoni
Valentina Ruas

EuroDefense-Jovem Portugal
#ObservatórioEDJ

Triangulation between BRICS, Brazil, and the EU: A Changing World

By Alice Almeida and Chiara Gonçalves

Introduction

As we know, the International Order is undergoing a necessary transformation process. In the past few years, the emergence and strengthening of new actors have turned the international arena into a more pluralist and *quasi*-even space. Alliances and coalitions are being reconfigured, and the emergent multipolarity challenges the “Global North” power structure, reflecting said coalitions and the entangling of the XXI century international forces.

Emerging economies are responsible for a significant share of global growth, and groups like the BRICS have been gaining importance in the geopolitical and economic scene. Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa are emerging economies that stand out as increasingly significant regional powers, rebalancing the Pax Americana, strengthening rival power poles, and giving rise to a new configuration of forces. The members of the BRICS group already account for 31.5% of the world’s GDP - in purchasing power parity - surpassing the 30.8% of the G7 (Germany, Canada, United States, France, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom). Turzi (2017) argues that we are facing a process of structural change that overlaps with a political transition linked to the increased role of Global South countries in discussing issues on the global agenda.

Brazil’s International Position

Brazil is the undisputed leader of South America. Even with Argentina’s attempt to lead the continent, it is no match for Brazil’s giant territory, population, economic strength, and vocalness in the international arena. This scenario is why Brazil is one of the founding BRICS+ members and one of the ten countries worldwide that have a strategic partnership with the European Union. Brazil’s diplomatic institution, the Itamaraty, has a long-standing international posture that prioritizes

The Chinese Communist Party emphasizes that building a new type of international relations based on mutual respect, equality, and cooperation is essential to address contemporary global challenges (Central Committee of the CCP, 2019). This perspective reflects the growing need for greater inclusion of Global South countries in global governance decisions. According to Cox (2016), there is, to some extent, a crisis of international architecture beyond the crisis of U.S. hegemony and the decline of American imperialism. Existing institutions and power relations are generating growing dissatisfaction, leading states to seek to construct an international system that serves the collective interests of many, not just a few. The result is a progressive confrontation between the camp of Western allies and emerging power blocs.

Increasingly crucial on the international scene, the BRICS+ has been transforming the paradigm, anticipating the arrival of a new global order. Due to the intense polarization of different poles, this article investigates Brazil’s position as a member of the BRICS+ and a strategic partner of the European Union to understand how its position could be a possible link between both blocs.

human rights and preserves diplomatic practices. For many years, the goal has been to achieve a global status that reflects the country’s importance and worldwide reach.

Despite experiencing difficult political and economic times in recent years, the South American giant has a prominent role in the agricultural industry, producing one-fifth of the world’s food supply. Not only is agriculture a substantial industry in Brazil, but the country is also a force to be reckoned with

regarding the energetic transition. The country is indeed an oil producer, with over 5 million barrels a day, but also has and explores other energy resources, such as gas, nuclear, hydroelectric, solar, aeolic, biomass, and biogas. Brazil is a

true example of how to conduct this transition process due to the fact that currently, 45% of the country's energetic matrix is from renewable energy sources, making the country cleaner than most developed nations.

*"Brazil, possibly, has never had in its history any perspective or any chance of reaching important spaces in the world as it does now with the climate transition and the energy transition. The world has never seen Brazil with such importance, and it is not just because of agribusiness, not just because of iron ore, not just because of soy, not just because of meat. This is because Brazil is an unbeatable country when it comes to energy. It is enough for us to be great, think big, wake up, and transform this dream into reality. That is why we are making this energy transition a new moment for Brazil to develop, grow, and present itself to the world with its head held high, without a defeatist complex or inferiority complex."*¹

Another issue that is of utmost importance for Brazil is the United Nations Security Council Reform, which the country has been an essential advocate for. The argument shared by Brazil and most of the international community is that it does not fairly represent global politics and cannot fulfill its stated goal, given the decade-long impasse between EUA, UK, and France vs. China and Russia. The Bolsonaro administration put Brazil in an awkward international position, given his conservative right-leaning views led by a relatively isolationist policy. Lula da Silva's third presidential term changed that and restored Brazil to its rightful place internationally.

Brazil has been traditionally an advocate for peace, opposing the Russo x Ukrainian war, as well as condemning Israel's war on Gaza as well as the Hamas October 7th attack. This does not mean that Brazil will compromise its position on BRICS+ and its relationship with Russia due to the war, but it does mean that Brazil will continue to offer its diplomatic mediation. Not cutting ties with Russia does not signify a stepping away from the West, given that Brazil still has essential economic and cultural ties with the European Union and the United States. The country shows itself to be open for dialogue and business with anyone who wants to do so, being a historical defender of worldwide multilateralism.

*"Brazil has never had, at any point in its history, the relationship that Brazil has today with the rest of the world. We have nothing against any country. Nothing. We have nothing against the United States. But we are sovereign. We have nothing against China, but we are sovereign. And Brazil wants to be with China, Brazil wants to be with India, Brazil wants to be with the United States, Brazil wants to be with Venezuela, Brazil wants to be with Argentina. Brazil wants to be with the whole world."*²

These points, summarized in this section, showcase that Brazil is an important international player with much to offer in the most diverse ways. If the cards are played correctly, the

country can consolidate its position as a global leader, running away from the "developing country" discourse.

¹ President Lula da Silva, September 2024, at the Graduation of the new Itamaraty Class of Diplomats.

² President Lula da Silva, September 2024, at the Graduation of the new Itamaraty Class of Diplomats.

BRICS+: History and Geopolitical Importance

The history of the BRICS is very recent, but its political basis has shown to be an essential factor within the international political system of the 21st century. The bloc acronym was first coined in 2001 as "BRIC" in a report by Jim O'Neill, head of global economic research at Goldman Sachs, which predicted four promising emerging/re-emerging markets for the following decade: Brazil, Russia, India, and China. In June 2009, the group was officially created during the first BRIC summit in Russia. In 2010, during the group's second summit, BRIC became BRICS by integrating South Africa as a full member. Since its creation, heads of state have met annually in one of these countries on a rotating basis. The BRICS countries created cooperation mechanisms to express themselves more assertively in the face of mutual demands for greater participation in international politics. Its first summit in Yekaterinburg ended with a call for emerging and developing countries, appealing for their greater involvement at the tables of international institutions, especially financial institutions. BRICS has become an essential platform for emerging markets and developing countries. Today, the bloc is more robust, following approaches and departures throughout its evolutionary process; however, 2016 and 2023 marked important milestones for understanding the BRICS+ as we know it. In July 2016, the group launched the multilateral New Development Bank (NDB) to "mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS

BRICS+ vs. European Union

BRICS+ and the EU are very different blocs in several aspects, whether in size, wealth, or purposes. According to a European Union briefing on the BRICS enlargement process in 2023, the EU has no formal direct relations with BRICS+ as a group nor a dedicated policy or strategy targeting it; however, the EU has bilateral and interregional agreements and partnerships with individual members. Regarding trade, the EU has no free trade or investment agreements with BRICS+ members, except for agreements with Egypt and the SADC EPA (economic partnership agreement with the Southern African Development Community, of which South Africa is a member). Currently, the EU is negotiating agreements with India and Mercosur. In terms

and other emerging economies and developing countries and to complement the Bretton Woods institutions."

Since its creation, BRICS member countries have applied their economic potential to reforming global financial institutions, intending to establish a responsible international currency system. In August 2023, during the 15th summit in Johannesburg, after 13 years without expansion, BRICS welcomed five new members - Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates - who officially joined the bloc in 2024. Since the group's establishment, many countries have shown interest in joining. Still, this latest expansion process can be understood as a move to create a more balanced world order by giving greater prominence to the perspectives of the Global South. During the 2023 BRICS Economic Forum, Putin stated: "In terms of purchasing power parity, the 'five' surpass the Group of Seven." Now informally called "BRICS+", the group's total GDP rose 35.5% of global GDP compared to the G7's 30%. BRICS+ is set to change the world economy by 2030. Beyond becoming Africa's most significant trade partners, the BRICS commit to strengthening a new multilateral and inclusive normative order based on regulatory principles and South-South Cooperation (SSC), with issues like UN Security Council reform frequently advocated by countries like Brazil and South Africa.

of population, the population of BRICS+ countries is significantly higher than that of the EU27. Economically, the GDP of the EU27 is nearly higher than that of the BRICS+ countries. BRICS+ represents more than 42% of global production. As mentioned, the EU takes different stances with different BRICS+ countries, mainly differentiating between those considered democratic and non-democratic. When asked about the BRICS enlargement, the EU's chief spokesperson for external affairs and security policy, Peter Stano, stated, "The European Union is not a member of the BRICS, so this decision on the group's enlargement is solely up to its members.

Therefore, we take note of this development and have already established connections with individual BRICS members."

Regarding the level of integration and cooperation, the EU is undoubtedly much more integrated, with much deeper coordinated policies than BRICS+. While the EU's decision-making process is complex and carried out by different institutions, BRICS+ decisions are made by consensus, and the bloc does not have a permanent secretariat. On the other hand, both in geography and familiar principles, the countries of the

BRICS+ x Brazil x EU:

As the previous sections made clear, the international arena is distancing itself from the 30-year-long American Hegemony and entering a multipolar phase. In terms of alliances, BRICS+ is the face of this movement, and understanding how it interacts with other international actors, as well as cooperation opportunities and possible tensions, is fundamental to grasping what the geopolitical future may bring. As stated, the EU and the BRICS+ do not have any sort of agreement or cooperation. If the BRICS+ development continues to follow its expectations, it will be impossible for the EU to ignore it. This is where Brazil can use its privileged position as a founding BRICS+ member and as a strategic partner of the EU to bring the blocs closer together.

Before establishing how Brazil can act as a bridge between the two, it is essential to highlight why they should cooperate. For the EU, the overreliance on the United States is an issue recently highlighted by the Ukraine invasion, which puts the European Security spectrum on high alert, and also by the volatility of American Politics. Many countries have been going through internal polarization within their political frame, and the instability of American politics does not only impact life inside their own borders. Due to the United States' global leadership in economic, cultural, and security aspects, the whole globe stands and watches the political impasse and worries about the outcome, knowing that nowadays, many American international stances do not reflect the State but do reflect the President. Donald Trump has been vocal about the disparity in NATO member payments and contributions, saying that the European nations should "pay up." This is a worrying

European Union are more unified than BRICS+. Despite having significant geopolitical and economic importance, BRICS+ countries have varying political, economic, and social interests, which can affect the group's effectiveness as a unified force for change by generating internal tensions, making it difficult to reach consensus on critical issues. With the enlargement, this could become an even more significant challenge, given the increased diversity of interests within the group; some examples are the tensions between China and India or Egypt and Ethiopia.

point for the UE, given that the main provider of security and defense for both the bloc and the continent is NATO. In conjunction with the Ukrainian invasion, the uncertainty of NATO protection leaves the entirety of Europe in a fragile position.

This delicate situation that the EU is going through can only be resolved if the bloc can unify its internal stances concerning particular dilemmas. So far, even though the BRICS+ initiative has been an actor in the international arena for over a decade, the EU limits itself to stating that they have bilateral relations with the members. If this is being done out of strategy or helplessness, the point is that the EU has to take a firm step regarding its foreign, security, and defense policies to lessen its dependence on America and maintain itself as a prominent player in the international system. With the enlargement and/or deepening of the Union - which is a point of internal dissonance- they need to guarantee the solidity of the bloc in the scope of international affairs. The BRICS+ is a bloc with a promise for the future, and the EU should be able to decide for itself what the best course of action is and envision how the bloc will stand internationally in the long term.

For BRICS+, the EU could partner in signaling to the West that it does not intend to end American Hegemony forcefully or to be an alternative forum to the UN. This would be a win-win situation for both parties, with the EU forming a stronger and more independent stance in the international arena and the BRICS+ following through to become a worldwide connected alliance. Following this premise, Brazil can be the ideal candidate to orchestrate this aggregation, given that Brazil is

a BRICS+ member that does not intend to break its Western connection, even denying the investment offered by China as a part of the Belt and Road Initiative, but accepting the EU funding for the Global Gateway Initiative.

Inside the BRICS+ alliance, Brazil holds a comfortable position, not only as a founder state but also as one with peaceful and cooperative ties with multiple members. China is Brazil's biggest trading partner, having a bilateral trade of over 150 billion dollars, and Brazil is the fourth biggest receiver of Chinese investments worldwide. Regarding food security, Brazil is China's most significant agricultural partner. The actors also cooperate on other bilateral initiatives, such as the COSBAN (Sino-Brazilian Commission for High Cooperation) and the CBERS (Sino-Brazilian Satellite for Terrestrial Resourcer), showing that this is a multilevel and increasingly important partnership for both.

Before the BRICS+ initiative came to life, Brazil, India, and South Africa were already collaborators in the IBAS. The forum was founded in 2003 to better coordinate political dialogue and economic cooperation between the three emerging nations, which are also democratic states with a multicultural background and multiethnic population. One of the main objectives of this forum is dealing with poverty and food insecurity, which are still, unfortunately, issues that have considerable impacts in these countries, even with economic growth. Besides the IBAS initiative, Brazil and India are fighting together for a permanent member expansion of the UNSC. Along with Japan and Germany, these four countries form the

Conclusion

In this regard, our aim with this article was to establish the deep economic multilateralism that rules over the globe nowadays and how much it would benefit the EU and the BRICS+ to develop cooperation. This partnership can be explored in the most diverse ways, ranging from finance matters to security ones. There needs to be political will to do so, and Brazil can not only be the one to link both but can also use this connection to promote peace. Most importantly, our main argument is that Brazil dotes capability, international respect, recognition, and importance to be the bridge between the two most important blocs in current geopolitics. And that movement, on Brazil's

G4, which advocates for being included as permanent members.

Regarding Brazil and Germany, besides their allegiance in striving for the expansion of the UNSC, they also interact bilaterally and in the bloc-to-bloc frame. As stated, Brazil is the leader of South America and also leads the Mercosur bloc. On the other hand, Germany is one of the European Union's leaders due to its economic strength and founding member status. Germany has been a true defender of the EU x Mercosur trade, but it has been challenging to turn it into a reality given the internal pressure from France and the Netherlands. Nonetheless, Brazil already has a strategic partnership with Europe, and they qualify as one of each other's biggest trading partners.

The points made above regarding Brazil's deep relationship with the EU and the BRICS+ countries show that Brazil has the possibility, and most importantly, the capability, through its respected diplomatic school, to link these two important blocs. The diplomatic practices have a wide reach in the international community, but even without betting completely in good faith, there are also immense economic benefits that can be reaped in the cooperation between them. For instance, the trade between the EU and China constitutes one-third of worldwide trade. It is important to recognize that there are projects between Brazil & China and Brazil & EU that can be expanded to become a multilevel cooperation between the BRICS+ and the EU.

part, is also safeguarding its future as a global leader and one more pillar to sustain the country's aim at becoming a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

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Comparative Analysis of Convergences and Divergences in Security Policies: CARICOM vs. NATO

By Francisca Moura and Isabela Gama

Introduction

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are two Atlantic organizations with different principles. CARICOM is an economic and political integration bloc of the Small Islands in Development (SIDS) of the Caribbean to promote their economic development process and defend their common development process. NATO is an international organization based mainly on shared security

policies and agreements made by states of Anglo-Saxon America and many states of Europe. Nevertheless, when it comes to security, in comparison, the organizations do not share several points, and in others have common grounds. In this article, we compare and analyze security points in both organizations and see convergences and divergences in these policies.

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is a treaty based on the Humanitarian Initiative, where a group of non-nuclear countries push nuclear countries toward nuclear disarmament.

"The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) prohibits States Parties from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, acquiring, possessing, or stockpiling nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices".³

According to NATO's Nuclear Sharing Arrangements (2022), the United States, France, and the United Kingdom are Nuclear States. The 9 nuclear states, U.S. allies, and NATO members failed to pass the prohibition in the General Assembly. (Nuclear Security Index, 2024) The U.S. even called the initiative

"unrealistic." Nevertheless, in 2021, nuclear weapons were considered proscribed by international law. Based on the latest facts, the official NATO position affirms the principles of peace but also strongly disagrees with the "ban treaty."

"We collectively reiterate our opposition to this treaty, as it does not reflect the increasingly challenging international security environment and is at odds with the existing non-proliferation and disarmament architecture.".⁴

NATO sees the TPNW as an impossible way to achieve disarmament and, more than this, to achieve peace. In particular, NATO concludes that the TPNW has no rigor and, by

doing so, does not see a concrete strategy in the name of disarmament. So differently, than the CARICOM, NATO does not consider the TPNW as a good strategy and defends the

³ (NUCLEAR THREAT INITIATIVE, 2024).

⁴ (NATO's official website, 2020).

existence of nuclear weapons as a method to control external coercion and stabilize peace around the world. The main basis for this argument is precisely the fact that NATO sees itself as an organization to stabilize general peace, so for the organization, the fact that 3 states possess nuclear weapons is just a demonstration to the rest of the nuclear states that NATO is prepared to face threats. NATO indeed wants to change the nuclear reality slowly but wants to develop a well-constructed plan for disarmament.

CARICOM comprises countries in a region that has historically been free of nuclear weapons. The members are signatories to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which establishes Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone free of the influence and possession of nuclear weapons.

Based on its commitment to global peace, security, and stability, the community adopts a firm position in favor of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

By strongly supporting the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Treaty (CTBT),

it expresses the desire of its members to keep the region, until then, free from the nuclear threat. The Treaties aim to promote the disarmament of nuclear weapons globally by advocating that all states that possess them reduce their use to a point where they eventually eliminate their arsenals.

In addition, the Community stands against the modernization of arsenals and their testing, as all its members support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPAN), adopted in 2017, seeking a total ban on the development, testing, use, and possession of nuclear weapons.

Reflecting CARICOM's tradition of seeking diplomatic solutions to conflicts and global threats, the Caribbean countries emphasize the need for international cooperation and multilateralism to be able to meet the challenges of nuclear non-proliferation and promote the strengthening of the verification and control mechanisms of the treaties that already exist and have to be put into account. At the same time, it has expressed its concerns about the humanitarian and environmental impacts of their use.

UKRAINE

As NATO said, Ukraine's future is in NATO. For them, defending Ukraine is not just defending a country from an invasion but,

more than this, defending their vital security space. Ukraine is already seen as part of NATO.

*"This aggression gravely undermines Euro-Atlantic and global security and is a blatant violation of international law. NATO Allies, in concert with relevant resolutions of the UN General Assembly, demand that Russia stop the war immediately, cease its use of force against Ukraine, and completely and unconditionally withdraw all its forces from Ukraine."*⁵

More than this, NATO sees Ukraine as a great partner, a country that helps in several missions and operations. This is why the Atlantic organization is important in establishing peace and security in the area. Following this train of thought, NATO is

taking any measures it can to reach its goal. The allies are in these areas, including money, political, and practical support. The annual plan for Ukraine in several areas was de 40 billion. In 2023, NATO also agreed to implement a multi-year program.

At the 2023 Vilnius Summit, Allies agreed to further develop the CAP into a multi-year program of assistance for Ukraine based on sustained and predictable funding. Longer-term support is organized through three

⁵ (NATO's official website, 2024.)

*principal lines of effort: recovery and reconstruction, institutional transformation, and transition toward NATO interoperability.*⁶

It is also important for the NATO agenda to recognize the Russian aggression and disrespect of international law by the international community. This is important, especially in revitalizing NATO's purpose nowadays. In this specific point, CARICOM plays a positive role in the "NATO'S campaign." CARICOM has made Ukraine an important matter of international politics, constantly discussing the war.

CARICOM has adopted a position of active and balanced neutrality concerning the Ukrainian War. They focus primarily on finding peaceful and diplomatic solutions in accordance with international law. Its 15 members have reiterated their position supporting Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity while emphasizing the need for dialogue between the two parties involved.

Since the start of the war in February 2022, CARICOM has taken a position of solidarity with Ukraine. It emphasizes that Russia's attitude in invading Ukraine violates international law, as well as the principles of sovereignty and self-determination. The community condemns the violation of Ukrainian territorial integrity and demands an immediate end to hostilities. On the other hand, as mentioned above, another strong Caribbean position is based on the call for diplomatic dialog and peace. CARICOM has consistently called for an end to violence through

peaceful and diplomatic means, with direct negotiations between Russia and Ukraine considered fundamental.

For the Caribbean, a prolonged conflict must be avoided, as it could have global repercussions, affecting Latin America and the Caribbean, especially the small Caribbean island states that suffer from the indirect consequences of the conflict, such as food crises and rising energy prices. Many of the countries that belong to the organization import food and energy from the global markets that have been affected by the war, leading to escalating prices that affect the economies of Caribbean countries. Therefore, out of concern for the economic and social impacts of the conflict, the community has emphasized the need for global mechanisms to mitigate its impacts, especially in developing and vulnerable countries, which are usually the most affected.

CARICOM member states have largely voted in favor of UN resolutions condemning the Russian invasions of Ukrainian territory. However, as an intergovernmental organization, CARICOM tries to avoid taking extreme positions that could further polarize the situation. Therefore, while recognizing that the global impacts greatly affect the Caribbean region, CARICOM maintains a pragmatic position in terms of upholding international law by advocating a mediation approach and focusing on diplomatic solutions.

Environment

As well known, climate change is a real problem facing our current lives and is getting worse daily. According to the think

tank Chatham House (2023), conflicts related to natural resources have been increasing over the centuries.

"Over the past 60 years, at least 40 percent of internal armed conflicts were related to natural resources, and the most devastating armed conflicts between 1950 and 2000 occurred in biodiversity hotspots."

Climate change impacts NATO's missions in different spheres. NATO faces natural disasters, such as the intensification of hurricane and cyclone seasons, wildfires, and flooding, and helps reduce the impacts. More than this, conflicts caused by

the scarcity of natural resources create a higher demand for NATO's scope of action. Lastly, the extreme conditions faced right now also affect NATO's capabilities.

⁶ (NATO's official website, 2024)

The US Department of Defense (DoD) has revealed that two-thirds of US military bases, including Hampton Roads in Virginia, which holds strategic importance for NATO, are especially vulnerable to rising sea levels and extreme weather events.⁷

Environmental security has become, through the years, a current topic in NATO's agenda. The organization sees natural disasters led by climate change as a threat to human life and the security of nations. A realization by the allies that climate

change can be a danger to the future of humanity and a transnational crisis is making NATO implement 1969 strategies to tackle environmental risks.

Since 1969, NATO's Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme and its precursors have supported cooperative activities that tackle environmental security issues, including those related to defense.⁸

NATO tries to work for environmental protection through two main groups of action: the Environmental Protection Working Group and the Specialist Team on Energy Efficiency and Environmental Protection. Additionally, NATO has Protection Standardization Agreements and Allied Joint Environmental Protection Publications. Finally, in 2021, NATO leaders agreed on a Climate Change and Security Action Plan, and since then, it has been making assessments every year.

NATO is prepared to work in the military to help in extreme conditions and natural disasters. Still, more than this, NATO is investing in mitigating climate risks, seeing that not investing money, personal actions, and actions can only create more and more problems, even when completing missions.

In 2022, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg inserted in the NATOS's 2022 Strategic Concept climate change by the orientation of Stoltenberg. NATO wants to play a pioneering role in the fight against environmental problems. Despite all the efforts being put into resolving the climate problem, as discussed here, NATO still needs even more effort to create a plan that can be implemented.

Like NATO, CARICOM sees climate change as a risk to human life, in the case of Caribbean countries, and even to the existential condition of the countries.

Climate change is one of CARICOM's greatest short-, medium- and long-term threats, with devastating effects for its countries. The year 2023 has been recorded as "the hottest year ever documented" in the Caribbean (State of the Climate in Latin America and the Caribbean Report, 2023). The occurrence of extreme weather events, such as rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and loss of biodiversity, are some areas that are threatened by climate crises (UNDP, 2022). Low-lying island countries, such as the Bahamas, face the existential risk of submergence of a large part of their territory. On the other hand, the geographical location of Caribbean SIDS makes them particularly vulnerable to hurricanes and tropical storms that cross the region every year, creating serious problems for local infrastructures and causing significant loss of life and economic disruption, generating food and energy insecurity.

According to Dr. Cláudia Marin Suarez, a researcher specializing in Latin America and the Caribbean,

"Year after year, after hurricanes, governments have to allocate funds to repair lost infrastructure and livelihoods, such as food, that have been destroyed. This is a major drain on resources."

⁷ (Chatham House, 2023)

⁸ (NATO's official website, 2024.)

Climate change affects the entire planet; however, the richest 10% of the population is estimated to be responsible for 50% of global greenhouse gas emissions (Oxfam 2015). To reach the targets set in the Paris Agreement, drastic changes need to be implemented: greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced by a considerable 43% (Climate Summit, 2023).

Those who pollute least are those who suffer most disproportionately from the severe impacts associated with rising global temperatures. The Caribbean is one of the most affected regions despite contributing less than 1% of global GHG emissions (UNDP, 2022). CARICOM, therefore, advocates a "shared and non-equivalent responsibility" where Caribbean countries do not have the same responsibility for the level of environmental degradation compared to the Global North, which is the main one responsible for the largest historical accumulation of GELs.

Conclusion

In this article, we tried to analyze NATO and CARICOM's points in common and disagreements in security matters. Despite the main convergence on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in which both organizations take different sides and opinions, NATO and CARICOM have points in common. Both see the war in Ukraine as an illegal invasion of Russia, and more than this, NATO and CARICOM are putting more and more effort into controlling not only the damage but also mitigating the climate crisis the world faces.

Despite their small size, island countries are very assertive in promoting and proposing climate justice initiatives. Political negotiations in international fora such as the COP are crucial opportunities for Caribbean countries to present their demands and proposals. Collaboration among the nations of the Global South and the creation of strategic alliances are fundamental to strengthening the position of SIDS in global debates. In this case, the "Bridgetown initiative promoted by Mia Mottlev, Prime Minister of Barbados, and adopted by CARICOM as a whole. This proposal seeks to reform the current international financial architecture by proposing to reform the current mechanisms and establish a new pact on how developed countries will help less developed countries so that financing will focus on the effects of climate change and the management of natural disasters.

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The environmental and agricultural security as a standard for EU and Mercosul relations

By Israel Goldoni and Valentina Ruas

Introduction

Following the general principles of the European Union's environmental policy, which are legally based on the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the bloc's environmental policies must be established on four main pillars:

- 1) Precaution, which inhibits the application of policies that could be harmful to the environment or public health;
- 2) Prevention, as a tool to prevent environmental damage instead of just reacting to it;
- 3) Correntios of pollution from the source, which states that after damage to the environment has already occurred, the polluters are obliged to mitigate it from the source;

- 4) "Polluters pay," which obliges polluters to pay for any future damages.

Mercosur has the Mercosur Framework Agreement on the Environment (AQ-MAM), which was passed in 2001 and represented the inauguration of regional environmental protection. This agreement foresees sustainable development and environmental protection as two fundamental pillars for the bloc's development policy. Theoretically, it should guide all of its decisions. Not only that, sustainable development has become one of Mercosur's official objectives, according to article 4 of the AQ-MAM.

Although, in an ambiguous demonstration open to multiple interpretations, the Mercosur Association Treaty states the following objectives in its preamble:

"[...] accelerate their processes of economic development with social justice; more effective use of available resources, environmental preservation, [...] scientific and technological development"; [...] modernize the economy in order to improve the living condition of its inhabitants."

In other words, the lack of direct use of terms like "sustainable development" means that the application of the concept requires greater interpretation of the Treaty, allowing its members to feel more comfortable not doing so.

This ambiguity is the first of those that will be analyzed in this article through two main cases: The Free Trade Agreement

between the European Union and Mercosur and the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union, with the aim of exploring the relationship between the two blocs from the perspectives of environmental security, as well as identifying the effectiveness, nuances, and gaps of these policies.

The European Union and Mercosur Free Trade Agreement

The European Union and Mercosur agreement negotiations have been taking place over the last 20 years, having started in 1995 and reaching its final forms on June 28th, 2019. The main reason why the agreement took so long to see any shred of light is that it goes in contrary to international shared objectives in the fight against climate change since it would

worsen the state of the climate crisis and biodiversity loss, and create a greater negative (inter)dependency of the South American bloc to its European partners in economic matters, once it will not help the Mercosur to develop its national economy and development, all investments and policies would be to prioritize the export of goods to the EU.

Starting off with the environmental perspective, the agreement does not center on sustainable measures against climate change; the Paris Agreement is only mentioned in the section of the non-enforceable Trade and Sustainable Development chapter. Looking at the Paris Agreement as one of the main and most important guidelines for preventing an irreversible climate collapse, a trade policy of this dimension, with all of its capabilities, should have the environmental protection aspect as one of its main priorities, especially between countries that have agreed on these principles.

Citing the European Council in 2019, "All relevant EU legislation and policies need to be consistent with, and contribute to, the fulfillment of the climate neutrality objective." According to this statement and Mercosur's environmental protection guidelines, it is quite controversial that the Paris Agreement has only been mentioned in the text's non-enforceable part.

Besides the environmental aspect, one of the main negative effects of this deal would be to deepen the main specialization of the Mercosur, which is exporting goods, mainly from agriculture, and also to trust the bloc's economy into this agri-export model. However, this model is not the same in Europe and in South America, especially because of the different roles that both economies have in the global value chains. Europe is an industry-based economy, while South America is an agro-based economy, and the agreement would exponentially grow these asymmetries.

The European Union Common Agricultural Policy

Regarding agricultural security, the EU Common Agricultural Policy is an interesting case of analysis. Although not directly connected to Mercosur, such as the free trade agreement, its consequences could have direct and indirect impacts on South America's environmental security since the effects of trade, agricultural, and environmental policies promoted in the EU have a broad influence in the Global South, in this case, Mercosur. It is also a good example of the European Union's statement on sustainability and social welfare in its own territory.

The Common Agricultural Policy has been largely criticized by the scientific community and political sectors. There is an

This is only beneficial for the industrial sector of the EU and for the big agribusiness sector of the Mercosur, which tends to disregard the welfare and livelihoods of small producers and local communities through policies that deepen the inequality between them and make it harder for local businesses to grow out of poverty cycles, worsening the social inequality in South America. Not only would South American small producers be affected, though, as a big source of contestation came from French agribusiness sectors, which would lose the French markets to Brazilian products.

Therefore, after much public and political discontent, the European Union, in 2023, formulated some additions to the final text, which demanded better environmental protection measures in order to further circulate the agreement. Some of these measures include sanctioning commercial practices that are potentially derived from deforestation. Some French parliamentarians have also motioned against the agreement ratification, claiming its environmental faults, but also motivated by a big social and economic component, as previously mentioned.

The Mercosur found this initiative to be a negative step in the negotiation process, given that one can even say it was formulated in a threatening and punishable tone. Therefore, its ratification still finds itself up in the air.

extensive list of reasons, however, to list some of the main ones that are often brought up for discussion:

1. It is not in line with the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda, the EU Green Deal and the Climate Emergency Declaration made by the EU in 2019;
2. Member States are not allowed to formulate stricter sustainable proposals other than those limited by the CAP;
3. Without strict protection measures and increasing monoculture, biodiversity is put at risk;
4. There is a controversial financial distribution in which subsidies are calculated based on hectares and go directly to landowners, not the farmers themselves, contributing to social inequality.

Besides all of these factors that are directly related to European internal policies, there is also a not-so-subtle aspect, however often overlooked in discussions, which warns about the negative effects of this European policy on developing countries. Because this policy promotes a model of intensive livestock farming, the agribusiness sector in South America - and not only - feels the pressure: Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Uruguay account for around 50.6% of the world soybean production, and the CAP stimulates even more the expansion of this soybean model. This, of course, comes with serious environmental and social costs.

As a way of dodging environmental protection measures in the EU and also as a natural result of market dynamics, environmental degradation is transferred, and land use is

externalized to these developing countries. Consequently, there is an increase in deforestation and resulting consequences felt on climate, such as an increase in air pollution and heatwaves, which is a common challenge since greenhouse gas emissions and climate change are transboundary.

There is also another very serious issue common to Mercosur countries that have their agricultural models very affected by external pressure, which is the increase of land conflicts. I Coordinations SUD's report on the Common Agricultural Policy and violence between landowners and businessmen and Indigenous and traditional communities, that are constantly at risk of losing their lands to monocultures, and often face life-threatening disputes.

Conclusion

With these two study cases, this article aimed to demonstrate the connection between environmental and agricultural security in the European Union and Mercosur through direct and indirect examples. In a globalized world where patterns of development are being constantly shaped and reshaped by these two blocs, but especially by the European Union, it is imperative that the future of these two policies are visualized outside of the EU territory and the big policymakers' monopoly in Mercosur, in order to have the best interests of local communities in mind. It is necessary to holistically comprehend that such agreements and policies are interconnected and, therefore, need to be formulated to cause minimal environmental and social damage not only internally but also in other countries that heavily feel spillover effects.

Furthermore, it is crucial that both the European Union and Mercosur refine the agreements and their frameworks in order to fight the environmental damage that would follow the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement, as well as the development of the Common Agricultural Policy. It is necessary to safeguard the people's, environment's, and local economies'

well-being instead of being policies only beneficial to a portion of people, which means the elites or the big industries of each bloc. Finally, it is very important that the language of the agreements be revised and edited in order to mitigate the ambiguity and dubiousness regarding their social and environmental consequences.

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Brazil's Foreign Policy and How it Impacts the EU-Brazil Relations

By Alice Almeida

For this article, the main goal is to analyze the foremost objectives of Brazilian Foreign Policy, going through some of the most pressing current world phenomena and exploring how they impact the relationship between the country and the European Union (EU). In this day and age, the geopolitical landscape is marked by evolving questions that mobilize international actors in different ways, which can positively or negatively impact how these actors interact. This analysis aims to see how Brazil and the Union's relationship navigates said phenomena, recognizing the nuances and tensions that may arise given the actors' different standing in the international arena.

The Federative Republic of Brazil, or simply Brazil, is a country in South America home to over 210 million people, soil for one of the world's most diverse fauna and flora spread across multiple biomes. It's also the *país do futebol*, *berço do samba* and *bossa nova*. Place of birth to the world's greatest soccer players as well as the most beautiful supermodels. Besides the pop culture *persona* that Brazil has crafted - or that has been crafted for them by *gringos* - it is crucial in today's international arena to bestow upon Brazil a more careful and analytical look, given its founder status at the BRICS organization, its preponderance in the agricultural and overall food industry, its possible leadership in the energetic transition process, and its role as the natural leader of South America, even striving for a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

In the current geopolitical landscape, it's possible to conclude that the world is moving towards a multipolar balance, differing from the past 30 years of USA hegemony - since the USSR's fall. As a counter initiative to the traditional G7, the BRICS appears as a new possibility of not only economic reference, challenging American dominance by proposing the de-

dollarization of world trade, but also could be seen as a space for promoting peace. Of course, despite recognizing the powerful bloc that BRICS can become, there is still a lot of structuring to be done, as well as resolving internal issues, like the historical disagreements between China and India.

As a founding member of the BRICS, Brazil can indeed emerge as a Global South leader and achieve the internal development and economic growth it has been striving for since its establishment as a sovereign nation in 1822. The BRICS initiative primarily comprised Brazil, Russia, India, and China in 2009. South Africa was later accepted as a full member in 2010, followed by a recent expansion to include Iran, Ethiopia, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates. The bloc's wider reach showcases a clear construction of a diverse association that challenges the American hegemony, and Brazil plays a vital role as one of the founding members. This is one of Brazil's foreign policy goals: not necessarily to challenge the American world order but to be an active actor in crafting a prosperous global environment where it can emerge as a leader and reach its full economic potential alongside other underdeveloped nations. For Brazil, it is not a matter of ideology but opportunity. The country is and has been open to dialogue and cooperation with every single country in the world and wishes to do so. This is clear when analyzing that even though Brazil is a founding BRICS member, it is also a strategic partner of the EU - while the EU is not especially concerned about cooperating with BRICS.

Another crucial point of attention when talking about Brazil is the country's enormous role in the agricultural and overall food industry. The *Plano Safra* (Crop Plan) is an essential governmental initiative offering large and familiar farmers lines of credit. If the growth rate continues following its projection, Brazil can become an even more colossal player in the agricultural industry. According to the Brazilian

government website, currently, one of five plates of food served worldwide is composed of Brazilian products. Even though agriculture is a strength point for Brazil, it is also indispensable to mention that Brazil could teach much to the international community regarding the energy transition. Almost half of the country's energy comes from renewable sources, and they also stand as pioneers in alternative energy sources, such as biomass and biogas. Not only that, but Brazil can also compete with traditional sources such as oil. The country produces, daily, 5 million barrels and exports 2 million of them.

The UNSC Reform is, and has been, a hot topic. Most countries do agree that a restructuring is needed, given the evident inability to act that the Council has presented ever since the 2012 Libya *fiasco*. However, even though the need for reformation is clear, the international community has never reached an agreement and moved forward with the different proposals. For Brazil, this topic is crucial in its foreign policy, given that being accepted as a permanent member not only signifies an official international recognition of the country's regional leadership and essential contribution to the maintenance of peace worldwide throughout the historical institutionalism of Itamaraty but also, grants Brazil an upper status and power in the international arena. Diplomacy is an essential historical point for Brazil, which has been a member of the Security Council for eleven terms and delivers the opening speech yearly at the General Assembly.

The points mentioned above constitute Brazilian foreign affairs priorities. Despite the importance of the BRICS bloc, Brazil is still an actor that bets on the multipolar aspect of international relations, having a close partnership with the European Union. Brazil has a crucial historical tie with Europe through Portuguese colonization. As a way to sustain an active role in the international arena, Portugal sought this historical connection to become a mediator in the Brasilia and Brussels relationship. Portugal successfully achieved this when, during the Portuguese presidency of the European Council in 2007, an accord was signed by the two parties. Today, Brazil is one of the ten countries worldwide with a unique strategic partnership with the Union. This strategic partnership was not the first agreement between the two actors, having diplomatic

ties that go as far back as the 1960's. However, as stated, this specific agreement put Brazil on a list of 10 countries worldwide to share this type of relationship with the Union.

This partnership establishes multiple dialogues and areas of cooperation, given that the two parties defend and promote many of the same pillars. Some shared principles are democracy, human rights, fundamental liberties, and social inclusion. In addition to the social and political concerns, there is also the recognition of the urgent need to deter climate change, which is why the EU has established the Latin-American Follow-up Committee to keep a close eye on deforestation and biodiversity. The Union also recognizes Brazil's importance as a keeper of peace and respectful of diplomatic practices, establishing cooperation in the security and defense frame. The cooperation even goes as far as the EU offering aid to Brazil during the COVID-19 pandemic, given the catastrophic development the virus had in the country - due to the poor administration of Bolsonaro. Besides these areas, both parties have significant investments in each other's territories, signaling a deep economic partnership, symbolized bilaterally between country and bloc, and through the long-awaited Mercosur x EU free trade accord.

Although the partnership signifies a critical step in becoming closer actors, it is still essential to recognize that the aforementioned Brazilian priorities do not necessarily put the cooperation opportunities between the two at risk but certainly do signify extra caution in negotiating future endeavors. The EU has yet to overcome its concerns about deforestation and the sustainability of augmenting the agricultural demand, which Brazil is also deeply concerned about. Besides, there was a clear restraint in the relationship during Bolsonaro's presidential term, given his utmost disrespect for environmental policy and many other pillars upheld by the Union. Lula's third presidential term has softened this tension, with his apparent commitment to reinforcing ecological laws to protect the Amazon forest and the other Brazilian biomes. In 2024, Brazil suffered profoundly from environmental tragedies, such as the flooding of Porto Alegre and the fires in São Paulo, showing that this issue, even with Lula's and the EU's attention is still not under control.

The agricultural scope also becomes an obstacle when considering European farmers' distaste for the possibility of importing even more Brazilian produce. This has proved to be an internal issue in France, the Netherlands, Ireland, and Austria, with protests and revolts amongst these groups arguing that there is no way to compete with the importations fairly. The possibility of free trade between the regions would happen in the bloc-to-bloc framework. However, it still impacts the relationship between Brazil and the Union, given that Brazil is the main economic force of Mercosur and the biggest

country in terms of population and territory. For Brazilian manufacturers, there is also the concern that European industrialized products could be more competitive in the Brazilian market, showing that both sides hold deep concerns regarding the blocs' cooperation, which, as stated, impacts how Brazil and the Union interact. Despite reaching an agreement regarding the free trade prospect in 2019, the mentioned European nations are very resistant to it, regardless of the financial benefits for the Union.

"This is obviously great news for companies, workers, and the economy on both sides of the Atlantic, saving over 4 billion euros worth of duties per year. This makes it the largest free trade agreement the EU has ever concluded".⁹

In joint pressure with the issues of sustainability and agricultural competitiveness, the apparent awkwardness between the United States and the BRICS puts the Union in a juggling position. As stated, BRICS has been signaling that it could be the receptacle for the new world order with the end of the American Hegemony. The UE depends profoundly on the American giant in the critical defense spectrum and the economic and scientific departments. Of course, they also share fundamental values and principles and have shown to be allies in the most difficult of times, such as the World Wars. Even so, Brazil can use this awkwardness to become closer to the Union. This is a considerable opportunity for cooperation for both parties; for Brazil, there is the chance to signal to the USA that it is not its priority to contribute to the end of the

Empire; for the Union, there is a chance to signal to the World that it is not entirely dependant on America.

Also, regarding BRICS, there is the matter of Ukraine. Supporting Ukraine's fight against the Russian Invasion is paramount for the Union. For the BRICS countries -including Brazil- there is recognition that the fighting must end, but there isn't much political will to guarantee it. Brazil has offered to mediate the conflict multiple times, but it will not cut ties with Russia over this matter. Of course, denying that the international arena is interest-oriented is impossible. That means that no country will stand for something that could maim its interests. During the BRICS Summit of 2024, the Ukraine invasion was a topic to discuss, but it was not a priority.

"We must adhere to the three principles of 'no spillover from the battlefield, no escalation of fighting, and no adding oil to the fire by relevant parties' so as to ease the situation as soon as possible." ¹⁰

For Brazil and the EU, despite not seeing exactly eye-to-eye on the Ukranian matter, there is still a plethora of worldwide struggles that they can cooperate on. Israel's war on Gaza is

one of the most pressing issues, and Brazil has been very outspoken since the beginning on its support for a Palestinian State but never condoned the Hamas October 7th attack. In the Union, not all countries agree, but there is an impressive

⁹ (Jean-Claude Juncker, June 28th, 2019, European Commission.)

¹⁰ (Xi Jinping, BRICS summit 2024.)

movement in this direction. Ireland, Spain, and France have also been vocal about the Palestinian Genocide, the first two even going as far as recognizing the State of Palestine and France proposing an arms embargo on Israel. Much can be done regarding cooperation opportunities for Brazil and the Union, especially in humanitarian aid. Both parties are seasoned actors in this matter and could offer this type of support diplomatically and effectively on the ground.

Despite some tension, as stated above, both parties continue to develop more cooperation opportunities within the scope of the strategic partnership and in the bloc-to-bloc framework. Another incredible opportunity to cooperate is the European Union's Global Gateway Initiative (GG), which attempts to realize the Union's idealization of the future, involving hope-inspiring projects, such as digitalization, green transition, education, and smart transport networks. As the name hints, this initiative is a worldwide investment; having a budget directed at Latin America means that Brazil will also receive investments to concretize said plans. If Brazil unites the *Programa de Aceleração de Crescimento* (Program for Fast Development), which is a governmental initiative to invest over two hundred billion reais in infrastructure, digital transition, and clean energy, with the budget and investments that the GG will grant, there is a very fertile soil for the Brazilian development, at last. In addition, the fact that Brazil accepts the GG initiative but chose not to integrate China's Belt and Road Initiative proves the point previously made that it is not in Brazil's interest to be an active part of the American decline and that the values and historical ties with the political West are still in Brazil's foreign affairs.

In the Global Gateway initiative's scope, Brazil has much to offer regarding the clean energy transition. Even with a discourse for clean energy, Europe is still a polluting agent, relying on important fossil fuels. Brazil gets almost half of its energy from renewable sources, showing not only its commitment to the cause but also its deep political will and technological capability to do so. This is certainly an area of rich cooperation to explore. For Brazil, it would be interesting to export knowledge and energy to the EU, and the EU could continue to invest in this industry in Brazil, being a cyclical and fair partnership between the two.

Regarding the last Brazilian diplomatic priority, which is the UNSC Reform and the country's acceptance as a permanent member, there is room for cooperation with Europe, specifically Germany. Alongside Brazil in the attempt to become permanent members are other countries that also exert essential roles in the multipolarism that rules the current world. The so-called G4 countries are Brazil, India, Japan and Germany. The first two are already collaborators in the BRICS initiative, and Brazil and Germany have been signaling what could be a closer partnership, given that they cooperate not only in the G4 but also that Germany is one of the European Union nations that most advocate for the long-awaited accord between the EU and the Mercosur. Not only that, but the fact that both Germany and Brazil constitute regional leaders shows that there is a fertile ground for deeper cooperation, whether in the bloc x bloc format or just between the two.

The allyship between Brazil and the EU can benefit both, given that they hold diplomacy and dialogue as honorable practices. Both parties can take advantage of the BRICS matter by stating their intentions in the new multipolar world. The concerns regarding the agricultural and sustainability questions are well stipulated, and many pathways exist to address them. Regarding the UNSC Reform, it can be a win-win situation at the individual level for Brazil and Germany and at the "social" international level to be seen as promoters of good governance. Regarding international development, the UE Global Gateway Initiative establishes a series of investments in Latin America, promoting digitalization, education, and green transition, values also shared by Brazil.

In summary, the cooperation opportunities are limitless and involve the most variable areas and nuances, which can and should be explored. Finally, it is crucial to reiterate that both actors have a strategic partnership and see allies in each other. Still, as the world evolves and moves toward a multipolar regiment, in union with environmental and competitiveness issues, it is natural to have some tensions break out. Even so, it is nonetheless essential to understand that the parties agree and have room to cooperate on the scope of its many shared principles and ideals for the future.

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