



Электронный научно-образовательный журнал «История». 2013-2023

ISSN 2079-8784

URL - <http://history.jes.su>

Все права защищены

Выпуск 10 (120) Том 13 - Россия и Иberoамерика: история, дипломатия, культура | Проблемы истории стран СНГ. 2022

Ernesto Araujo and Russia: How The Brazilian Ex-Chancellor's Ideas Influenced Bilateral Relations between Brasilia and Moscow?

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Аннотация

Отношения между Бразилией и Россией в значительной степени потеряли динамику во время пребывания на посту министра иностранных дел Бразилии Эрнесто Араужо с января 2019 г. по март 2021 г. В настоящей статье утверждается, что идеи бывшего министра оказали непосредственное влияние на относительную стагнацию российско-бразильских отношений. Интерпретация Араужо международной реальности находится под сильным влиянием идей бразильского правого идеолога Олаво де Карвалью, который рассматривает Россию как союзника Китая в стремлении к глобальной коммунистической гегемонии. Согласно Кохейн и Гольдштейну, идеи являются решающим фактором в разработке внешнеполитического курса и создают этическую и моральную мотивацию для проведения конкретного политического курса. В статье определяется, как идеи Араужо отразились в его внешней политике в целом и в бразильско-российских отношениях в частности. В исследовании делается вывод о том, что Араужо проводил внешнюю политику, основанную на ценностях и идеологии, которая значительно отклоняется от прагматичных традиций бразильской дипломатии, с критическими последствиями для развития двусторонних отношений с Российской Федерацией во время его пребывания в должности.

Ключевые слова: Бразилия, Россия, БРИКС, Жаир Болсонару, Эрнесто Араужо, Олаво де Карвалью, двусторонние отношения, идеи, идейный подход

Дата публикации: 30.11.2022

Ссылка для цитирования:

Эстевес А. Ernesto Araujo and Russia: How The Brazilian Ex-Chancellor's Ideas Influenced Bilateral Relations between Brasilia and Moscow? // Электронный научно-образовательный журнал «История». – 2022. – Т. 13. – Выпуск 10 (120).

Introduction

In January 1st 2019, Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro (2019—2022) inaugurated his mandate, consolidating the rise of the far-right in Brazil. During his campaign, Bolsonaro promised to radically change Brazilian domestic and foreign policies. Once elected, he stated that “Brazil is not an open field where we intend to build things for our people. What we have to do is destroy a lot of things. Undo a lot”¹.

2 To fulfill this task in the field of foreign policy, Bolsonaro chose Ernesto Araujo, a career diplomat and follower of right-wing ideologue Olavo de Carvalho, to serve as chancellor. Araujo introduced new concepts such as “globalism”, “theophobia” and “climatism” to the lexicon of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, known as the Itamaraty.

3 Araujo’s foreign policy is widely considered to be a disruption with long-standing traditions of Brazilian diplomatic practices (Casarões and Faria², Maringoni³, Berringer⁴, Schutte⁵, Timofeeva⁶). According to former chancellor Celso Lafer, Araujo’s foreign policy applies “confrontational strategies” that are incompatible with Brazil’s traditional cooperation diplomacy⁷. The “confrontational strategy” led not only to serious diplomatic crises with Brazil’s major partners, such as Argentina, China and France, but also to domestic discontent.

4 In March, 2021, the Brazilian Congress exerted significant pressure on the Itamaraty, what eventually led to Araujo’s resignation. He was substituted by Ambassador Carlos França, who engaged in a campaign of damage control to restore the Ministry’s prestige domestically and internationally. This leadership change in the Itamaraty had a significant effect on Bolsonaro's foreign policy, bringing it closer to traditional Brazilian diplomatic practices.

5 Therefore, Bolsonaro's foreign policy can be divided in two periods: the first, under the leadership of Ernesto Araujo, extending from January 2019 until March 2021; and the second, under the current chancellor Carlos França, from March 2021 until present. This research will focus exclusively on the first period and specifically on the impact of Araujo’s ideas on Brazilian-Russian relations.

6 During Araujo's tenure Brazilian-Russian relations stagnated. Commissions that are structural for the countries’ strategic partnership, such as the Brazilian-Russian High Level Cooperation Commission (CAN, in the Portuguese acronym) and the Brazilian-Russian Intergovernmental Agreement for Economic, Commercial, Scientific and Technological Cooperation (CIC, in the Portuguese acronym), were not convened during this period.

7 To understand the reasons behind the deceleration of bilateral ties, this article will investigate how Araujo conceived the role of Russia in his foreign policy. Preliminary research reveals that Araujo's ideas and interpretation of the international reality were decisive for the relative distance between Brazil and Russia during his tenure.

8 This article will propose that the slowdown of bilateral relations is due to Araujo’s perception of Moscow’s foreign policy objectives. The former chancellor believes Russia, alongside China, is engaged in establishing a communist global hegemony, fatal to the Western Civilization and incompatible with Brazilian interests.

9 International Relations experts have long debated the influence that ideas have on foreign policy-making (Keohane and Goldstein⁸, Jervis⁹, Duroselle¹⁰, Wendt¹¹). Keohane and Goldstein assert that ideas, defined as a set of beliefs about the nature of the world that have implications for human action, are important determinants of government policies¹².

10 They suggest that ideas define the universe of possible policy choices. By limiting

conceivable pathways, ideas function as a roadmap for government policies. Furthermore, ideas can provide compelling ethical and moral motivation for undertaking a given course of action.

¹¹ Although the role of ideas in policy making has been discussed for millennia by philosophers and social scientists, it has to be emphasized time and again in International Relations debates. The rationalist approach, dominant in both the institutionalist and realist theories of International Relations, assumes that foreign policy decisions are taken by self-interest actors, aiming at maximizing their utility. This approach sidelines ideas as unimportant and devoid of any causal role. However, Keohane and Goldstein argue that, even when acting purely on self-interest, actors do mobilize ideas, mainly to clarify principles, conceptions and causal relations.

¹² The authors challenge the rationalist explanatory power by suggesting the existence of “empirical anomalies” that can be resolved only when ideas are taken into account. This article suggests that Araujo’s foreign policy is a deviation in Brazilian foreign policy tradition, for it prioritizes values over economic and commercial agendas, changing Brazilian long-standing definitions of national interest. The rationalist approach is insufficient to explain Araujo’s foreign policy, therefore requiring the mobilization of the ideational approach.

¹³ This article will emphasize the impact of an individual statesman’s ideas on foreign policy elaboration, making use of the approach proposed by the member of the French School of History of International Relations, Jean-Baptiste Duroselle¹³.

¹⁴ Duroselle elucidated how the ideas, social position and the entourage of political leaders influence their foreign policy choices¹⁴. Likewise, the statesmen’s perception about threats and foreign actors plays a critical role. Furthermore, Duroselle sustains that changes in the statesman’s perceptions can alter cultural, economic and ideological relations between countries¹⁵.

¹⁵ The French historian considers fundamental to analyze the temperament of political leaders through the study of their texts and testimonies. This article will make extensive use of Araujo’s official addresses as chancellor, compiled in the book “Foreign Policy: Sovereignty, Democracy and Freedom¹⁶”. Moreover, before his nomination as chancellor, Araujo has published articles in academic journals and in his personal blog “metapolitica”, that will also be analyzed in this research.

¹⁶ After his resignation as chancellor, Araujo took a leave of absence from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Relieved from his duties as a state official, the former minister has been quite outspoken about his experience as chancellor, recollecting facts and analyzing his performance in interviews and in his personal YouTube channel “Logopolitica”. This material provides an interesting window to Araujo’s views on Brazilian-Russian relations during his tenure, and will be scrutinized in the present article.

¹⁷ The article will be structured as follows: the first section will introduce the context of Araujo's nomination and his interpretation of the international reality. The second section will determine how these ideas were applied in his foreign policy. The third section and its subsections will delve upon the impact of Araujo’s foreign policy in Russian-Brazilian relations, followed by a conclusion.

¹⁸

Araujo’s nomination as chancellor

Jair Bolsonaro announced the nomination of the first class-minister Ernesto Araujo shortly after his election. A linguistics graduate at the University of Brasilia, Araujo at the time led the Department for Relations with the US, Canada and Interamerican affairs at the Itamaraty.

¹⁹ The nomination of an official that had not been considered one of the country's top diplomats, nor had ever administered an Embassy, took his colleagues by surprise¹⁷. The appointment of Araujo is attributed to his close relations with the then US-based Brazilian right-wing ideologue Olavo de Carvalho, who exerted significant influence over members of the

Bolsonaro family, particularly over the president's sons.

20 It can be established that Araújo was nominated due to his ideological affiliations, rather than his career accomplishments. This is critical to understand why his ideas had disproportionate weight on Brazilian foreign policy during his tenure.

21 Araújo's tutor, the ideologue Olavo de Carvalho, has a rather eclectic biography: Born in 1947, he dropped out of his philosophy university course to join the Brazilian Communist Party during the 60's. He specialized in astrology before converting to Islam in 1984. Later, Carvalho inaugurated a religious order that exercised Sufi religious practices and promoted traditionalist philosophy. During the 90's, Carvalho published a series of books and consolidated himself as a right-wing intellectual on a national scale.

22 By the turn of the century, Carvalho made extensive use of the Internet to promote his ideas. Residing in the USA, where he was awarded a visa for foreigners with extraordinary abilities, Carvalho found shelter from a number of lawsuits he was subject to in Brazil. During this period, he administered the blog "Midia Sem Mascara" (freely translated as "media without mask") and ministered an online philosophy course, that tutored several leaders of the Brazilian far-right, clustered in a movement that became known as "olavism".

23 In the field of International Relations, olavist thinking is determined essentially by two conceptions: globalism and "cultural war".

24 In Carvalho's view, globalism is a project led by international elites to achieve ideological, political and economic hegemony. The ideologue proposes that the international arena is currently being disputed by three major globalist projects: the communist, the Islamic and the liberal technocrat.

25 The communist project, allegedly led by Russia and China, uses Marxist ideas to attain the global hegemony of the Communist Party. The Islamic project, led by organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood, aims at establishing a global Caliphate. The liberal technocrat project is led by a fraction of the western financial elites seeking to implement a materialist and atheist "administered society"¹⁸.

26 In his conspiratorial view of the world, the communist project is the only one that can be directly identified with particular nation States, namely Russia and China. The Islamic and liberal technocrat projects would operate above the interests of the countries in which they are based. In the particular case of the liberal technocrat project, western financial elites would even act against the interests of their own countries of origin, in their search to erase national identities and borders.

27 In Latin America the most advanced globalist project is, according to Carvalho, the Russian-Chinese, that coordinates its actions through an organization central to the olavist narrative called Foro de São Paulo.

28 Foro de São Paulo is an organization created in 1990 that convenes major Latin American left-wing parties. According to its website, the organization aims at achieving "unity of action in the anti-imperialist and people's struggle"¹⁹.

29 Carvalho is convinced that this organization is a threat to Brazilian interests, for it allegedly manages the communist globalist project in the Americas, using money from drug cartels²⁰ and the infrastructure of nation States such as Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

30 The second relevant element of the olavist interpretation of International Relations is the idea of "cultural wars". According to the Brazilian ideologue, the contemporary world is dominated by a leftist ideological hegemony. He attributes this achievement to a new strategy adopted by the left after the fall of the Soviet Union, of "abandoning guns in favor of the books"²¹. According to Carvalho, the mastermind behind this strategy is the Italian intellectual Antonio Gramsci, who allegedly proposed the instrumentalization of schools and universities to indoctrinate individuals into adopting socialist ideology without their knowledge²².

31 Carvalho considers the professed global hegemony of the left as a threat to be eliminated, in a battle fought not in the geopolitical field, but in the domains of culture and values. The combat strategy proposed by Carvalho is remarkably similar to the Gramscian: right-wing militants should not focus on occupying power, but rather infiltrate “churches, schools, neighborhood associations and local clubs”²³.

32 Despite the controversial tone of Carvalho’s ideas, by the beginning of June, 2021, he had over 1,03 million followers on his YouTube channel, 574.364 subscribers on Facebook, a website, a blog²⁴ and had ministered his online philosophy to an estimate of 20 thousand students²⁵.

33 The international connections of Olavo de Carvalho cannot be underestimated: during his residency in the US, the ideologue had straightened ties with the North-American oligarch Steve Bannon and with the country’s former president, Donald Trump²⁶.

34 Carvalho’s connections with Jair Bolsonaro’s family date back to 2012, when the future president’s son and then State representative, Flávio Bolsonaro, awarded Carvalho with the honorific Tiradentes Medal²⁷. According to Teitelbaum, Carvalho and Jair Bolsonaro maintained regular online conversations since 2014. The two men share not only a combative style of argumentation and aggressive phraseology, but also political affiliations: both are fervently anti-communist, reticent to social movements, denialists of climate change and opposed to human rights advocacy.

35 Once Bolsonaro came to power, Carvalho appointed his followers to government posts considered key for waging the “cultural war”. The most prominent olavist nominations were those of the Minister of Education Ricardo Vélez Rodrigues and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ernesto Araujo.

36 In his inauguration speech, Araujo paid tribute to his tutor, stating that Carvalho is “a man that, after president Jair Bolsonaro, is probably the main responsible for the immense transformation that Brazil is going through”²⁸.

37 Araujo’s adherence to olavism is associated with the publication of his article “Trump and the West”, in 2017²⁹. The essay maintains that the Western civilization (in which he includes Brazil) is facing an existential threat, due to “spiritual and psychological” weaknesses generated by globalism. Then US president Donald Trump was allegedly the only Western leader aware of the threat and willing to take action.

38 Araujo shares Carvalho’s idea that the international arena is being disputed by globalist projects. He is convinced that Brazil has to side with the United States in a battle to guarantee the survival of the Western civilization. The diplomat believes that the US — at heart a conservative country — is the only foreign power capable of tackling the globalist threat, making use of its efficient economic model and civilizational capacities.

39 As Carvalho, Araujo maintains that international organizations were instrumentalized by globalist elites to advance their agendas. He declared that “all the «global issues», when we look closely, are designed to deprive nations of their sovereignty and subject the people to some kind of reductionist, materialist philosophy³⁰”.

40 This idea translated into a foreign policy that deeply distrusted multilateral initiatives to tackle transnational issues, such as health emergencies or climate change. Araujo declared his readiness to reverse Brazil’s long-standing multilateralist approach, even at risk of turning the country into an “international pariah”³¹.

41

The main axes of Araujo’s foreign policy

During a hearing at the Commission of Foreign Affairs and National Defense of the Brazilian

Senate in May, 2020³², Araujo laid down the main axes of his foreign policy: 1) democracy; 2) economic transformation and development; 3) sovereignty; 4) values.

42 The Brazilian democratic system guarantees that each government elaborates its own foreign policy, provided the observance of basic diplomatic principles enumerated in article 4 of the Federal Constitution. Among them, Latin American integration, a permanent objective of Brazilian external action.

43 Araujo, however, establishes a precondition for the observance of this constitutional imposition: democracy promotion. He claims that “it seems impossible to advance in the aspiration of Latin American integration (which is a constitutional demand) without democracy”³³. According to the chancellor, the greatest threat to regional stability was Venezuela’s “totalitarian” government.

44 The focus on democracy promotion in Venezuela is not an innovation of Araujo’s foreign policy. During the tenure of Bolsonaro’s predecessor, Michel Temer (2016—2018) Brasilia had already distanced itself significantly from Venezuela by endorsing the country’s suspension from the Mercosur trade bloc in 2016.

45 However, Araujo goes further in his condemnation of Venezuela, classifying it not only as an authoritarian State, but as a criminal organization. The chancellor accuses Venezuela of links to drug cartels and financing terrorism. Araujo maintains that “the Venezuelan regime sustains itself in a complex net that overlaps with organized crime”, in a symbiose with “terrorism and transnational corruption”³⁴.

46 By framing Venezuela as a “new form of organized crime”, the chancellor denied negotiations between Caracas and the opposition, changing the long-standing Brazilian position that favored intra-Venezuelan talks.

47 The second axis of Araujo’s foreign policy, focused on trade and economy, proposes the negotiation of new free trade agreements (FTAs) with partners that Araujo considers compatible with Brazilian values and economy. Additionally, he advocates for further technological integration with the US, Israel and Japan, partners that were allegedly sidelined by previous Brazilian left-wing administrations on ideological grounds.

48 He recognizes the achievements of the Brazilian-Chinese space cooperation and of the Strategic Partnership with India, vowing to maintain them. Nonetheless, the chancellor fails to mention Russia, South Africa and the BRICS Forum during his address to the Senate.

49 The third axis of Araujo’s foreign policy is sovereignty, which he associates with the Brazilian Armed Force’s capacity to defend the national territory. He expresses concern about Brazilian sovereignty over the Amazon Forest, which is allegedly being threatened by the advances of the globalist agenda on climate change.

50 Addressing an audience of lawmakers, Araujo declares that resolutions of international organizations such as the United Nations are an essential threat for Brazilian “legislative autonomy”. The diplomat sustains that multilateral agreements hinder the State’s capacity to elaborate and implement its own laws.

51 Finally, the fourth axis focuses on an issue Araujo considers to be a priority: values. He asserts that Brazil’s prior national interest is “guaranteeing the space to exercise its values”³⁵. Therefore, the country requires a values-based foreign policy.

52 Araujo is convinced that a country’s foreign policy should reflect of the values of its people. When questioned on how a diplomat could objectively determine what are the “true values of the people”, Araujo answered that Brazilian people are “conservative at heart”³⁶.

53 By identifying the values of the people as coincidental with his own, Araujo finds in the public’s alleged conservatism a source of legitimization for his rather controversial foreign policy, that was being increasingly questioned by Congress.

Araujo's impact on Brazilian-Russian relations

Russian experts in Brazilian-Russian relations, such as Okuneva, Martynov, Simonova and Davydov³⁷, have predicted that the rise of the far-right in Brazil would pose significant challenges to its relations with Russia.

55 According to these authors, since 2016 Brazil has been living under a “new political cycle”, during which new foreign policy priorities were established³⁸. Jair Bolsonaro's victory in the 2018 general elections would ultimately affect the nature of Brazil's relations with Russia and other BRICS countries.

56 In this context, the authors concluded that “in the foreseeable future, it will be quite difficult for Russia to establish mutual understanding with Brazil, especially in the field of foreign policy”. Nevertheless, they identified “common conservative values” as an area of potential cooperation.

57 Indeed, during a recent interview, Araujo disclosed that, by the beginning of his mandate, he thought “Russia could be a partner in a conservative agenda”, despite “having geostrategic interests that are very different from ours”³⁹.

58 Shortly after his nomination by president elect Jair Bolsonaro, in December 2018, Araujo wrote an article proposing an alliance between the “three major Christian countries: Brazil, US and Russia”⁴⁰.

59 Under Araujo, Brazil engaged in promoting conservative values worldwide, not only through the Itamaraty, but also through the Ministry of Woman, Family and Human Rights. However, the list of its preferential partners in this endeavor did not include Russia, but rather Poland, Hungary and the US.

60 One of the main initiatives of Araujo's foreign policy in this field was the Declaration of the Geneva Consensus on Improving Women's Health and Strengthening the Family. The declaration covers issues related to the antiabortion agenda and was signed by 35 countries, not including the Russian Federation.

61 Another notable Brazilian initiative in conservative values promotion was the support for the International Religious Freedom of Belief Alliance, an initiative launched by the Trump administration to protect religious minorities worldwide. Russia does not take part in the alliance, which frequently targets Moscow's policies towards religious minorities, with Brazil's endorsement⁴¹.

62 Therefore, no alliance between Brazil and Russia for the promotion of conservative values can be identified during Araujo's tenure. The main reasons posed by Araujo for this failure are: 1) Russia's adversarial relations with the US; 2) Russia's ties with Venezuela.

63

US and Venezuela as obstacles for Brazilian-Russian relations

The former chancellor recalls that, as his mandate evolved, he dismissed the idea of establishing closer relations with Russia. One of the difficulties, as explained by Araujo, was Moscow's allegedly adversarial relations with the US.

64 He maintains that “Russia is really focused on a geopolitical matter and they are adversaries of the US”, regretting that Moscow purportedly “wants to destroy the great power of the free world, a world that I think Brazil should be a part of”⁴².

65 Araujo's unequivocal pro-Americanism was expressed in some of his foreign policy priorities, notably the ambition to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

66 However, Araujo identifies an internal dispute in the US between conservative and globalist elites. Therefore, the chancellor does not refrain from proposing an alliance not with the North-American State *per se*, but with the Trump administration in particular.

67 The preference to engage with political factions rather than States became the norm in Araujo's foreign policy. This position can be considered a violation of the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs, as specified not only in article 4th of the Brazilian constitution, but also in article 2.7 of the UN Charter.

68 However, Araujo defends the legitimacy of recognizing political affinities with given administrations or political movements. He believes that restricting bilateral relations to the State level and ignoring government-to-government ties is to "refuse the exercise of politics"⁴³. The chancellor considers it necessary to "seize the opportunities" whenever there is a friendly government in power in a foreign country, standing by his choice to align Brazilian interests to those of the Trump administration in the US.

69 Close relations between Russia and Venezuela were likewise a major impediment for Brasilia's cooperation with Moscow during Araujo's tenure. As the former chancellor stated during an interview: "I began to see that Russia did not have any disposition to change the Venezuelan reality. Russia for us means Maduro, means Venezuela, means Foro de São Paulo"⁴⁴.

70 One of the first acts of Araujo as foreign minister was to uninvite Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro to Bolsonaro's inauguration ceremony and, shortly after, recognize the opposition figure Juan Guaido as the country's legitimate president. In March, 2019 the Itamaraty withdrew its diplomatic and consular personnel from the neighboring country.

71 Tensions between Brazil and Venezuela reached unprecedented levels during Araujo's tenure in the Itamaraty. President Jair Bolsonaro considered engaging with the US in an eventual military intervention in Venezuela. Vice-president General Mourão, however, was quick to deny any possibility of an US attack on Venezuela using Brazilian territory as a stepping-stone⁴⁵.

72 That clearly contrasts with Russia's role as a guarantor of Venezuela's security and supporter of Maduro's government in Caracas⁴⁶. Russian commitment to Venezuela can be illustrated by Moscow's veto of a Security Council draft resolution requesting the organization of new elections in the Latin American country and the free flow of humanitarian aid, in February 2019⁴⁷.

73 Araujo resents Russia and China as the main spoilers of his strategy of "democracy promotion" in Venezuela, that consisted essentially in the substitution of president Nicolas Maduro for the opposition figure Juan Guaido.

74

Evolution of Russian-Brazilian ties under Araujo

Considering the foreign policy priorities set by Araujo as a) democracy promotion in Venezuela; b) strengthening ties with the Trump administration in the US; c) joining NATO and the OECD; d) promoting conservative values, few areas of potential cooperation with Russia could be identified.

75 Bilateral relations retreated to a low-level during Araujo's tenure. From January, 2019 until March 31st, 2021 only five visits of Brazilian officials to Russia were held, two at the ministerial level and three at the secretarial level. On the other hand, the vice-minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergei Ryabkov, met with Araujo in March, 2019, at the sidelines of a political coordination meeting in Brasilia.

76 Presidential in-person meetings during this period were held under the BRICS and G20 formats. In the strictly bilateral level, presidents Jair Bolsonaro and Vladimir Putin held one telephone conversation in June, 2020. Furthermore, in October, 2020 president Bolsonaro sent a letter to his Russian counterpart to address the arrest of a Brazilian citizen in Moscow. It should also be noted the CAN and CIC commissions, that structure Brazilian-Russian strategic partnership, did not meet during Araujo's tenure.

77 A higher level of activity can be identified in parliamentary diplomacy, with several bilateral visits of Senators and meetings of congressional commissions. This level of diplomacy, however, does not fall under the authority of Ernesto Araujo, and therefore is beyond the scope of this article.

78 Given the difficulties in developing bilateral ties during Araujo's tenure, Brazilian-Russian relations were maintained primarily under the auspices of the BRICS forum. Despite Araujo's aversion to deeper cooperation with Russia or China, domestic pressure exerted by the military guaranteed Brazil's continuous engagement with the BRICS .

79 The BRICS is mentioned in Russia's Foreign Policy Concept of 2016⁴⁸ and is perceived by Moscow as an important platform for political coordination on relevant issues of the international agenda.

80 However, Araujo envisioned a different role for the BRICS: he was convinced that the group should no longer be a forum for broad political coordination, but rather focus on the narrow issues proposed by each chairmanship⁴⁹. Araujo's statements corroborate the research of Jeifets and Jubran, according to which political cooperation was not a priority for Brazil in the BRICS during the 2019—2020 period⁵⁰.

81 Brazil held the chairmanship of the BRICS in 2019, under the theme of "Economic Growth for an Innovative Future". The country hosted the XI Summit in Brasilia, which successfully gathered the member countries' heads of States.

82 However, Brazilian and Russian chancellors Ernesto Araujo and Sergei Lavrov, respectively, expressed differences during preliminary meetings, particularly on issues such as Venezuela and Bolivia⁵¹. According to Jeifets and Jubran, the Venezuelan issue became the main obstacle for further coordination between Russia and Brazil and casted a shadow over the BRICS' performance.

83 Despite Araujo's personal convictions, during Russia's chairmanship in 2020, Brazil took part in the activities of the group, sending representatives at the ministerial level for several of the group's online meetings.

84 The BRICS final declarations of 2019 and 2020 refrained from mentioning Venezuela or any other Latin American issue, such as the political crisis in Bolivia and Chile. However, the declarations still delved upon many other issues of interest for international peace and security, attesting the BRICS's capacity to maintain its activities in periods of ideological disagreement among members.

85 However, recalling his experience as chancellor, Araujo declared that Brazil was "not feeling comfortable" in the BRICS during the period of 2019—2020, due to its democratic credentials and "lack of affinity with Russia and China⁵²".

86

Conclusion

Ernesto Araújo led a foreign policy that deviates significantly from Brazilian traditional external action. The former chancellor's ideas contributed significantly to this detour from Brazilian long standing diplomatic practices.

87 The analysis of Araujo's ideas reveals a messianic character in the chancellor's performance. The diplomat saw himself as imbued with an existential mission: fighting for the survival of the Western civilization against globalist threats. Araujo engaged Brazil in this battle by siding it with one of the belligerents, namely the US's conservative movement, at the time led by Donald Trump.

88 Araujo's foreign policy did not follow canons of Brazilian diplomacy, such as instrumentalizing external action to achieve economic development⁵³. Araujo subordinated Brazilian commercial and economic interests to values promotion and to alliances with like-minded anti-globalist partners.

89 According to Duroselle, leaders define their objectives based on their ideological framework. Once in a position of power, foreign policy leaders tend to confuse their personal objectives with national interests⁵⁴. It can be established that Araujo has associated Brazilian national interests with his personal objective of engaging in a cultural battle for the survival of what he defines as Western Civilization.

90 During this period, relations with Russia were equally subordinated to the chancellor's anti-globalist mission. By identifying Russia as an ally of China in a professed globalist communist project, Araujo did not encourage the development of relations between Brasilia and Moscow.

91 The complexity of this bilateral relationship, however, allowed commercial, parliamentary and social ties to be maintained, preventing a major setback in Russian-Brazilian relations.

92 Araujo's subordination of pragmatic interests to an agenda of values generated strong domestic opposition to his foreign policy, eventually forcing him to resign.

93 After his successor Carlos França took office in April 2021, relations with Russia experienced a period of rebuilding, that can be illustrated by the convening of the CIC commission in October, 2021, followed by a visit of the Brazilian chancellor to Russia in November, 2021 and, finally an official visit of President Jair Bolsonaro to Moscow, in February 2022.

94 Araujo's eventual resignation can be considered an overdue realization from several economic and social groups in Brazil that the values-based, messianic foreign policy conducted by the former chancellor did not meet the complex, multi-leveled national interests of Brazil.

Примечания:

* Выражаем благодарность за поддержку со стороны факультета мировой экономики и международных отношений НИУ ВШЭ / Support from the Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs at HSE University is gratefully acknowledged.

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Ernesto Araujo and Russia: How The Brazilian Ex-Chancellor's Ideas Influenced Bilateral Relations between Brasilia and Moscow?

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Abstract

Relations between Brazil and Russia decelerated significantly during the tenure of Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs Ernesto Araujo, from January 2019 until March 2021. This article maintains that the former chancellor's ideas had a direct impact in the relative stagnation of Russian-Brazilian ties. Araujo's interpretation of the international reality is heavily influenced by the ideas of Brazilian right-wing ideologue Olavo de Carvalho, which frames Russia as a Chinese ally in the pursue of a global communist hegemony. According to Keohane and Goldstein, ideas are an important determinant of foreign policy-making and provide ethical and moral motivation for pursuing a given policy course. The article determines how Araujo's ideas reflected in his foreign policy in general, and in Brazilian-Russian relations in particular. The research concludes that Araujo led a values-based and ideological foreign policy, which deviates significantly from the pragmatic tradition of Brazilian diplomacy, with critical consequences for the development of bilateral relations with the Russian Federation during his tenure.

Keywords: Brazil, Russia, BRICS, Jair Bolsonaro, Ernesto Araujo, Olavo de Carvalho, bilateral relations, ideas, ideational approach

Publication date: 30.11.2022

Citation link:

Esteves A. Ernesto Araujo and Russia: How The Brazilian Ex-Chancellor's Ideas Influenced Bilateral Relations between Brasilia and Moscow? // ISTORIYA. – 2022. – V. 13. – Issue 10 (120). URL: <https://history.jes.su/s207987840023498-6-1/>. DOI: 10.18254/S207987840023498-6