

# **AFRICA AND THE EMERGING POWERS: THE SOUTH AND THE UNHOLY COOPERATION**

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## **Introduction**

One of the most remarkable phenomena of Contemporary International Relations is the fact that Africa became object of a new global race, like in the end of the 19th Century. In the beginning of the 21st Century, however, the most dynamic protagonists of such movement are the emerging powers, and not the European metropolises. Such process occurs in a frame of economic and social development in Africa, besides a diplomatic protagonism, which represented an unexpected feature for many. Africa, in marks of globalization and the end of the Cold War, experienced a second “lost decade”, with bloody internationalized civil wars, epidemics (HIV/AIDS, cholera and the Ebola virus, among others) and economic marginalization.

Nonetheless, without due importance given by European powers and the U.S., South Africa, Nigeria and Libya, soon followed by other nations, became more active, and China, India and, shortly after, Brazil started interacting with greater economic and political intensity with the African continent. In addition, they were followed by other emerging powers, such as Turkey, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Malaysia, amongst others. The

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effects did not take long, with Africa presenting, since the turn of the century, economic growth rates above the global average. Such phenomenon was accompanied by new diplomatic initiatives and social transformations, which altered the political elements of governance. Although the relative weight of change had limited impact, it was quick enough to be able to rework the hate speech presented by the North towards Africa.

As a reaction, academic and journalistic production began to arise, accusing the emerging powers of "new imperialists" that promoted a "new scramble" for Africa. The explicit speech gets to be surreal: academics, politicians, journalists, businesspersons and activists from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from former colonial powers and the United States present themselves as defenders of the African people, denouncing particularly the Chinese presence. Not exclusively, however, since Europeans, whose companies are deployed in Africa since colonial times, also criticize the Brazilian presence in Africa, which supposedly would seek only "to exploit the continent". However, critics relatively spare India, although its action is equivalent in form and intensity (Stephan 2006).

Interestingly enough, this speech echoed through the far-left and NGOs, which denounced "Brazilian imperialism" and even "Brazilian racism", while, further paradoxically, many national executives criticized the government for wasting time and resources with "a continent with no economic value and no future". Such opinion fluxes, skillfully supported by companies and governments (through foundations) and globally disseminated by media, have the single goal of delegitimizing Brazil's diplomacy for Africa, constraining its agents (although nowhere comparable to the anti-Chinese policy, much more intense). In this context, this article aims to introduce the topic in order to discuss the elements of such narrative before the reality of South-South Cooperation. The African economic and social development, its integration in global flows (reversing marginalization) and its relatively autonomous diplomacy, all active phenomena in the past fifteen years, represent important elements in the international arena. Thus, in the frame of the developed nations' 2008 crisis, such account finds its *raison d'être* among the well-intentioned, naive, and economic and political agents with well defined interests (Alden, Large and Oliveira 2008; Ampiah and Naidu 2008; Bond 2010). This point of view is heavily laden by contradictory arguments: today, Africa is

regarded as irrelevant, just as the emerging countries; tomorrow, emerging powers might cause a huge negative transformation.

### **Emerging countries in Africa**

The end of the Cold War represented the disengagement of foreign powers and the abandonment of large amount of weapons in the hands of weak governments and insurgent groups without access to power. The struggle for scarce resources, survival and the settlements of previous times produced slaughters from Liberia to Rwanda. The tragedies of the 1990s were not totally compensated for the (ambiguous) end of South African Apartheid, seeming to vindicate the Afro-pessimistic, with conflicts also involving neighboring countries (Schmidt 2012).

Then, Western attentions turned to the fast-developing Asia, particularly China, without giving due importance to the Chinese increasing presence in Africa. The War on Terror (real or idealized) promoted by the Bush Administration since 2001 kept the alienation in respect to the bonds that were forged between Asia and Africa and to the strong internal inflection that occurred in the evolution of the African continent itself.

At that time, China and India were not only becoming major exporters of manufactured products (requiring raw materials, energy and markets), but the Chinese also withdrew the first 400 million individuals out of poverty line and the latter, 100 million. The overall income increase and the resulting social inclusion both widened consumption and the search for more raw material, food and energy sources. The PR China has never departed from Africa, and Sino-African relations, which presented a new economic tone, reflected the Dragon's economic changes. It was not just about trade and investment, but the way China acted and how much it was important for Africa. Quickly and discreetly, China qualitatively increased its presence in Africa, closely followed by India, though it lacked the strategic vision and governmental support brought up by China.

In a surprise fashion, Brazil regained its own diplomatic, economic and cooperative protagonism, especially in relation to Africa, yet surpassing the strong activism exercised during the Military Regime. The African policy of

Lula exceeded all expectations and Brazil's African policy has become the vector of South-South Cooperation, acquiring a multifaceted profile.

The presence of these three giants in Africa has found a continent where new structures and practices emerged in order to deal with socio-political problems and economic development. The result was rapid, with new economic flows and external policy followed by the action of the new South Africa, Nigeria and Libya, with their abundant resources. At the same time, other emerging powers set a rapprochement, novel or not (but then with a new focus) between themselves and the African continent.

Yeltsin's Russia has ignored its former African allies, but the USSR had left deep roots in various regions of the continent: just as Chancellor Yevgeny Primakov signaled and Vladimir Putin took power, a significantly transformed Russia created an African policy based on economic relations to return to narrower link. In the same vein, Cuba, the Latin American country of largest presence and greatest knowledge and experience in Africa, never abandoned their cooperation, but its military dimension vanished after the end of the Cold War. Its support carried on and, after 1999, the Cubans started to rely on the political and financial support and the association with Hugo Chávez's Venezuela.

However, Turkey, Iran and the Arab countries (especially the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, particularly Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates), besides minor states like Malaysia, have also been present on the African continent by trading, investing and weaving political alliances. Interestingly, a movement of such magnitude went unnoticed by Europeans and Americans until the outbreak of the 2008 crisis. Henceforth, the Northern traditional powers had not only to seek new opportunities, but also to combat efficient competitors, especially China. The European Union still is the largest economic partner of Africa, but the speed with which China, and other emerging powers, joined African business and created new ones, undermining the old structures of domination, surprised the Euro-Americans (Visentini and CEBRAFRICA 2013).

Whilst a soft power campaign against the presence of China and Brazil – and to a much lesser extent, against India – was launched, the Euro-Americans went on the diplomatic-military offensive, since the financial crisis and the competitiveness of emerging countries (especially China) did not allow a

purely economic reversal. The rebuilding of the Fourth Fleet (South Atlantic), the creation of Africom (Africa Command) and the "anti-terrorist" militarization of the Sahara by Americans added up to the violent Franco-British military intervention in Northern Africa in the wake of the "Arab Spring". Hence, Africa became a pivotal part of great international politics.

### **China in Africa awakes the African people and the Western Powers<sup>2</sup>**

China has been developing projects in manifold areas since the foundation of its relations with African countries, especially after the 1990s. Oil and other natural resources represent an important part of Beijing's investments in the continent. Facing the developments presented by Beijing, the Western powers set the strategy to control progressively the Chinese access to natural resources, particularly in Central Asia, making China turn itself to developing countries, especially in Africa, which possessed roughly 10% of the global oil reserves in 2007.

In this sense, Sudan and Angola – which surpassed Saudi Arabia as China's main oil supplier in 2000 – would be among the most relevant African partners, in energetic terms. However, it is important to stress that oil producing countries – like Nigeria and Gabon –, although relying on Chinese investments and participation in the petroleum sector, continue to have Western powers as their main allies, a phenomenon that occurs elsewhere in Africa in many other fields with China. It is largely because Chinese investments are much more diversified when compared to the Western ones, strongly focused on the oil sector.

Beijing has also been developing projects for the construction and establishment of Special Economic Zones and Free Trade Areas in many African countries. The Special Economic Zones, where joint venture companies are installed, started to be developed in the 2006 FOCAC (Forum of China-Africa Cooperation) Summit and, since then, five zones were approved in Sub-

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Saharan Africa. The investment in economic and free trade zones represent an attempt to reproduce the Chinese development model, since the implementation of zones of these types in China was responsible for the increase of foreign direct investments and the consequent development of the country.

It is also worth remembering that some African countries have recently passed through internal conflicts, which destroyed a large part of their infrastructure, like Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte D'Ivoire. Thereby, a significant part of Chinese investments in the continent is focused on the construction or reconstruction of countries' infrastructure, generating thousands of posts of employment, though China employ its own workforce for many times, causing localized tensions (but reducing costs and allowing to operate in a minimal profit rate of 3%, unlike the European 15%) (Brautigam 2009, 247). Many public edifices were built, as well as football stadiums, energy-producing plants, roads, schools and centers for agriculture development. Hospitals were also built by China, which have been providing capacity building and formation for doctors and many other local professionals. The construction of infrastructure and the training of African employees are fundamental aspects of the Sino-African relations, once they focus on the African necessities for modernity and dignity, much less emphasized by Western vision.

Other important point is the financial aid provided by China to African countries. Differently from the West, China does not impose political demands and conditionalities on the recipient nations. Still, most of Chinese aid is completed through infrastructure building, and not through payments made directly to governments, significantly avoiding the misappropriation of funds and corruption (Sautman and Hairong 2006, 58). Moreover, unlike the international financial organizations, the Chinese financial aid is very dynamic, being available in a much faster period, flattering African leaders.

The interaction between China and Africa changed the economic panorama of the continent. Beyond the investments, the aid projects and the infrastructure construction, the huge Chinese demand for commodities enormously favored the African economies, transforming growth from possibilities into a real improvement and contributing for the expressive economic development of Africa in recent years. The capitulation of currencies

through commodities exports, for example, allows the African states the emancipation from IMF.

The African population is of roughly one billion people. Considering that a large part of it subsists from the production of commodities that, thanks to the Chinese expansion, suffered a strong escalation of prices, causing the increase of the purchasing power of the African population, an improvement of the pattern of consumption in Africa can be observed, turning the continent into a new market for China and other nations. Furthermore, the Chinese products sold for Africa, besides possessing affordable prices, have the capacity to increase the standard of living of African consumers. Thus, there is a commercial balance between Africa and China.

In political terms, the Sino-African interaction significantly benefits both Africa and China. For African people, the Chinese support aggregates a heavyweight partner in the pursuit for a more active participation in the international forums. Besides, once China is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, the African countries have a strong ally against some Western initiatives, negative for African countries. The relations with Beijing proportionate a kind of economic decolonization and a new international projection for Africa. The Chinese participation in the continent presents itself as positive to the extent that it creates new opportunities and possibilities, both politically and economically, with the increase of the number of possible partners and the competition between them.

Chinese presence in Africa, like the politics and the development model in China, presents itself enigmatically. There is no politics without interests, and China has particular interests in Africa. Many of them are the same of the Popular Republic's militant era, though they are not only connected to Africa, but equally to the change of an international system dominated by the West. The Third World has always been a key piece of the Chinese strategy of alteration of the world order. What is new is the economic dimension.

China does not "plunder" the continent because it is not in a position of imposing itself before the African people (and it would not long for such thing). It also pays for what it buys (reverting the price decline), besides representing a model for Africa through its successful progress and poverty eradication, for China still is a developing country even though it is a permanent member of the

UNSC. The Chinese make donations for lost funds, cooperate in all spheres, do not meddle in African internal affairs and sell consumer goods for very low prices, accessible for many social strata deprived heretofore of them. It is causing a social transformation from the base, with economic and political impacts. The African consumption affects the capitalist model currently in force at the global level. The Chinese presence is still a minority, and the country does not put in practice any activity not demanded by the African nations.

The economic flows between China and Africa increased from 10 to 200 billion dollars in 10 years, and 25% of the oil imported by China come from the African continent. The relations between both actors is similar to the link China kept with Japan in the 1970s, during the Oil Crisis and the recession of OECD countries, only with reverted roles, for Chinese used to receive investments in infrastructure, acquired vehicles and other goods, while exporting oil and coal to Japan. Through the sale of commodities, China paid for imports and amortized investments without becoming indebted, which was highly advantageous for both countries.

One problem is that Africa has not a particular negotiation policy, because there are 54 states. It is Africans' responsibility to improve their arrangements within multilateral institutions, like African Union, to negotiate with the Chinese<sup>3</sup>. The West has short-run policies for Africa, but China acts in a long-run perspective, though with a flexible strategy. According to Yu (2010, 150), "China [is the] 'Dragon in the woods', [which] needs to be unknown and not understood. However, Africa understood it and the Western countries often reckon that China possess capacity, experience and technology to contribute for the African economic transformation".

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<sup>3</sup> The multiplicity of Chinese agents in Africa makes their control problematic for Beijing. Abuses, which happen in every relation, involve links between Chinese and local authorities (limber and ivory contraband, for example). In respect to the labor question, there is a cultural problem: the China that enters the African continent is engaged in a swift growth, which contrasts with the situation faced by Africa, generating a clash between completely different time dimensions. The Chinese eagerness to conclude the works in time and with a payable cost deprive interpersonal relations of a human aspect that is much expensive for African culture. Moreover, the diversity and quantity of fronts in which the Chinese are involved make eventual problems even more frequent and easily explored (when not broadened) by international media, with aims at (de)forming the local and external public opinions.

Another important question, of global impact, is that Sino-African relations are remarkable features of South-South Cooperation, and they are contributing for creating a southern geopolitical space, in which the South Atlantic and Indic oceans acquire a strategic role in the political and economic fields (Kornegay 2010). China has become an industrial power, but not a superpower, continuing to be a developing country. It makes a huge difference for Africa, if compared to Europe or the United States. In this sense, the Western critiques just confirm the hypothesis that Sino-African cooperation creates a situation of decreasing Western importance. The valuation of the African space changes the world balance of power.

### **The resumption of Brazil-Africa relations and its geopolitical effects**

Brazil is a mixed country, a multiple and still-forming culture with a strong African component. It joined the world-system during the slavery mercantilism along with Africa, turning the South Atlantic into one of the most dynamic centers of the world-economy during the seventeenth and part of the eighteenth centuries. In spite of this common identity, British diplomacy prevented Angola to integrate Brazil at the latter's independence in 1822. Throughout the nineteenth century, Great Britain cut the transatlantic ties (especially the traffic) and, during its imperialist phase, occupied much of the African continent (Rodrigues 1964; Munanga 2009). From 1860 to 1960, Brazil-Africa relations were minimal, and it was only with the Independent Foreign Policy (1961-64), the Military Regime (1964-85) and the Sarney administration (1985-90) that the political-economic interaction gained new intensity. The 1970s and the 1980s were decades of large commercial interchange (greater than currently) and political rapprochement.

However, the Third World's debt crisis and the end of the Cold War affected Brazil and Africa, restraining interactions between them both. After the retreat of the neoliberal adjustments period on both sides of the Ocean (1990s), when there was only a selective approach (prioritizing some key countries), cooperation was resumed quantitatively and qualitatively, in a multidimensional frame, during Lula administration (2003-2010). At this stage, Brazil seeks no mineral raw materials or food in Africa because it is a major

exporter of the same items and is on track to become an exporter of oil. Three main relationship lines gained remarkable boost.

Firstly, an intense political and diplomatic approach, bilaterally and multilaterally, aiming to influence the evolution of world politics, where President Lula's protagonism was decisive. It was not only a search for support to a permanent seat at the UN Security Council, but also the formation of a cohesive group in the political and commercial negotiations at international organizations such as the WTO. Moreover, Brazilian diplomacy sought to strengthen Africa's international role and pushed for the creation, within the South-South Cooperation framework, of the IBSA Dialogue Forum (India, Brazil and South Africa), and of the triennial summits South America-Africa and South America-Arab Countries. Besides, Brazil gave a new impetus to the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP, initials in Portuguese), and the Zone of Peace and Cooperation in the South Atlantic (ZOPACAS, initials in Portuguese).

Secondly, in the economic sphere, it intensified the trade of goods in both directions (slightly favorable to Africa) and Brazilian investments in infrastructure and services, with the debt forgiveness of various countries and financial support from the National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES, initials in Portuguese). Such initiatives aimed not only to internationalize Brazilian big companies that were in Africa since the 1970s (Petrobras, Vale do Rio Doce, Odebrecht), but also to increase trade in both directions. The creation of political, financial, institutional and logistical channels for the exchange's sustainability was fundamental. It is important to mention that there were great business prejudice and resistance from certain domestic and foreign actors to such cooperation (IPEA/BM 2012).

Finally, in third place, South-South Cooperation had an enormous improvement in the technical, educational and social fields. The Brazilian government's successful social policies drew Africa's attention: combating hunger, eliminating poverty and epidemics (such as HIV-AIDS), and supporting youth, women, education, sports, culture and public safety. With regard to technical cooperation, Embrapa and other agencies' work contributed for the development of agriculture from the large to the domestic scale. Technical education, transports, energy, urban planning, sanitation, biofuels

and health, among others, are fields in which the performed work is strongly recognized by Africans and the international agencies (Mendonça Jr. 2013).

If all these processes and developments represent only political discourse (prestige diplomacy), economic interests ("soft imperialism") or an association between two peripheries of the world-system in the pursuit of socio-economic development (South-South Cooperation), time will show. This is an ongoing process with many stakeholders, multiple objectives and a complex regional and global environment.

African governments, in turn, must overcome the conduct of external assistance and dependence, created during the Cold War and intensified during the "lost decade", as well as to seek deepening the processes of development and integration under the challenge of globalization. To vanquish some aspects of the colonial legacy – especially the fragmentation of countries, mainly observed in the setting of small and unviable nations – is an urgent need. At the same time, they have to strengthen the ties of cooperation, in an independent external perspective, reversing the trend of marginalization of the continent.

Brazil, on the other hand, is a mixed country, not a "racial democracy" or a "multicultural" nation. Miscegenation does not mean bleaching, but mixing, something that has to do with a culture that ignores certain differences and feels strongly attracted by other cultures<sup>4</sup>. The country is seeking an identity and developing its own culture, in which the African element has a definite contribution and should be recognized, and social inequalities that penalize the majority of the black population are the subject of affirmative action policies and tend to be at least minimized. Yet, among many injustices, we have a huge culture of tolerance, which can be a model for a world of intolerance (Cardim and Dias 2011).

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<sup>4</sup> The expression "racial democracy", often invoked by critics (always invoking Gilberto Freyre) of the cooperation between Brazil and Africa as a hypocrisy, never surpassed an internal political and diplomatic discourse of short duration. One must separate the academic Gilberto Freyre from the opportunist, ally of Portuguese Salazarism, and remember progressive historians such as José Honório Rodrigues, who presented the qualities of a mixed country. The concept of "multiculturalism", based on North American anthropology, was introduced in Brazil in the 1970s and 1980s by domestic and foreign critics in the zenith of both cooperation with Africa and struggle for democracy. It seems that its objective was to delegitimize the Brazilian diplomatic discourse and to substitute the centrality of the social class' concept for the race's, with the aim of disarticulating the increasing social conflicts that followed the end of the military's "economic miracle."

Far beyond the commercial aspect, Brazil can be an important partner for the African continent to surpass some internal obstacles (political, economic and social). The barriers of Africa, in turn, may also be useful for Brazil, not only in economic aspects, but also political and cultural. As a developing nation, there is always a kind of "First World temptation" by Brazilian elites, who see the country as "a white, Western and Christian" state. Moreover, our society, which receives African students, should also send students and tourists to Africa, which would contribute to the development of Brazilian national identity, the essential element of any development process.

Finally, the tension between a transoceanic cooperation focused on the North Atlantic (due to the history of capitalism) and another centered in the South Atlantic (based on South American integration, in association with Africa and South-South Cooperation) is a fundamental contradiction. In this context, the Brazil-Africa relations are crucial to overcome such limitation. The integration of the North Atlantic is already completed and many analysts focus on the rise of the Pacific Ocean region. However, few realize the importance of emerging oceanic spaces in the South Atlantic and Indian oceans, the route that connects Brazil to Asia. Most of the oil from South Africa and Southern Asia is in these two oceans. It is vital, therefore, to defend the sovereignty over these natural resources and demilitarization and the security of these strategic routes. Hence, it is possible to understand the logic behind the IBSA strategy and even the Brazil-Africa relations.

Obviously, Brazil's stand regarding the African States have allowed a worldwide projection of the country's image (prestige diplomacy). However, it is important for both sides, once the bilateral relations and the common multilateral action are fundamental to boost African states' international performance. Besides, they contribute to the emergence of a multipolar order, as well as to vanquish the past challenges and to balance the opportunities of European and North American cooperation with new ones, provided by the Indian and Chinese presences. This represents a primary condition for the social and economic development of Africa.

At the same time, as a capitalist country, the Brazilian business community wants to gain profits, especially in new markets (then the concept of soft imperialism). Nonetheless, the historical experience shows that just political will and solidary rhetoric are insufficient without solid economical

connections. The recent political evolution shows, on the other hand, that African governments are becoming more pro-active in the defense of their interests. Brazil, thus, is not in position of imposing a condition the Africans do not want. In the same way, China and India have no conditions to “dominate” Africa.

It is evident that Lula administration had a wider approach for South-South Cooperation and tried to propose a new shape for international system. It was not the case of asking developed countries for a new form of treatment, but of not doing the same to the least developed partners. It was coherent with the social and political programs of Lula and Dilma. Neither was it the old Third World’s 1970s strategy – a coalition against the north. The post-Cold War and globalizing scenario has produced a new international environment, in which Brazil needs consistent partners to a construction of a multipolar world order.

Finally, Brazil-Africa relations gain even more importance in the recent context of world financial crisis, in which the commodities’ price drop and the decrease of foreign investment fluxes threaten the developing countries. It is, therefore, a critical moment for partnerships with African countries, because there is not only the potential for a tighten relation, but also for a rupture. According to Lula’s posture in forums – the III IBSA Summit, the Financial G-20 and the UN General Assembly –, the president was interested in the first option, tending to maintain the most important foreign policy lines through diplomatic efforts, in order to deepen relations between Brazil and developing countries. As affirmed by the president during the XXIII African Union Assembly, in July 2009, “Brazil has not come to Africa to apologize for the colonial past; we want to be real partners in development and cooperation”. In the occasion, he promised to help Africa to promote a *Green Revolution* in all agricultural fields.

It would not be an exaggeration to consider Brazil’s foreign policy towards Africa as a *Revolution*. During the July 2010 FIFA World Cup, Lula made his last trip to Africa as president. He visited Cape Verde, where he watched the CEDEAO/ECOWAS-Brazil Summit Meeting to promote cooperation with West African countries. Then, he traveled to Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and South Africa. In Kenya and Tanzania, agreements were signed with Vale do Rio Doce and Petrobras.

Between 2003 and 2010, Lula travelled 11 times to Africa, visiting 29 nations, while Brazil received 48 African Chiefs of State. Brazil has opened 17 new embassies in Africa, totaling 35, standing in the fourth position, right after the U.S., France and China. Never has so much been done for Brazil-Africa relations, while Dilma is keeping the same path, although in a difference conjuncture (“continuity without priority”).

### **India, Russia and other emerging powers also reach Africa**

Like China, India has maintained millennial contacts with East Africa, which were interrupted while both suffered from common colonialism. A significant migration of contracted Indian workers has also occurred, though. From India’s independence until the end of the Cold War, neutrality, anticolonial policy and the antiapartheid diplomatic support were the guidelines of India-Africa relations. Since the 1990s, globalization and Indian development and economic openness created a new stage for cooperative relations, which has a smaller governmental support from Delhi if compared to Beijing. Moreover, India seeks maintaining a low political profile and a predominantly economic acting, though Indian diplomacy’s long-run objectives were not changed, just reshaped.

The most remarkable point is that Indian actions are rarely subject of Western critiques, though they are not much different to Chinese or Brazilian practices. In any way, India contributes to African development, where it seeks energy, raw material, food and markets, offering cooperation and investments. In the absence of a well-defined policy, India follows China’s path, with the difference of being a member of IBSA and sharing with the Africans the Indic Ocean’s ascension as a strategic space (Beri 2003; Mohanti 2008).

Czarist Russia maintained relations with coopt Christians from Ethiopia and Egypt, as well as an anti-British policy similar to the African. If the Russian Revolution, on the one hand, represented a physical drift away from Africa, on the other it presented a strong anti-imperialist policy that flattered the Africans. Moreover, Africa sent some individuals to the formation of the Communist International and, after the Second World War, to Eastern Europe and the Communist Parties of the metropolis, which kept indirect contact with the USSR.

Moscow developed an intense anticolonial policy as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and extended its cooperation to the first independent states of Africa. In a less-known continent, the participation during the Congo Crisis represented a trauma. Besides, the uncertain situation of progressive regimes, such as Ghana, Guinea and Egypt, caused a Soviet retreat, despite the continuing cooperation with the continent. The Soviet anticolonialism also suffered from contradiction with its European policy during the Cold War, like the relations with France, for instance.

Nonetheless, with the situation of the Portuguese colonies after the *Revolução dos Cravos* and the Cuban involvement, as well as with the Ethiopian Revolution, Moscow had to position itself in support to its allies and against the Sino-American influence towards Africa. Fifteen years of war in the South and the Horn of Africa would follow, with indirect participation of the Warsaw Pact (arms, assessors, economic and diplomatic support, and political formation) and direct participation of Cuba (combatants and cooperation). Such involvement helped forming new African elites – military, bureaucrats and technicians, which contributed to state and nation building, and to international projection (Hughes 1992). However, this whole process was interrupted with the end of the USSR, and the 1990s were marked by an estrangement during the Ieltsin administration.

With Putin, Russia re-emerges as an economic partner aiming to invest, more than just to import, in energy and minerals, besides retaking its military contacts to sales and improvements of equipment. However, Russia also contributes to infrastructure, cooperates in a myriad of traditional fields and becomes an ally at multilateral forums, trying to qualify African states to participate of the building of a multipolar world order (Fidan and Aras 2010).

Cuba was included in this article not because it is an “emerging” country, but because it represents the Latin American nation with the longest and steadiest presence in Africa, where Cuba exerts great influence, however not economic. Like Brazil, it is a mixed country with large African component. Even prior to the Revolution, there were intense contact, simultaneous to the independences, with Africa activists. Excluded from Latin America and with a complex relation, not immune to contradictions, to the communist world, Cuba approached the Third World, especially Africa. There, Cuba supported the

national liberation movements, cooperated in the social field with the new nations and formed technical and political personnel in Cuba. In 1975, the Cubans started to possess a military-strategic presence in the South and the Horn of Africa.

The Cubans guaranteed Angolan sovereignty and the defense of the Ethiopian Revolution, as well as Namibia's independence, but Cuban troops left Africa in 1989. Medical, technical and educational cooperation continued, though. Even with its economic crisis, Cuba kept aiding and hosting thousands of African students. (Lopez 2002). In the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, its situation improved and it opened an association with Chávez's Venezuela for a high-level diplomacy for Africa. The new South Africa represents an important ally thanks to the old partnership with African National Congress.

Turkey had a historical presence in Northern Africa, though it is not perceived as colonialist. In 1998, with the victory of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), of Islamic orientation, an Action Plan for Africa was created. A nation with certain industrialization level, Turkey is a regional power and possess a new and active diplomacy. It stopped having in the European Union and the NATO membership (USSR no longer exists) its only vectors of foreign policy. The Turkish Doctrine of Strategic Depth aimed establishing leadership and influence ties to Muslim states, especially in Africa. Besides commercial and investment ties, Turkey has been granting great emphasis to the Somalian question, which guaranteed the country a lot of prestige in the African continent.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), particularly Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, along with the Islamic Development Bank (founded in 1973), aims investing in Africa, preparing for the post-petroleum era. It is not about "emancipating the continent", since they exclusively focus on business, occupying the empties left or neglected by Euro-Americans, and the Petrol-Monarchies are allies of the Western countries (though they start to develop some different interests). Their actions, however, are of great contribution to the African development.

On its turn, Iran, which during its imperial era maintained certain contact with Africa, emerges negotiating oil by a cheaper price, exchanging products and investing in the continent, besides an intense political cooperation. It represents an effort to overcome the isolation provoked by the Western

sanctions to the country, as well as the exercise of a diplomacy directed to the emancipation of the Third World, which has always been a motto of the Iranian Revolution. Currently, Iran is one of the leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement. The discrete, but relevant and increasing, presence of Malaysia, also worth a mention. An officially Muslim country with a typical business diplomacy, Malaysia has an emerging nation profile that is very similar to the aforementioned states. However, it avoids any specific political discourse for the African Continent apart from the South-South Cooperation.

### **The encounter between periphery and semi-periphery: effects**

At the structural level, the presence of emerging powers such as China, Brazil and India, Russia, Cuba, Turkey, Iran and the Gulf Arab nations, Africa relies on ongoing change in global capitalism. Industrialization spread by the semi-periphery of the world system, especially in East and South Asia. However, it is important to note that without economic connections, no system of international relations. Nonetheless, the world political system is also undergoing changes with the relative decline of the economy and even the power of traditional military-diplomatic powers of the North Atlantic, and these conditions are necessary to explain the new phenomenon, are not sufficient.

This set of new relations was not the result of chance, cyclical economic opportunity or simple political voluntarism. The transformation of global capitalism, industrialization had brought to the Asian Tigers and China, and other emerging nations such as Brazil and India, now allow these countries to invest and trade with Africa. However, it is not a mere economic logic that connects the semi-periphery to periphery: there is a political dimension and the emergence of a new socioeconomic paradigm that were not part of the calculations of policymakers, entrepreneurs and speculators of the North Atlantic. Great production and technological progress in creating conditions for the emergence of alternative political, diplomatic and social projects in the context of long-term history in the five centuries of expansion of Western Empires Maritimes give rise to the recovery of large land areas and "continental empires."

However, it is necessary that the countries in question have projects and political will to promote economic globalization and political and social cooperation with other regions. Many attributed the presence phenomenon emerging in Africa to an "exceptionally favorable conditions in the global economy" without any particular merit. But such a situation, if it ever existed, has passed, but cooperation with Africa remains strong, to the point that the old powers have sought to employ diplomatic and military resources to bar the way of South-South cooperation for Africa.

Africa, a huge and underpopulated continent is the last space with strategic resources and under-used, still under the influence of declining economic powers. This is the space that opens a new dispute between powers, but called "new race" or "new share" is not based on established exclusive areas of direct control, as in the past. It is aimed at specific sectors of the entire continent, which today is characterized by a number of nations in the process of consolidation and political will own economy.

The Africans and their new partners gain greater diplomatic role, with the new international relations marked by the South - South cooperation and the building of a world system characterized by increasing multipolarity, which advances as the development of the periphery is consolidated. China is the most important part of this process, quantitative and qualitative factor, which favors the presence of other emerging markets. China, Cuba and have never stopped cooperating with Africa, since 1949 and 1959 respectively.

The USSR started cooperation in the passage from the 1950s to 1960, suffering a setback to the mid-1970s, when it acquired high profile. With its decline and implosion, followed almost a decade of absence, until Putin's Russia, in 2000, resumed cooperation, this time with an economic profile and with increasing intensity. The Turks, Iranians and Arabs came later, although the latter have had some cooperation in the decade that followed the 1973 oil crisis.

Currently, we observe the continued presence of the emerging powers, but amid a Euro-American counteroffensive since 2008. The question is that African states, even with the creation of the African Union in 2002, do not have a consolidated common policy, nor a defined developmental project set on a continental scale, although if it has been sketched. The big issue is whether its cooperation with emerging countries will resist to the new Western offensive.

There is strong evidence that such link is going to persist, but there will be major changes in the current contours.

China had ancient contacts with Africa five hundred years ago, which were interrupted (except for the presence of immigrants hired to work fronts), and the Asian country suffered colonialism the same way as Africa, creating a common vision. The Chinese Revolution, the Bandung Conference and the anti-colonialism set the conditions for a new cooperation, with diplomatic, revolutionary support and cooperation in the spheres of social base. Although poorer than the USSR, China has disbursed more resources on Africa than the latter until the Cold War reached the continent during the 1970s. This phase was marked by the internal problems, pro-West external alliances and the economic transformation that provoked a decrease on the cooperation and Beijing's adoption of alliances that drifted China away from most Africans.

Nevertheless, in the 1990s, returned to China with technical cooperation and growing economic interaction, since its development and transformation of the world order so require. Though he denies, China has a strategy for the continent, which aims to develop both and closer diplomatic cooperation as a way to transform the world order towards multipolarity and strengthening of multilateral organizations, especially the UN. China seeks raw materials, food, energy, markets and political support , offering cooperation basis (including grants), infrastructure construction (via help or paid by Africans), makes investments, contributes to the economic emancipation of the continent and works together in international organizations, almost always in support to the Third World.

Brazil had strong interaction with Africa in the colonial period and the nineteenth century, along with Cuba, the only emerging with strong population of African origin. But Brazil's cooperation with Africa was only resumed with the Independent Foreign Policy (PEI) in 1961, and consolidated during the military regime (1964-1985) , decreasing during the 1990s and being resumed with great intensity at the beginning of the century XXI.

The Brazil-Africa cooperation, in addition to ASA and ASPA Summit, another multilateral dimension involves transcontinental range, the IBSA Dialogue Forum, which is an elaborate South-South cooperation form, reactivating the size of Brazilian diplomacy in the Third World. You can

compound the connections of strategic emergence of the South Atlantic, which has a strong interface with the Brazil - Africa relations.

While social and economic development, coupled with the political autonomy of Africa, are political components of the government led by the Workers' Party, they are needed to change the international system and the deepening of ties between Brazil and Africa conditions. In addition, the relationship contributes to the definition of Brazilian identity as a Third World nation (although linked to the misconception of "multiculturalism"<sup>5</sup>), instead of the idea of elites belonging to the Western world, read, white and Europeanized.

As African nations, Brazil is a developing country. Hence the aggressive way the Brazilian elite fighting African policy initiated by the Lula government. During the Dilma administration, the relationship with Africa has lost importance, but priority and prominence. The President does not have the same interest in foreign policy, which he considered "too advanced" and consolidated, giving greater autonomy to the Foreign Ministry and focusing on combating the crisis and in building the infrastructure. There is continuity, but the future will show which Africa's place in the future world insertion of Brazil.

Finally, the diplomatic and military response Euro-American (and Israeli ) aims formally to combat terrorism , but also to business, to weaken the presence of emerging powers in Africa , and ensuring a strategic edge for right reflux in the Middle East, to control the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans as well as the stabilization of Europe's southern frontier. The Israelis seek to avoid isolation in the region, where the Western presence declines. The static figures point to the Euro- American supremacy on the African continent, but its evolution shows that, as a whole, emerging become a growing force, not only for themselves, but also for contribution to African development.

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<sup>5</sup> There is a wrong idea in the country simplistically linking the question of the Afro-descendants in Brazil to Africa's situation: both would be "the oppressed." In Brazil, the analysis of class is switched by the analysis of the race, just like the North American anthropology, which introduced the concept of "multiculturalism" since the 1970s. On the other hand, while the elite opposes the Brazil-Africa relations, the "Left" believes that we should "pay the historical debt" of slavery, without considering that the European states promoted this process. Well, the African nations are capitalists, and it is with them that Brazil must negotiate, which does not mean that the affirmative actions are not directed for the change.

The phenomenon described in this article occurs in the framework of global capitalism, with Africa through a process of capital accumulation and the formation of different social classes, the modern type. However, it is already marked by a visible political impact on the countries most advanced in the process, as South Africa is important to remember that African leaders and significant social groups are key actors in such interaction, which falls within the framework of one inter-capitalist competition on the world stage. On the one hand, as has been seen, the South-South Cooperation empowers the political and economic development of African countries, with impact on the global reordering. Then, a deepening of capitalist social relations of its kind in Africa, which creates political and social cleavages involving the development of alternative projects internally, with possible breaks in the medium and long term, occurs. This modernization of the African continent allows such future possibility, unlike the naive defense of corporate pre-capitalist in the region, supported by some social actors default.

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**ABSTRACT**

In the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century, after the second "lost decade" and rather surprisingly, Africa resumes economic growth, socioeconomic development, relatively political stability and progress in the processes of regional and continental integration. The reason for such inflection results from a combination of both internal and external factors: the stabilization of large African states, the performance of its leaders in the pursuit of political and economic integration (NEPAD and AU) and the increasing presence of emerging powers, especially China, but also the other BRICS countries and other strong developing nations. Based on new capital flows between the semi-periphery and periphery, a phenomenon linked to political-diplomatic and social initiatives from South-South Cooperation occurs and presents significant impacts on the transformation of the international system. Impacts strong enough to make the Western powers, as from the 2008 crisis, begin to seek the reversal of this process.

**KEYWORDS**

Africa; Emerging Powers; BRICS; South-South Cooperation.

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