

The Dynamics of Conflicts in Africa in the Early 21st Century



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THE DYNAMICS OF CONFLICTS IN AFRICA IN THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY

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OF CONFLICTS IN AFRICA
IN THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY

Edited by
János Besenyő – Viktor Marsai

The work was created in commission of the National University
of Public Service under the priority project PACSDOP-2.1.2-
CCHOP-15-2016-00001 entitled “Public Service Development
Establishing Good Governance”.

Revised by
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BRICS in Africa and the Brazilian Approach

Dávid Vogel

Abstract

The end of the Second World War served as a new start in many areas of life, new systems were introduced in order to better regulate and coordinate the interactions among people, countries and other entities. However, during decades, these systems were too rigid to react to the changes, positive and negative developments reorganised and reshaped the actors; thus specific systems were not favourable for certain players any longer. After the turn of the millennium, developing countries – especially those with vast areas and large populations – that were at a totally different stage in their lifecycle at the end of World War II, started to feel uncomfortable and initiated certain changes to the system. Upon failing to reach their proposed aims, these countries found each other as natural partners to transform existing structures, or in case they are still found to be too rigid, to make their own ones in particular areas. The aim of the study is to offer an overview of such an initiative, BRICS, the cooperation of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa and to give a special focus on one of the most popular, though very complex target areas, Africa and the approach how Brazil has been dealing with the continent, parallel to its fellow BRICS-member states.

Keywords: *Africa, BRICS, Brazil, economics, neo-colonisation, trade, foreign relations*

Introduction

When talking about Africa nowadays, what comes into most people's minds are expressions like poverty, unstable or failed states, armed struggles in most parts of the continent: just the everyday challenges of staying alive. In a more historical context, one might think of colonization or colonial powers but only as a fact of the past that has already ended in the 1960s in most parts of Africa. Even though the effects of the colonial period are still very vivid – just think of borders and tribal rivalry or even the exploitation of areas of vast resources ranging from petroleum through coal till ores like iron or gold – the whole idea of foreign countries coming from afar and taking advantage of the vulnerabilities of the African states or the gap between the levels of development just seem to be rather far-fetched.

With slightly different memories in mind, African countries – even in the best case scenario – do have mixed feelings towards European states. If we zoom out of the continent,

we can easily find other countries that are not satisfied with Western states either, and especially with the world system that was produced mostly by these states at the end of World War II. These emerging countries in question – since around the turn of the millennium referred to as BRICS, meaning Brazil, Russia, India, China and a bit later on South Africa – were mostly in a totally different situation after the Second World War (probably with the exception of Russia/USSR). Due to their political, later on economic changes, they have gradually become regional powers and now are trying to get to a higher level and become real world players; doing so they are strongly challenging the Western world order.

These are: four continents (with Russia being a transcontinental country) and five countries with an area¹ of more than 38,309,501 km² and a population of a bit below 3.1 billion people² representing 29.53 per cent and 42.19 per cent of the world, respectively. Both are respectable amounts of share. If we consider the GDPs (counted on purchasing power parity) they accumulate an amount of more than 33.1 trillion USD together, which is more than 30 per cent of the world's GDP (PPP).³ In terms of Africa, the numbers go as 30,370,000 km² for the area with a population of around 1.2 billion people in countries generating a GDP (PPP) of 6.757 trillion USD.⁴ Respectful numbers too, but only fractions of the corresponding BRICS data.

After this short introduction, my intention with the study is to show how these facts – the new circumstances of the BRICS and the African states, as well as the strengths of the BRICS countries – have a great impact on the African continent. BRICS countries have been gradually setting foot in Africa, multiplying their influence in most of the countries, in many cases even surpassing Western states or the former colonial powers in the field of trade. However, so far it seems they are competing more with each other than they are behaving as a coalition or working for the original goals of the BRICS. Even though this course of action might change when the newly set up financial institutions – the New Development Bank and the Contingency Reserve Arrangement – are functioning on a full scale. The original aim of the study is to show, how BRICS countries can find their ways in Africa but due to the limitations of the volume, the focus will be on the Latin American giant, Brazil and the unique path it pursues, since it lacks the vast resources (both financially and in human resources) that China has, so it needs to have a special approach in order to be successful.

¹ “The World Factbook Field listing: Area”. CIA. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2147.html#br>, Accessed on 14 June 2017.

² “The World Factbook Field listing: Population”. CIA. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2119.html#br>, Accessed on 14 June 2017.

³ “The World Factbook Field listing: GDP (purchasing power parity)”. CIA. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2001.html#br>, Accessed on 14 June 2017. China is the leading player in all factors mentioned above.

⁴ “The World Factbook Field listing: Area”. CIA. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2147.html#br>, Accessed on 14 June 2017.

“The World Factbook Field listing: Population”. CIA. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2119.html#br>, Accessed on 14 June 2017.

“The World Factbook Field listing: GDP (purchasing power parity)”. CIA. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2001.html#br>, Accessed on 14 June 2017.

A Brief Overview about BRICS: Africa in BRICS – BRICS in Africa

When in 2001, Jim O’Neill coined the term *BRIC* in his article *Building Better Global Economic BRICs*⁵ in the Goldman Sachs Global Economics Papers, very likely none of the strategic thinkers would have thought that the original four countries, Brazil, Russia, India and China made a long-term coalition in eight years. This prognosis became even more exciting when in the 2003 Annual Report of Goldman Sachs,⁶ O’Neill wrote about BRIC states surpassing the economies of the G6, namely the six greatest economies – USA, Germany, Japan, Great Britain, France and Italy – by 2050.

What brought these quite different and in many ways distant countries together – that are often even hostile with each other, just think of the border disputes of China and India – is that they are all leading developing countries in their regions and besides this: their economic growth and its rate, the need for mostly raw materials to fuel their economies and productions. Besides these – especially since the accession of South Africa at the end of 2010 – BRICS has a special focus on the South–South Cooperation,⁷ which in a way means an additional dimension for the group. This special approach was especially supported by Brazil thus the fellow IBSA-member South Africa was invited by the then-president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil to participate at the second BRIC Summit in Brasília, Brazil in April 2010. This meeting was shortly followed by the official invitation of South Africa in August to join the BRIC which became effective at the end of the same year, 2010.⁸

If mentioning the Brasília Summit of 2010, we should talk about the other meetings of heads of states, as well. The first two summits – the first official summit that was actually meant to be a BRIC meeting and not just a side event of a United Nations General Assembly or a G20 summit being held in Yekaterinburg, Russia⁹ – only ended with a short, few-page-long joint statement. The main difference that is interesting in our approach is that the 2010 joint statement was the first one to particularly mention Africa, in this case, in the context of the fight against poverty. It called upon “the international community to make all the necessary efforts to fight poverty, social exclusion and inequality bearing in mind the special needs of developing countries, especially LDCs, small islands and African Countries.”¹⁰

The first closing document that went by the name declaration was the one after the Sanya Summit in China, 2011. This was the first occasion, when member states

⁵ O’Neill, J. “Building Better Global Economic BRICs”. *Global Economics Paper No. 66*, November 2001.

<http://www.goldmansachs.com/our-thinking/archive/building-better.html>, Accessed on 17 September 2017.

⁶ *Goldman Sachs 2003 Annual Report – Every catalyst elicits a reaction*. New York: Goldman Sachs, 2003. 18. <http://www.goldmansachs.com/investor-relations/financials/archived/annual-reports/attachments/2003-annual-report.pdf>, Accessed on 17 September 2017.

⁷ South–South cooperation has always been a framework of reference for developing countries, later on emerging economies since the first African–Asian Conference was held in Bandung, Indonesia, in April 1955. On the Spirit of Bandung see Tarrósy, I. “Need for non-alignment in our global world? The Non-Aligned Movement Today and Tomorrow”. *Croatian International Relations Review* XI/40–41. 2005. 157–163.

⁸ Smith, J. A. “BRIC Becomes BRICS: Changes on the Geopolitical Chessboard”. *Foreign Policy Journal*, 21 January 2011. <http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2011/01/21/bric-becomes-brics-changes-on-the-geopolitical-chessboard/2>, Accessed on 17 September 2017.

⁹ “Joint Statement of the BRIC Countries Leaders”. Government of South Africa. 16 June 2009. <http://brics5.co.za/about-brics/summit-declaration/first-summit>, Accessed on 17 September 2017.

¹⁰ “II BRIC Summit – Joint Statement”. Government of South Africa. 16 April 2010. <http://brics5.co.za/about-brics/summit-declaration/second-summit>, Accessed on 17 September 2017.

mentioned particular security issues in connection with Africa, as well (in this case North and West Africa, and in particular, Libya) which later on became a permanent part in the following declarations. They also touched upon development and expressed their support to “infrastructure development in Africa and its industrialization within framework of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)”.¹¹

The Delhi Declaration of the next year did not bring too many new topics or initiatives. Even though it clarified a bit more on cooperation in the field of development, declaring that BRICS sees the highest importance in “economic growth that supports development and stability in Africa, as many of these countries have not yet realised their full economic potential. We will take our cooperation forward to support their efforts to accelerate the diversification and modernisation of their economies. This will be through infrastructure development, knowledge exchange and support for increased access to technology, enhanced capacity building, and investment in human capital [...]”.¹²

In connection with Africa, the real breakthrough was when the summit was also held on the continent, in Durban, South Africa, 2013.¹³ Only the title by itself *BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Development, Integration and Industrialisation* showed that the only African member of the coalition meant serious business and really wanted to take advantage of the opportunity of a locally organised meeting. This document is by far the most Africa-centred, dealing with African issues in 12 paragraphs (as opposed to the previous two years’ 4–4, and the upcoming years’ 9 or fewer cases).

From our point of view, one of the most relevant ones was to “acknowledge that infrastructure development in Africa is important and recognise the strides made by the African Union to identify and address the continent’s infrastructure challenges through the development of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), the AU NEPAD Africa Action Plan (2010–2015), the NEPAD Presidential Infrastructure Championing Initiative (PICI), as well as the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plans that have identified priority infrastructure development projects that are critical to promoting regional integration and industrialisation.”¹⁴

The document also highlighted that two fundamental agreements were negotiated successfully between the Export–Import Banks (EXIM) and Development Banks of BRICS so the *Multilateral Agreement on Cooperation and Co-financing for Sustainable Development* and the *Multilateral Agreement on Infrastructure Co-Financing for Africa* were signed as well, meaning a significantly broader spectrum of possibilities and greater financial opportunities for development initiatives in Africa.

Regarding Africa, the Fortaleza Summit of 2014 strengthened the previously mentioned fields of cooperation and needs of development, however – probably because it

¹¹ “Sanya Declaration”. Government of South Africa. 14 April 2011. <http://brics5.co.za/about-brics/summit-declaration/third-summit>, Accessed on 17 September 2017.

¹² “Delhi Declaration”. Government of China. 29 March 2012. https://brics2017.org/English/Documents/Summit/201701/t20170125_1406.html, Accessed on 17 September 2017.

¹³ “BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Development, Integration and Industrialisation – Durban Declaration”. Government of South Africa. 27 March 2013. <http://brics5.co.za/about-brics/summit-declaration/fifth-summit>, Accessed on 17 September 2017.

¹⁴ “Delhi Declaration”. Government of China. 29 March 2012. https://brics2017.org/English/Documents/Summit/201701/t20170125_1406.html, Accessed on 17 September 2017.

was held in Latin America, *the land of regional integrations* – the document highlighted the importance of regional actors such as first of all of course the African Union (AU), and more particularly the AU Peace and Security Council, but also the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) which is especially important for Brazil, the host of the summit.

Touching upon defence issues, the declaration also named some of the ongoing UN missions of the continent – MINUSCA (Central African Republic), MONUSCO (Democratic Republic of the Congo), MINUSMA (Mali) – but more importantly and for the first time, mentioned the importance of local capabilities in the sector. It welcomed “the AU Malabo Summit decision to establish an interim African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) by October 2014 to respond quickly to crisis situations as they arise”.¹⁵

Besides the *standard* issues in connection with Africa, the Ufa Declaration highlighted the problems of terrorism, especially the acts against the most vulnerable groups such as women and children. It also mentioned the challenges in the field of health, on the occasion of “the impact of the Ebola virus disease (EVD) in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, including its grave humanitarian, social and economic consequences” and as well as other major diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and the highly pathogenic influenza.¹⁶

The *African highlights* of the Goa Declaration in October 2016 are the support and will for cooperation in connection with Africa’s long-term strategies. First of all, *Agenda 2063*, the document that collects the visions and goals of the African Union in connection with the development of the continent, as a broader frame to the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Also fitting in this picture is BRICS’s welcoming and support for a lasting and sustainable peace and security architecture for the African Union in cooperation with the United Nations and regional organisations. In particular, the decision of the Assembly of the African Union about the operationalization of its Peace Fund in order to create the financial means for its peace and security operations that can – in the end – relevantly contribute to enduring stability and growth on the continent.¹⁷

The declaration of the ninth BRICS Summit was a little bit different in context than the previous ones but one point is very relevant in connection with Africa: the establishment of the Africa Regional Center of the New Development Bank in South Africa, as the first regional office of the Bank.

Having mentioned all the relevant details in connection with Africa that are included in the nine BRICS Summit outcome documents, we can have a quite clear picture about the highest level of decisions and strategic thinking, although, in order to get a full picture, all the ministerial and lower level professional meetings should be analysed, which of course would not fit the limits of this study. Concluding the first part of the chapter, we need to

¹⁵ “Fortaleza Declaration”. Government of Brazil. 15 July 2014. <http://brics.itamaraty.gov.br/media2/press-releases/214-sixth-brics-summit-fortaleza-declaration>, Accessed on 17 September 2017.

¹⁶ “Ufa Declaration”. Government of China. 9 July 2015. https://www.brics2017.org/English/Documents/Summit/201701/t20170125_1409.html, Accessed on 17 September 2017.

¹⁷ “Goa Declaration”. Government of China. 16 October 2016. https://www.brics2017.org/English/Documents/Summit/201701/t20170125_1410.html, Accessed on 17 September 2017.

mention that even though BRICS is a coalition of countries with common goals and similar circumstances in many ways, every single summit, and naturally every single declaration is tailor-made by the host country. As we could track this regarding at least the last five summits, we can assume that African issues are going to be a bit more stressed during the tenth BRICS Summit since it will be hosted in Johannesburg by South Africa in 2018.¹⁸

Means of United Presence: The Financial Instruments of BRICS

In addition to the economic aspects, in the political sphere BRICS members are linked by the fact that they are not satisfied with certain areas of the current world system: some countries feel excluded from world affairs (think about Brazil's and India's aim to gain a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, for instance), others see their role in world economics unfair with regard to their burden sharing or their presumed or real position (e.g. China's goal to reform the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in order to gain more voting rights to better reflect its place or Russia's quest for making the Rubel become the sixth currency in the SDR basket besides the US dollar, the Euro, the Japanese yen, the British pound and the newly introduced Chinese Renminbi).

In order to have stronger means to execute their goals and to start their own way of dealing with areas they found problematic, during the fifth summit of the BRICS in March 2013, in Durban, South Africa, member states decided to set up financial institutions as alternatives to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.¹⁹ The *Agreement of the New Development Bank* (NDB) was signed at the sixth summit in Fortaleza, Brazil, on 15 July 2014. The document that defines all the details of operation of the bank clearly states that the purpose of the Bank is to “mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries, complementing the existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development.

To fulfil its purpose, the Bank shall support public or private projects through loans, guarantees, equity participation and other financial instruments. It shall also cooperate with international organizations and other financial entities, and provide technical assistance for projects to be supported by the Bank.”²⁰ So as to reach these goals, the five members allocated 10–10 billion USD each, giving all five of them equal voting rights in the decision-making.

¹⁸ “BRICS Leader Xiamen Declaration”. Government of China. 4 September 2017. https://www.brics2017.org/English/Documents/Summit/201709/t20170908_2021.html, Accessed on 17 September 2017.

¹⁹ Powell, A. “BRICS Leaders Optimistic About New Development Bank”. *Voice of America*, 27 March 2013. <https://www.voanews.com/a/brics-summit-leaders-optimistic-about-new-development-bank/1629583.html>, Accessed on 14 June 2017.

²⁰ “Agreement on the New Development Bank – Fortaleza, July 15 Article 1 – Purpose and Functions”. 15 July 2014. New Development Bank. <http://www.ndb.int/wp-content/themes/ndb/pdf/Agreement-on-the-New-Development-Bank.pdf>, Accessed on 15 June 2017.

To highlight the importance of the African continent, summit participants agreed to have the first regional centre after the Shanghai Headquarters in Johannesburg, South Africa.²¹

Besides many other economic actors from all over the world and especially from Africa, representatives of the African financial sector gathering in Abidjan, Ivory Coast at the 50th Annual Meeting of the African Development Bank in May 2015 welcomed the decision very positively, expressing their hope that the bank would play a leading role in infrastructure development and in enhancing trade and economic relations among states of the African continent and beyond.²²

The other leg of the BRICS financial institutions is the *Contingent Reserve Agreement* (CRA). The framework that is meant to support BRICS members with short-term liquidity problems was established in 2014 in Fortaleza, Brazil²³ and became operational in October 2016.²⁴ CRA has a double amount of resources compared to the NDB, but capital intakes, access to funds and voting rights are shared unequally among the member states.

Table 1.
*CRA financial and voting rights*²⁵

	Capital contribution (billion USD)	Access to funds (billion USD)	Voting rights (per cent)
Brazil	18	18	18.1
Russia	18	18	18.1
India	18	18	18.1
China	41	21	39.95
South Africa	5	10	5.75
TOTAL	<i>100</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>100</i>

As shown by the data, these institutions are brand new, so we cannot have a clear picture of how big of an impact they will have in the development of African states, but what we can say now is that both the NDB and the CRA are fully operational and functional. According to the NDB's website – as of 1 July 2017 – it has seven ongoing projects with a total loan

²¹ "Agreement on the New Development Bank – Fortaleza, July 15 Chapter 1, Article 4 – Headquarters". 15 July 2014. New Development Bank. <http://www.ndb.int/wp-content/themes/ndb/pdf/Agreement-on-the-New-Development-Bank.pdf>, Accessed on 15 June 2017.

²² Africa welcomes NDB Regional Centre. BRICS Business Council. 22 September 2016. <http://bricsbusiness-council.co.za/trade-investment-opportunities/africa-welcomes-ndb-regional-centre>, Accessed on 14 June 2017.

²³ "Treaty for the Establishment of a BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement – Fortaleza, July 15". Itamaraty. 15 July 2014. <http://brics.itamaraty.gov.br/media2/press-releases/220-treaty-for-the-establishment-of-a-brics-contingent-reserve-arrangement-fortaleza-july-15>, Accessed on 14 July 2017.

²⁴ "BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement operational: Finance Minister Arun Jaitley". *Indian Express*, 7 October 2016. <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/brics-contingent-reserve-arrangement-operational-finance-minister-arun-jaitley-3070448>, Accessed on 15 June 2017.

²⁵ "Treaty for the Establishment of a BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement – Fortaleza, July 15 Article 2 – Size and Individual Commitments". Itamaraty. 15 July 2014. <http://brics.itamaraty.gov.br/media2/press-releases/220-treaty-for-the-establishment-of-a-brics-contingent-reserve-arrangement-fortaleza-july-15>, Accessed on 14 July 2017.

amount of 1.559 billion USD. Although, of which only one with 180 million USD is carried out in Africa, namely in South Africa.²⁶

The *ESKOM*²⁷ project is an investment in the renewable energy sector with an intended impact of 670 megawatts renewable energy evacuated and a yearly 1,300,000 tons of CO₂ avoided.²⁸ It is clearly visible that there is a lot more to go if BRICS and NDB want to have a significant impact on the continent. This can be said in connection with the partnerships of NDB regarding Africa. Today, the Bank has 11 memoranda of understanding with financial institutions (multilateral development banks, national development banks and commercial banks) representing Europe, Asia and Latin America, but none from Africa²⁹ which on the long run needs to be fixed in order to be more effective and more available.

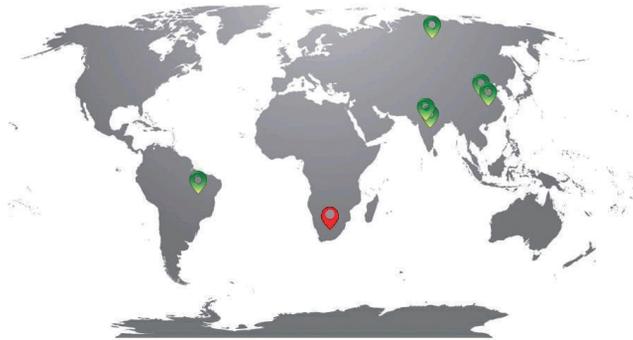


Figure 1.
*Ongoing NDB projects (as of 1 July 2017)*³⁰

Having a clearer picture now of BRICS' financial instruments and their institutional relations with Africa, one might wonder: what will make the intensity of relations stronger amongst the actors? With the earlier formation of IBSA,³¹ an alliance focusing on the South–South Cooperation with member states such as India, Brazil and South Africa, two of the original four BRICS countries were already in coalition with each other. With the accession of South Africa to BRICS, today, all IBSA members share a double partnership.

²⁶ "Projects". New Development Bank. 2017. <http://www.ndb.int/projects/list-of-all-projects>, Accessed on 14 June 2017.

²⁷ Eskom is a South African electricity public utility, successor of the Electricity Supply Commission established in 1923 by the Government of the Union of South Africa. Steele, M., Schulz, N. and Musana, F. "The Eskom factor: Power politics and the electricity sector in South Africa". *Greenpeace*, June 2012. 3. www.greenpeace.org/africa/global/africa/publications/coal/theeskomfactor.pdf, Accessed on 13 June 2017.

²⁸ "Project: ESKOM (South Africa)". New Development Bank. 2017. <http://www.ndb.int/project/eskomsouth-africa>, Accessed on 14 June 2017.

²⁹ "Partnerships". New Development Bank. 2017. <http://www.ndb.int/partnerships/list-of-partnerships>, Accessed on 14 June 2017.

³⁰ "Projects". New Development Bank. 2017. <http://www.ndb.int/projects/list-of-all-projects>, Accessed on 14 June 2017.

³¹ IBSA was established by the Brasilia Declaration of 6 June 2003. "The India–Brazil–South Africa Dialogue Forum". IBSA. <http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/about-ibsa/background>, Accessed on 14 June 2017.

Although there is more in common in BRICS members, they tend to have and build relationships with countries that are *out of the league*, states like Muammar Gaddafi's Libya, Iran or Venezuela. Besides this, they also share common patterns in their history: during the colonial period they were the colonised ones rather than being colonisers themselves,³² therefore they are seen in a totally different perspective than Western (European) states in general.

In order to get a better picture about the involvement of BRICS states in Africa, we should take the five members individually. Given the fact that there are 54 bigger or smaller countries in Africa³³ this would take a lot more space than the dimensions of this study allows, so my aim is to highlight some factors, tendencies or intensions of BRICS member states in Africa, with a special focus on how each BRICS member has a unique approach to their countries of interest.

BRICS or Rather briCs? – In Other Words: Is Africa only China's Playground?

When people talk about China nowadays, it is not the Sleeping Dragon³⁴ any more. It is a common cliché that the Dragon woke up and is stretching now, not only in economic terms, but also politically and militarily. One of the means of doing so – especially if we talk about trade and (financial) influence – is through international/regional organisations, such as BRICS.

In order to demonstrate this often stated fact, find below two maps – containing the data gathered from reliable sources – showing the trade (export and import) of BRICS countries to African states, each BRICS-member with its own colour. Darker colours represent the strongest BRICS-member in the given state, even surpassing the former colonial power, lighter colours show supremacy only towards the other four members.

Without getting into too many details, some tendencies can be spotted at the first look. The first map – showing the African exports to BRICS countries – is a lot more colourful, while the second one, picturing the imports to Africa is more in a reddish shade. Namely, while regarding BRICS' imports, India can almost match China's results – 20 versus 24 countries out of the 54 African states – BRICS' export map shows 42 countries as leading Chinese partners, 31 of which have stronger trade relations with Beijing than with the former colonial power.

³² Even though that of course, we cannot forget about Russian, American or Chinese activities in Tibet, that is also considered by some scholars colonisation.

³³ Since Western Sahara, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic is only partially recognised and not a member of the United Nation, it is not considered a sovereign state in the study.

³⁴ The original saying was from Napoleon upon returning from China, saying: "That is a sleeping dragon. Let him sleep! If he wakes, he will shake the world."

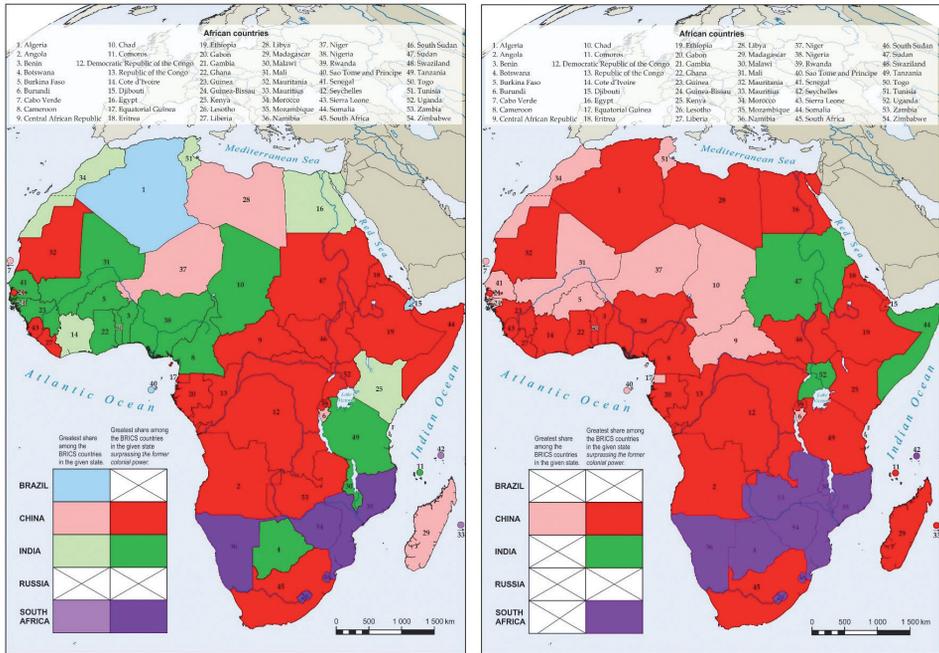


Figure 2.

The trade of BRICS countries to African states

With these maps in mind, especially with the second one, we can easily have the impression that China is *colonizing* Africa and with *China-level volumes* other countries can only be secondary players, despite the fact that China – as a BRICS-member – is only one of the five partners, sharing supposedly the same goals and acting as a team-member and not as an individualistic player. So in the forthcoming parts below, we will see what the Latin American giant, Brazil can do in order to find its ways to African countries and establish mutually prosperous cooperation.

Looking for a Special Link

If a country with a responsible government knows that their possibilities are limited but they still want a piece of the cake so they need to compete with bigger players around the table, then, in this case, other methods need to be identified and taken advantage of to ease their job. In case of Brazil's relations with Africa two ideas can come up. The first one is history. Out of the estimated approximately 11 million Africans who were taken as slaves to the American continent, every third person, around 4 million people were transported to

Brazil.³⁵ Later on, when the Portuguese Empire started to have larger and larger portions of Africa, the movement reversed: large groups of African–Brazilians were moved back to Africa. These groups are referred to as Agudás in Benin, Amaros in Togo and Nigeria, and Tabom in Ghana.³⁶

If one might think that these are just people who share the same customs and religion, but their importance is not that high, the case is quite the opposite. In fact, the Kingdom of Portugal was so concerned about a possible union between Brazil and Portuguese territories in Africa that upon Brazil gaining independence from Portugal, in the Friendship and Alliance Treaty of 1825, there was a particular clause requiring Brazil to refuse any proposals of territorial integrity with Portuguese colonies.³⁷ However, this period eventually ended with the abolishment of slavery in 1888, meaning not only the end of the arriving of masses of African people, but also marking the beginning of a period where the distance between Brazil and Africa started to grow and later on, even some kind of *Europeanization* was introduced in 1945, stating that “in the admission of immigrants, the need to preserve and develop, in the ethnic composition of the population, the more convenient features of their European ancestry shall be considered”.³⁸

During most of the twentieth century, Brazil carried out a very limited foreign policy. One of the few exceptions to this was the administrations of Jânio Quadros and João Goulart (1961–64). The African Division was created within Itamaraty in this period. However, this process and the increase in bilateral relationships were interrupted by the military coup of 1964, since, according to the Cold War logic, African liberation movements were considered Communist. In this era, Brazil was on the opposite side regarding independence movements, since The Friendship Treaty of 1953 gave very limited autonomy to Brazil especially in regards to the Portuguese African colonies which were considered domestic policy issues.

The other exception was during the so-called *Economic miracle* during the Medici and the Geisel Governments. The economic boom was a catalyst for Brazil and Brazilian companies to reach out increase in their export and in some cases even set foot in Africa. In 1972, Mario Gibson Barbosa, Medici’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited nine African states to secure oil supplies for Brazil. Following the Carnation Revolution of 1974 and the political changes in Portugal, Brazil regained total control over its foreign affairs.

This was the time, when Angola and Nigeria became important trading partners of Brazil exporting industrialized products and also importing oil. The export with the latter

³⁵ Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). *Estatísticas Históricas do Brasil: Séries Econômicas, Demográficas e Sociais de 1500 a 1988*. [Historical Statistics of Brazil: Economic, Demographic, and Social Series from 1500 to 1988.] 2ª Edição Revisada e Atualizada do v.3 de Séries Estatísticas Retrospectivas, IBGE, 1990. https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/monografias/GEBIS%20-%20RJ/serieestatisticasrestrospectivas/Volume%203_Estatisticas%20historicas%20do%20Brasil_series%20economicas_demograficas%20e%20sociais%20de%201550%20a%201988.pdf, Accessed on 17 September 2017.

³⁶ Figueiredo, E. “Os Brasileiros Retornados à África”. [The Brazilians that Returned to Africa.] *Cadernos de Letras da UFF, Dossiê Diálogos Interamericanos*, No. 38. 2009. 51–70.

³⁷ de Freitas, M. V. “Brazil and Africa: Historic Relations and Future Opportunities”. The German Marshall Fund of the United States. 8 February 2016. <http://www.gmfus.org/publications/brazil-and-africa-historic-relations-and-future-opportunities>, Accessed on 30 August 2017.

³⁸ “Decreto-lei Nº 7.967 de 18 de Setembro de 1945”. 18 September 1945. Presidência da República, Casa Civil, Subchefia para Assuntos Jurídicos. http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/decreto-lei/1937-1946/De17967.htm, Accessed on 16 August 2017.

one grew almost 40 times in four years: from 3 million USD in 1973 the volume went up to 115 million USD in 1977, representing half of Brazil's overall trade in this period. Northern Africa started to become more important in the 1970s as well: Brazilian exports grew from 50 million USD in 1972 to 300 million USD in 1980.³⁹ Meanwhile, the number of Brazilian embassies in Africa almost doubled in 10 years, and reached 21 in 1984, from the level of 12.⁴⁰ This boom period was followed by the so-called *lost decade* when Brazil needed to deal with domestic political and economic problems, so African relations were more or less neglected.

From the very beginning of Brazilian history – a history that is linked in so many ways to Africa – we reached the millennium, the time of great changes in the history of Brazil, but before we continue, we need to mention the other link with the African continent, that started to *develop* in this period.

When people think about Brazil in connection with Africa, it is more than likely that what comes in mind first is the historical links explained earlier. However, there is a closer and probably stronger tie: language. Thanks to Portuguese sailors and the zealous colonising strategies of Portugal, several countries share the Portuguese language in the world. These states joined together in 1983 and established the *Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries* (Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa, CPLP). As of today, CPLP has nine member states covering 10,742,000 km², around 7.2 per cent of the world, out of which a great majority, six countries – Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe and Equatorial Guinea – are situated in Africa, as well as three associate observers, Mauritius, Namibia and Senegal.⁴¹

Main objectives of the CPLP include:

- Political and diplomatic cooperation among member states to have a stronger presence in the international arena;
- Cooperation in multiple areas, such as education, health, science and technology, defence, agriculture, public administration, communications, justice, public safety, culture, sports and media;
- Promotion of the Portuguese language.⁴²

No question these are policies and common goals that are really helping Brazil to have a welcoming environment when negotiating in Africa.

If we look back a bit more than a decade in Brazilian history, we can see a big shift in the Latin American country's politics and especially in the field of foreign affairs. Presidents of the democratic transition after the military dictatorship between 1964 and 1985, focused more on strong relationships with the hegemon of the greater region, the United States. When *Lula da Silva* became president, he made a huge turn in the intensity of Brazil's foreign affairs and its directions, as well: he turned more to Africa, referring to Brazil's *historic debt* to the African continent, and also stressing on cultural ties, the importance of the South–South relations. Additionally, he also realised that the markets of

³⁹ Ligiero, L. F. *A Autonomia da Política Externa Brasileira*. [The Autonomy of the Brazilian Foreign Policy.] Brasília: Fundação Alexandre Gusmão. 2001.

⁴⁰ Ligiero. *A Autonomia da Política Externa Brasileira*.

⁴¹ "Estados-membros". CPLP. 2017. <https://www.cplp.org/id-2597.aspx>, Accessed on 15 June 2017.

⁴² "Objetivos". CPLP. 2017. <https://www.cplp.org/id-2763.aspx>, Accessed on 15 June 2017.

Africa mean a great opportunity for Brazilian companies and investments. Also, the reason behind the change was the then President Lula's goal to push for a reform of the United Nations and especially for the Security Council: his ultimate foreign policy goal was to gain permanent membership for Brazil in the exclusive group. In order to reach this, he started a very active foreign policy by contacting previously *untouched* regions and countries to gain support for his quest. This also meant an increased number of visits abroad. During his two terms, Lula made 56⁴³ foreign trips, out of which 12 were to Africa,⁴⁴ covering 23 countries on the continent.⁴⁵ This figure is even more remarkable if we consider the fact that he visited a total number of 35 states. His successor, *Dilma Rousseff* continued Lula's very dynamic foreign policy. On the occasion of her international trips, she visited 84 countries, including eight in Africa.⁴⁶ Since 31 August 2016 – when after her impeachment, *Michel Temer* took over the presidential office – he has made seven trips, but has not visited any African states so far.⁴⁷

There is also a sharp rise in the number of diplomatic representations,⁴⁸ namely, under Lula's and Rousseff's terms the number of embassies more than doubled in Africa reaching

⁴³ Vigevani, T. and Cepaluni, G. "A política externa de Lula da Silva: a estratégia da autonomia pela diversificação". *SciELO*, March 2007. *Contexto Internacional* 29/2. 2007. http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&id=S0102-85292007000200002#n4, Accessed on 15 June 2017.

⁴⁴ One very visible sign of appreciation of the Brazilian foreign policy towards Africa happened in July 2009, when President Lula was invited as a guest of honour to the 13th African Union Summit held in Sirte, Libya. Mahmoud, S. M.: "The Brazilian Foreign Policy Towards Africa". *African Perspectives* 12/41. 2015. 7–13.

⁴⁵ Amorim, C. "Brazilian foreign policy under President Lula (2003–2010): an overview". *SciELO*, 11 November 2010. *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 53/Special issue on Brasil Dec. 2010. http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0034-73292010000300013, Accessed on 15 June 2017.

⁴⁶ "Viagens Internacionais da Presidenta da República/2011". Planalto. 20 December 2011. <http://www2.planalto.gov.br/area-de...da.../viagens-internacionais-2011>, Accessed on 16 June 2017.

"Viagens Internacionais da Presidenta da República/2012". Planalto. 14 December 2012. <http://www2.planalto.gov.br/area-de...da.../viagens-internacionais-2012>, Accessed on 16 June 2017.

"Viagens Internacionais da Presidenta da República em 2013". Planalto. 10 December 2013. <http://www2.planalto.gov.br/area-de...da.../viagens-internacionais-2013>, Accessed on 16 June 2017.

"Viagens Internacionais da Presidenta da República em 2014". Planalto. 17 December 2014. <http://www2.planalto.gov.br/area-de...da.../viagens-internacionais-2014>, Accessed on 16 June 2017.

"Viagens Internacionais da Presidenta da República em 2015". Planalto. 15 December 2015. <http://www2.planalto.gov.br/area-de-imprensa/relatorios-da-secretaria-de-imprensa/viagens-internacionais-2015.pdf>, Accessed on 16 June 2017.

"Viagens Internacionais da Presidenta da República em 2016". Planalto. 24 April 2016. <http://www2.planalto.gov.br/area-de-imprensa/relatorios-da-secretaria-de-imprensa/viagens-internacionais-2016.pdf>, Accessed on 16 June 2017.

⁴⁷ "Viagens Internacionais do Presidente da República". Planalto. 19 October 2016. <http://www2.planalto.gov.br/area-de-imprensa/relatorios-da-secretaria-de-imprensa/viagens-internacionais-michel-temer-2016.pdf>, Accessed on 16 June 2017.

"Viagens Internacionais do Presidente da República". Planalto. 10 January 2017. <http://www2.planalto.gov.br/area-de-imprensa/relatorios-da-secretaria-de-imprensa/viagens-internacionais-michel-temer-2017.pdf>, Accessed on 16 June 2017.

⁴⁸ There are some unique cases in connection with diplomatic relations. The Brazilian embassy is the only Latin American embassy in Gabon, and both Gabon and Ghana have their only Latin American embassies in Brazil. "Gabonese Republic". Itamaraty. 2017. http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7385&Itemid=478&cod_pais=GAB&tipo=ficha_pais&lang=en, Accessed on 1 July 2017; "Republic of Ghana". Itamaraty. 2017. http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7407&Itemid=478&cod_pais=GHA&tipo=ficha_pais&lang=en, Accessed on 1 July 2017.

37 from 18,⁴⁹ leaving out mostly the very small (island) states only, and some with major domestic security problems.⁵⁰ In order to value this information, one should note that a traditional world power like the United Kingdom, has only 34 embassies or high commissions (UK diplomatic missions accredited to the capitals of members of the Commonwealth of Nations thus on the same level as embassies) in Africa.⁵¹

Even though in its rhetoric, Brazil's aim is to work on changing the *unfair balance of power in the world* and pushing for development in the Third World, the Latin American country has strong geopolitical and commercial motivations resulting in a more and more visible role in Africa, in form of companies (the most visible sector is construction, with companies like Odebrecht), mining concessions (the largest share belonging to Vale, and regarding hydrocarbons, to Petrobras) and in financing/banking industry (BNDES with financing Brazilian companies abroad and Itau-Unibanco being the leading one in banking) as well. Today, Brazilian companies – often referred to as *multilatinas* – have robust business interests in most of Africa's fastest growing economies. In less than a decade and a half, Brazilian trade to Africa rose from \$4.3 billion in 2000 to \$28.5 billion in 2013.

This energetic and conscious strategy was well supported by the decision of the Rousseff Government in 2013, to cancel (or in some cases restructure) the debts of 12 African countries, worth of almost 900 million USD.⁵²

The investments were made possible by the several bilateral agreements that were signed or renewed mostly during the Lula–Rousseff period. In case of Angola and South Africa, Brazil signed a *Strategic Partnership*. In the latter one, it includes a wide spectrum of areas, like agriculture, communications, defence, energy, environment, food security, health, public administration, science and technology. Trade between the two countries, consisting of primary and secondary products, started to grow with an impressive speed especially during the Lula period: it increased approximately 300%, from USD 659 million in 2002 to USD 2.6 billion in 2012. The more balanced relationship is reflected in the fact that it is not only Brazilian companies investing in South Africa, but South African companies – especially in communications, mining, aviation – are also operating in Brazil, while Brazil is present in South Africa with motor vehicles and spare parts manufacturing,

⁴⁹ Brazil has two consulate-generals in Africa, one in Lagos (Nigeria) and one in Cape Town (South Africa), but both of these countries have Brazilian embassies in their capital cities. "Bilateral relations". Itamaraty. 2017. <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/en/brazilian-missions-abroad>, Accessed on 19 June 2017.

⁵⁰ 17 countries do not have their own Brazilian representations but are accredited to neighbouring countries. In case of South Sudan, Brazil is one of the 21 states that has already expressed its will to open an embassy in the country. Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Gambia, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Niger, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda. "Bilateral relations". Itamaraty. 2017. <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/en/brazilian-missions-abroad>, Accessed on 19 June 2017; "Republic of South Sudan". Itamaraty. 2017. http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6626&Itemid=478&cod_pais=SSD&tipo=ficha_pais&lang=en, Accessed on 19 June 2017.

⁵¹ "Find a British embassy, high commission or consulate". Government of the United Kingdom. 2017. <https://www.gov.uk/government/world/embassies>, Accessed on 22 June 2017.

⁵² The three biggest debts belonged to Congo–Brazzaville (352 million USD), to Tanzania (237 million USD) and to Zambia (113.4 million USD); they were followed by Ivory Coast, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, and Sudan. "Brazil 'to write off' almost \$900m of African debt". BBC, 25 May 2013. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-22669331>, Accessed on 10 July 2017.

mining, food, and reinsurance companies.⁵³ With Angola, the partnership covers the fields of political and technical cooperation, as well, besides economic integration. The relationship of the two countries is very special. At the time of the rightist military dictatorship in Brazil, the Latin American country was the first to recognise the independence of Angola, in November 1975, which was gained by the Marxist-inspired *Movement for the Liberation of Angola* (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, MPLA). This historically strong relationship started to be even more visible in terms of trade after the turn of the millennium. In its peak years, between 2002–2008, the volume of the trade reached USD 4.21 billion which is a twentyfold growth. The main areas of business are of course in the construction and the financial sector, many companies and other state actors like the *Brazilian Development Bank* (Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social, BNDES), the *Brazilian Cooperation Agency* (Agência Brasileira de Cooperação, ABC) and the *Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation* (Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária, EMBRAPA) have offices in Luanda.⁵⁴ This latter one is especially interesting since it opened a new field of cooperation and investment: agriculture (programs like the *Cotton 4+Togo* program, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad Mali and Togo involving sharing of expertise, know-how and best practices⁵⁵) and in recent years a special field, bio-fuels which in case of Brazil means bio-ethanol.

When talking about special partners, we need to highlight the unique position of Egypt, which became the second African entity – after Southern Africa Customs Union (2009) – to sign a Free Trade Agreement with MERCOSUR as an extra-regional partner. When President Lula broke the *silence* in December in his first year as President, he became the first Brazilian head of state to visit Egypt, after Dom Pedro II did so 127 years earlier. Since then, several ministerial and presidential meetings took place and Egypt became the main destination of Brazilian exports to Africa and in a way a special link not just to Africa, but also more precisely to Maghreb, the Arab World, the Middle East and the Mediterranean, as well.⁵⁶ However, it should be underlined that Egypt always had a special status regarding its relations with Brazil: in 1983 Embraer, Brazil's civilian and military aerospace conglomerate signed a contract for 120⁵⁷ *EMB 312 Tucano* aircrafts to be delivered to Egypt and Iraq as a part of the industrial cooperation program of the Arab Organization for Industrialization. This initiative was unique as it was the first time an aircraft designed in Brazil was assembled abroad under license.⁵⁸

⁵³ “Republic of South Africa”. Itamaraty. 2017. http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7422&Itemid=478&cod_pais=ZAF&tipo=ficha_pais&lang=en, Accessed on 23 June 2017.

⁵⁴ “Republic of Angola”. Itamaraty. 2017. http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6018&Itemid=478&cod_pais=AGO&tipo=ficha_pais&lang=en, Accessed on 23 June 2017.

⁵⁵ “Cotton 4+Togo”. <http://www.embrapa.br/en/cotton-4-togo>, Accessed on 25 June 2017.

⁵⁶ “Arab Republic of Egypt”. Itamaraty. 2017. http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7475&Itemid=478&cod_pais=EGY&tipo=ficha_pais&lang=en, Accessed on 23 June 2017.

⁵⁷ The first 10 aircrafts were transported to Egypt, while the rest of the order was assembled there. *The Market for Military Fixed-Wing Trainer Aircraft*. Forecast International. April 2011. 3.

⁵⁸ “Embraer 40 anos: Parcerias e inovação”. Portal CR/Portal de Aviação. 2009. <http://www.contatoradar.com.br/paginas-da-historia/702-embraer-40-anos-parcerias-e-inovacao>, Accessed on 10 July 2017.

Last but not least, we need to talk about Nigeria who is in fact the biggest trading partner of Brazil with a volume of 9.1 billion USD, way before Egypt's 3 billion USD, followed by South Africa and Angola with 2.6 billion USD and 1.2 billion USD respectively (only these four, totalling a more than 60% share of Brazil's trade). However, unfortunately, this trade involves no added value, it mostly consists of natural resources such as gas and oil since Nigeria is Brazil's major petroleum provider.⁵⁹

On the whole, the trade relationship between Brazil and Africa seems to be a bit more favourable for the Latin American giant. Brazil's exports are more or less balanced with 42% manufactured, 27% semi-manufactured products, while regarding imports, the picture looks a bit different, natural resources taking the lead with two thirds fuels (oil, natural gas and liquefied natural gas) and the rest is raw materials.

On the other hand, we must not forget about other forms of cooperation that Brazil is offering, namely development programmes such as humanitarian assistance, scholarships, technical cooperation and contributions to locally involved international organisations. The idea of technical cooperation – meaning knowledge transfer and capacity building – came up during Lula's presidency and is in many ways a very different approach in comparison with other BRICS or Western countries, since it has a special focus on promoting the use of local labour, initiating projects tailored for local specificities and needs with no or limited conditionality.⁶⁰

Additionally, bearing all these in mind, we also have to add that while securing economic positions in several countries, Brazil is also working on securing and even extending its maritime influence over the South Atlantic.⁶¹ From this point of view, the goals of the *White Book* and more particularly of the *Defence Articulation and Equipment Plan* (Plano de Articulação e Equipamentos de Defesa) – especially the nuclear submarines developed in cooperation with France⁶² – are more understandable.

Having mentioned Lula's quest for the UN reform and the growing interest of the Brazilian Government in Africa, the issue of UN peacekeeping missions cannot be left out. According to the official website of Itamaraty, Brazil has contributed to more than 50 peacekeeping missions so far, with more than 33,000 military, police and civilian personnel. Since the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has fulfilled its mandate in October 2017, Brazil's *flagship mission* has come to an end decreasing the country's contribution to UN peacekeeping to 250 persons,⁶³ as opposed to the 1,288 PAX at the

⁵⁹ "Africa and the BRICS: a Win-Win Partnership?" African Development Bank. 10 July 2013.

<https://www.afdb.org/en/blogs/afdb-championing-inclusive-growth-across-africa/post/africa-and-the-brics-a-win-win-partnership-12098>, Accessed on 29 May 2017.

⁶⁰ These projects are carried out and fostered by the ABC. Alves, A. C. "Brazil in Africa: Achievements and Challenges". In Kitchen, N. (ed), *Emerging Powers in Africa*. London: London School of Economics, 2012. 40.

⁶¹ Muggah, R. "What Is Brazil Really Doing in Africa?" *Huffington Post*, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-muggah/what-is-brazil-really-doing-in-africa>, Accessed on 22 June 2017

⁶² Vogel, D. "A Rend és Haladás szolgálatában: a Brazil Fegyveres Erők". In Ferenc, P. (ed), *O Brasil em contexto europeu e húngaro – Brazília európai és magyar kontextusban*. Budapest: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, 2015. 208–216.

⁶³ More particularly, with 10 Individual Police Officers (IPO), 19 Military Experts on Mission (MEM), 206 troops and 15 Military Staff Officers (MSO). "Monthly Summary of Military and Police Contribution to United Nations Operations". United Nations. 31 October 2017. https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/mr_31_october_2017.pdf, Accessed on 5 December 2017.

beginning of the year.⁶⁴ Although, 2017 did not only bring changes for Brazil in the number of personnel contributed, but also in its involvement in Africa. In June 2017, another UN peacekeeping mission – with Brazilian participation – the United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) has finished its operations, meaning that Brazil is contributing to nine UN missions – including political missions – as of December 2017, six of which are in Africa:⁶⁵

- United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO): 10 MEM;
- United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA): 1 MEM, 2 MSO;
- United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID): 3 MSO;
- United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS): 1 MEM, 3 IPO;
- United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA): 2 MEM;
- United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS): 5 MEM, 5 IPO, 6 MSO.

Even though the number of Brazilian participation in African peacekeeping missions might seem impressive – six out of nine – the overall contribution is only a not so impressive 38 persons. Although, as the authorised size of the military component deployed in MINUSCA was lifted by 900 military personnel by the new MINUSCA mandate,⁶⁶ Brazil had a chance to show not only its dedication to peacekeeping, but its interest in the African continent, as well. Based on the statement found on Itamaraty's website stating that "Brazil is proud of its historic and consistent participation in UN peacekeeping operations, which is always in accordance with its foreign policy interests, along with national and international rules and principles",⁶⁷ one can say that deciding not to contribute troops to MINUSCA is a sign of change in Brazil's foreign affairs and relations with Africa. So far, the decision has still not been made by the Brazilian Government, but there are indications that the supporting arguments of the Brazilian military will not be strong enough to convince the political elite to send a contingent to the Central African Republic.

⁶⁴ 3 Police; 26 Military Experts on Mission; 1,259 troops. "Contributors to United Nations peacekeeping operations". United Nations. 31 January 2017. https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/jan17_1.pdf, Accessed on 5 December 2017.

⁶⁵ MINUJUSTH (2 IPO), MINURSO (10 MEM), MINUSCA (1 MEM, 2 MSO), UNAMID (3 MSO), UNFICYP (1 Troop, 1 MSO), UNIFIL (205 Troops, 3 MSO), UNIOGBIS (1 MEM, 3 IPO), UNISFA (2 MEM), UNMISS (5 MEM, 5 IPO, 6 MSO). "Brazil's participation in the United Nations Peacekeeping operations". Government of Brazil. www.itamaraty.gov.br/en/politica-externa/paz-e-seguranca-internacionais/6283-brazil-s-participation-in-the-united-nations-peacekeeping-operations, Accessed on 5 December 2017.

⁶⁶ "United Nations Security Council Resolution 2387 (2017)". United Nations. 15 November 2017. 8. https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/resolution2387_2017en_0.pdf, Accessed on 5 December 2017.

⁶⁷ "Brazil's participation in the United Nations' Peacekeeping operations". Government of Brazil. <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/en/politica-externa/paz-e-seguranca-internacionais/6283-brazil-s-participation-in-the-united-nations-peacekeeping-operations>, Accessed on 5 December.

Food for Thought

Quickly having gone through the history of Brazil, at least on those aspects that are relevant in connection with Africa, we can say without hesitation that the two regions have a lot in common. Historical roots, common language, similarities in culture and society, the challenges and possibilities they face and even the lifecycles of the countries, even though they are probably at different stages, but they can definitely learn from each other. With all these areas of similarities, mutual understandings, the size, or the volume that is behind some fellow BRICS members' possibilities, the overall situation can be balanced. If Brazil is able to overcome its current domestic problems – especially those of related to politics, corruption and economy – then it can again pay attention to other regions as well, and at the same time, serve as a good example for the African countries, many of which are facing the same problems as Brazil.

With regards to BRICS, the goals and visions that are articulated in the declarations and other documents show grandiose plans, lots of energy and effort put into numerous ideas covering almost all areas of life by now, not only the original fields of interest. The outcomes of these are still quite unpredictable, since the economic cycles of the five countries – just like many of their other aspects – are different, and their intent tends to be different, as well. However, the first steps are taken, investments are being made and all five BRICS members seem to be determined to pursue their aims. Now, all we need to do is watch carefully, if they pursue their aims as Brazil, Russia, China, India and South Africa or they do it as BRICS. From Brazil's example, we know that even states with limited possibilities can be successful, but on the other hand, are the five individual successes more or less than the success of BRICS as a group? Also, which scenario is closer to a win–win situation for BRICS countries and African states?

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Dialóg Campus is the publisher of the National University of Public Service.



Nordex Non-Profit Ltd. – Dialóg Campus

www.dialogcampus.hu

www.uni-nke.hu

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Responsible for publishing: Ildikó Petró, Managing Director

Managing Editor: Zsolt Kilián

Copy Editor: Zsuzsanna Gergely

Typeset and design: Angéla Fehér

Printed and bound by Pátria Printing House.

ISBN 978-615-5889-57-8 (print)

ISBN 978-615-5889-58-5 (ebook)

After decades of civil wars, state collapses, famines and genocides Africa experienced significant developments in the new millennium. Booming economies, the spread of good governance and democracy and the end of armed conflicts were the benchmarks of the new era.

Nevertheless, there is still another side of Africa. On this side we find the prolonged conflicts of Sudan and Somalia, the challenges of peacekeeping in the Central African Republic and Mali, and the increasing tensions of Northern Nigeria and the Maghreb. Therefore, contrary to many optimistic works, this book will concentrate on the dynamics of conflicts and challenges in Africa – not only armed struggles, but other aspect of crises, too. To achieve their goals, the editors asked Hungarian and foreign experts to contribute to the book by the examination of different challenges of the continent. Some of the thirteen articles will explore wider regional or continental issues (*Concerted Development Strategy for Africa, BRICS in Africa and the Brazilian approach*) while others will focus on more local issues (*Black Holes of Insecurity – the North of Mali, The Border Dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea*). It is important that the papers describe not only the problems but also the best practices which could contribute to the lasting solution to the crises.

The work was created in commission of the National University of Public Service under the priority project PACSDOP-2.1.2-CCHOP-15-2016-00001 entitled "Public Service Development Establishing Good Governance."

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