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**Brazilian-Russian Relations during Jair Bolsonaro's administration  
(2019-2022)**

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### **Relevance of the research topic**

International Relations is undertaking a moment of fundamental changes, in which power correlations in the world arena transition politically, economically and geographically. The relative decline of the main centers of power of the International System inherited from the post- Second World War period represent an opportunity for the rise of emerging economies, assembled in international fora such as the BRICS and the G20. Relieved from the restraints of a Western-dominated international arena, countries of the Global Majority will have more leverage to work bilaterally, without triangulation with obsolete centers power. In this context, countries such as Brazil and Russia have a unique opportunity to build an autonomous political and economic infrastructure to cement bilateral ties and cooperate autonomously towards building a multipolar world.

Both countries are fundamental actors in the International System and architects of the emerging multipolar world. Both countries actively engage in multilateral forums such as the G-20 and coordinate positions in the United Nations -including the Security Council, where Brazil has occupied a non-permanent seat in 2022, therefore within the chronological framework of this research. Bilateral political coordination in multilateral organizations is foreseen in the Plan for Political Consultations for the period 2022-2025, approved by Brazil and Russia during Bolsonaro's administration, under the auspices of the countries' Strategic Partnership<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the dynamics of Brazilian-Russian ties are often reflected in the level of engagement of the BRICS forum, intensifying or decelerating its performance according to the degree of coordination between Moscow and Brasilia.

Despite eventual political and economic instabilities, Brazil is an emerging power in international relations. With a robust diplomatic tradition, Brazil is the only Latin American country to have a seat on the table to participate in the resolution of global issues, such as Middle East peace settlement. Moreover, Brazil is a regional leader on nuclear nonproliferation, economic cooperation, environmental issues and a strong candidate to occupy a permanent seat in a reformed Security Council. The relevance of Brazil as an international actor is, therefore, indisputable.

The country went through a turbulent political period, starting with the controversial impeachment of president Dilma Rousseff in 2019 and culminating in the presidency of Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022), shifting Brazil's international strategy significantly, as well as its image around the globe. It is necessary to understand the impact of the so-called "new Brazilian foreign policy" promoted by Bolsonaro's administration in Brazilian-Russian relations. Bolsonaro's foreign policy is widely considered to be a rupture in Brazilian diplomatic tradition. However, during Jair Bolsonaro's mandate, an internal political crisis led to a leadership change in the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (known as *Itamaraty*) in March 2021. This research sustains that this development had a significant effect on Bolsonaro's foreign policy, bringing it closer to traditional Brazilian diplomatic practice.

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<sup>1</sup> Brasil, Plano de Consultas Políticas Brasil-Rússia (2022-25). URL: The Digital Library of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. . (retrieved in: 28.02.2022).

Since the **object** of the study is Brazilian-Russian relations, and the **subject** is the specifics of these relations during the presidency of Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022), the author puts forward the following **hypothesis**.

The author suggests that the evolution of Bolsonaro's general foreign policy, which occurred under the influence of the “ministerial crisis” of March 2021, the change of leadership in the Brazilian Foreign Ministry had immediate effects on Brazilian-Russian relations, which evolved from a period of crisis during the beginning of Bolsonaro’s mandate (until March 2021), to a period of rebuilding and deepening of relations, (from April 2021 until the end of his administration). The research sustains that, while the mandate of foreign minister Ernesto Araujo imposed a serious crisis in Brazilian-Russian relations, the term of foreign minister Carlos França was characterized by rebuilding of ties followed by a deepening of relations. The results achieved during Carlos França’s period, added to the resources mobilized to overcome the crisis imposed by Araujo, lead to the hypothesis that Bolsonaro’s administration overall can be considered as a positive period for Brazilian-Russian relations.

Based on this hypothesis, the **research question** can be formulated as follows: How did the change in the political situation in Brazil become a factor in the transformation of the foreign policy course of the Jair Bolsonaro administration and influence the specifics of bilateral relations between Brazil and Russia?

This research question entails a debate on the impact that a given administration has on a country's foreign policy. Therefore, we will question the Realist theory of International Relations, that considers the State as a unitary actor, in which domestic and foreign policy are separated, independent domains. According to Milani, Pinheiro & Lima<sup>2</sup>, since Brazil’s redemocratization and the approval of the Constitution of 1988 the range of internal actors involved in the foreign policy elaboration and execution have widened, narrowing the gap between domestic and foreign policy. Therefore, it is legitimate to analyze the impact of particular administrations in Brasilia's foreign policy conduct.

While recognizing the capacity that administrations have to impact foreign policy elaboration and execution, this research will also scrutinize how internal institutional mechanisms, (such as the professional bureaucracy of the Brazilian State, especially the Itamaraty), act against abrupt changes in foreign policy course<sup>3</sup>. This will be fundamental to understand how the crisis installed in Brazilian foreign policy in the first period of Bolsonaro’s ruling was mitigated by the Itamaraty and other domestic actors and finally reversed in the second period of Bolsonaro’s administration. The fundamental dynamic of the Brazilian-Russian relations under Bolsonaro’s administration identified in this research, is that of the installment and subsequent overcoming of a diplomatic crisis.

The **research objective** is to understand the impacts of the adoption of Jair Bolsonaro's “new Brazilian foreign policy” in bilateral relations between Brazil and Russia between 2019 and 2022.

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<sup>2</sup> Milani, C., Pinheiro, L., Lima, M. Brazil’s foreign policy and the ‘graduation dilemma’. International Affairs, Oxford. 2017. V. 93. N. 3. P. 585-605.

<sup>3</sup> Lima, M. Instituições Democráticas e Política Exterior. Contexto Internacional, 2000. V. 22. N. 2. P. 265-303.

Considering the research objective, the chronological framework and sources available to investigate Brazilian-Russian relations during Jair Bolsonaro's administration, the main **research tasks** outlined are:

1. To examine the main vectors of Jair Bolsonaro's foreign policy and its relationship with the historical traditions of Brazilian foreign policy.
2. To demonstrate the impact that Jair Bolsonaro's foreign policy concepts have had on Brazilian-Russian relations and to determine the level of discontinuity and continuity in Jair Bolsonaro's foreign policy towards Russia.
3. To identify the main dynamics in Brazilian-Russian relations during the administration of Jair Bolsonaro, assessing the different foreign ministers who have determined the course of Brazilian diplomacy towards Russia.
4. To explain the influence of external factors on the evolution of Brazilian-Russian relations during the analyzed period, paying special attention to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the start of the Special Military Operation for bilateral ties.
5. To identify the main results of Brazilian-Russian relations during the analyzed period, considering the dynamics of such parameters as trade flows, cooperation in sensitive areas and coordination in multilateral forums

The **chronological framework** of the present research is limited to the period from January 2019 until December 2022, which is the interval of the constitutional mandate of Jair Bolsonaro as president of the Federative Republic of Brazil. Within this period, two different foreign ministers served under Jair Bolsonaro: Ambassador Ernesto Araujo, from January 2019 until March 2021, and Ambassador Carlos França, from April 2021 until December 2022. This research considers the change of ministers as a relevant event in Bolsonaro's foreign policy and, therefore will divide Bolsonaro's administration into two periods: the first, spanning from January 2019 until March 2021 and the second, covering April 2021 until December 2022.

### **Theoretical framework and methodology**

Since the research is conducted within the field of International Relations, the thesis has engaged in the main ontological debates of this academic area with the support of the Constructivist theory of International Relations. The focus on issues such as the role of leaders and the influence of domestic issues in foreign policy conduct required the opening of "the State's black box" and the adoption of ideas proposed by A. Wendt in his pioneering book "Social Theory of International Relations".<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, the Constructivist approach will be critical to assess the role of ideas in foreign policy making. The influence of a leader's ideas is particularly relevant to address the role of minister of Foreign Affairs Ernesto Araujo in Brazilian-Russian ties. Araujo's peculiar world view and specific perceptions on the role of Russia in International Affairs were determinant to explain the meaningful deterioration of bilateral ties during his mandate. The works of authors identified with the Liberal school of International Relations,

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<sup>4</sup> Wendt A. Social Theory of International Relations. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1999.

such as Keohane and Goldstein<sup>5</sup>, will also be mobilized to properly assess the role of ideas in world affairs.

In addition, the research adopted a middle-range International Relations theory to support the analysis of Bolsonaro's foreign policy in particular: Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). FPA emerged as a significant tool for this research, due to its emphasis on decision-making process, the role of individual leaders and the impacts of domestic policy in international affairs. This area of study in international relations is committed to producing agent-specific research that examines national policy at the highest level and analyzes domestic policy components to clarify foreign policy choices. While maintaining the role of the nation State as the fundamental level of analysis, as noted by Snyder<sup>6</sup>, FPA allows for the study of the psycho-milieu of foreign policy leaders as an essential tool to comprehend their decisions on what is called "foreign policy undertakings", as proposed by H. and M. Sprout<sup>7</sup>.

Considering that this research assesses the evolution of a specific bilateral relation, within a specific period, it is necessary to adopt adequate historical theories and methods. A particularly valuable tool to undertake this task is the adoption of the French School of History of International Relations, forged by authors such as Renouvin<sup>8</sup> and Duroselle<sup>9</sup>. These scholars have taken a vital epistemological step in International Relations, surpassing the traditions of diplomatic history and inaugurating the field of History of International Relations, mobilizing categories such as decision-making, culture and material determinants of State action. Through the adoption of the French School's theoretical framework, the examination of Brazilian-Russian relations will move beyond the enumeration of its diplomatic events or meetings at Embassies. The French School allows for encompassing social elements and the impact of the International System in researches dedicated to the history of bilateral ties.

The main methods used by this research were systemic-historic, as proposed by Tsygankov<sup>10</sup>, allied with tools such as discourse analysis and content analysis. The historical proximity of the period analyzed by this research and its preference for the assessment of human agency did require extensive analysis of speeches, interviews and other official and unofficial textual sources. To guarantee a responsible analysis of these materials, the research will observe the methodological principles proposed by Discourse Analysis tradition, as detailed in chapter one of this thesis. Discourse Analysis can be applied to assess both positivist and interpretivist research tasks. The positivist approach to Discourse Analysis will focus on the motivation of the agents to undertake a given course

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<sup>5</sup> Goldstein J., Keohane R. *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 1993.

<sup>6</sup> Snyder R. *Foreign Policy Decision-Making: An Approach to the Study of International Politics*. Glencoe: Free Press. 1962.

<sup>7</sup> Sprout H., Sprout M. *Man-Milieu Relationship Hypothesis in the Context of International Politics*. Princeton : Princeton University Press. 1956.

<sup>8</sup> Renouvin P., Duroselle J.-B. *Introduction à l'histoire des relations internationales*. Paris : A. Colin. 1964.

<sup>9</sup> Duroselle J. B. *Tout empire périra : Théorie des relations internationales*. Paris: Armand Colin. 1992.

<sup>10</sup> Tsygankov, P. A. *System approach in the theory of international relations*. In: *Vestnik of Moscow University. Ser. 12, Political Science*. 2013. № 5. P. 3-25. (In Russ.)

of foreign policy action, seeking for causal links between discourse and decision-making. In the other hand, an interpretivist approach will focus on the reasons behind the establishment of a given discourse and on investigating why and whether it has become dominant. Throughout the present research, both positivist and interpretivist Discourse Analysis capacities have been applied.

### **The evaluation of secondary sources**

Brazilian-Russian relations are generally cooperative and complex, for it entails intense bilateral and multilateral activities. Therefore, this research made extensive use of secondary sources, such as academic articles, books, monographies and produced mostly, but not exclusively, in the fields of International Relations, History, Sociology and Economy.

The research has applied a set of principles for secondary source selection, such as reliability, peer review and general acceptance by the academic community, defined by the relevance and number of quotations. Reliable secondary sources were defined according to the following criteria: a) the reliability of the author, assessed by his institutional affiliation, scholarly activity and number of quotations by his peers; b) the verification of the author's experience in the subject proposed by the article, attested by his publications list and research records; c) the articles selected were published in credible and influential academic journals, with relevant track record of publications and elevated number of quotations by Brazilian, Russian and/or Western scholars. Finally, the articles selected were published in a chronological framework that were relevant to the objective of the present research, with the exception of secondary sources regarding theory and method of International Relations.

The secondary sources were categorized in three main groups: the first is focused on scholars that specialize in Brazilian Foreign Policy analysis, Brazilian diplomatic history and relations with its main strategic partners. In this group, the research also comprises works of Brazilian, Russian and Western scholars on Bolsonaro's foreign policy. The second group is focused on authors dedicated to Brazilian-Russian relations in particular.

**1). Secondary sources on Brazilian Foreign Policy.** Research by Brazilian scholars such as Maringoni<sup>11</sup>, Casarões<sup>12</sup>, Belém Lopes<sup>13</sup>, Pecequilo<sup>14</sup>, Lessa<sup>15</sup>, Cervo<sup>16</sup> and Bueno<sup>17</sup> will provide the base to determine the main pillars of Bolsonaro's Foreign Policy, its elements of continuity and rupture with Brazilian diplomatic tradition. The issue

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<sup>11</sup> Maringoni, G., Shutte, G., Berringer, T. *As bases da política externa bolsonarista*. Santo André, SP: Editora UFABC. 2021.

<sup>12</sup> Casarões, G., Leal, D., Stolle, P. *Brazilian Foreign Policy under Jair Bolsonaro: Far-Right Populism and the Rejection of the Liberal International Order*. Cambridge Review of International Affairs. 2021

<sup>13</sup> Belém Lopes, D. *De-westernization, democratization, disconnection: the emergence of Brazil's post-diplomatic foreign policy*, Global Affairs, 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Pecequilo, C. *Descontinuidades e Continuidades bilaterais Brasil-Estados Unidos: a gestão de Jair Bolsonaro (2019/2022)*, In: *América Latina: Eleições e Mudanças Políticas*. Marília, SP: Projeto Editorial Praxis. 2023.

<sup>15</sup> Lessa, A. C. *Sessenta Anos de contribuição para a formação do pensamento brasileiro de Relações Internacionais: a segunda Semana Especial RBPI*. São Paulo: Humanas. 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Cervo, A. L. *Inserção Internacional: formação dos conceitos brasileiros*. São Paulo: Editora Saraiva. 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Bueno, C. *A política multilateral brasileira. O desafio internacional*. Brasília: Editora da UnB. 1994.

of continuity and discontinuity permeates the literature regarding Brazilian foreign policy, highly influenced by the idea that Brazil has permanent principles of diplomatic action, which remain unchanged, despite governmental variations. This fundamental trace of Brazilian foreign policy studies is credited mostly -but not exclusively- to the works of International Relations scholar and historian Amado Cervo<sup>18</sup>.

According to Cervo, Brazilian foreign policy has amassed a set of conducts and principles throughout its history, which became constant features of its external action<sup>19</sup>. These constant features provide a significant degree of predictability and continuity to Brazilian foreign policy, providing it with elements of a state policy, as opposed to a government policy<sup>20</sup>. The permanent principles of Brazilian foreign policy proposed by Cervo were described and adopted by the present research as a fundamental tool to assess not only the traces of continuity and rupture in Bolsonaro's foreign policy overall, but also the variations within the administration's foreign policy, reflected first and foremost in the change of helm at the Itamaraty from minister Araujo to minister França.

Articles of scholars specializing on Brazilian Foreign Policy were crucial to determine main pillars of Bolsonaro's foreign policy, as well as its position within Brazilian diplomatic tradition. Authors such as Casarões<sup>21</sup>, Pecequillo<sup>22</sup>, Hirst<sup>23</sup>, Maringoni and Berringer<sup>24</sup> have suggested that Bolsonaro's foreign policy represents a significant deviation from Brazilian diplomatic practices. The main trace of rupture in Bolsonaro's foreign policy would be his skepticism towards global governance, meaning distrust about the role of international organizations as a mean to solve common challenges. Other indications of rupture are the choice of preferential partners based on ideological alignment, as opposed to pragmatism; forsaking autonomy by adopting an automatic alignment with the United States and, finally, disregard for regional integration projects.

However, while there is a wide perception of Araujo's foreign policy as a rupture in Brazilian diplomatic tradition (Casarões and Faria<sup>25</sup>, Maringoni and Berringer<sup>26</sup>, Schutte<sup>27</sup>, Timofeeva<sup>28</sup>, Borzova and Martynov<sup>29</sup>), Carlos França's foreign policy has been less scrutinized than his predecessor's. Since the end of Bolsonaro's government, there is an

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<sup>18</sup> Cervo, A. L. *Inserção Internacional: formação dos conceitos brasileiros..* São Paulo: Editora Saraiva. 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Mariano, M. *A política externa brasileira e a integração regional: uma análise a partir do Mercosul.* São Paulo: Editora UNESP. 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Casarões, G. Eleições, política externa e os desafios do novo governo brasileiro. In: *Pensamento Proprio*, No. 49-50. 2019.

<sup>22</sup> Pecequillo, C. Brazilian foreign policy: from the combined to the unbalanced axis (2003/2021). *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*. 2021, V. 64, No. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Hirst, M., Maciel, T. A política externa do Brasil nos tempos do governo Bolsonaro. 2022. Preprint. URL: <https://preprints.scielo.org/index.php/scielo/preprint/download/4771/9230/9673> (retrieved in: 27.07.2023).

<sup>24</sup> Maringoni, G., Schutte, G., Berringer, T. *Relações...*

<sup>25</sup> Casarões, G., Barros Leal Farias, D. *Brazilian foreign policy...*

<sup>26</sup> Maringoni, G., Schutte, G., Berringer, T. *Relações...*

<sup>27</sup> Schutte G., Fonseca B., Carneiro G. *Jogo de Dois Níveis Voltado ao Eleitorado: Uma Análise da Política Externa Bolsonarista.* In: *Conjuntura Global*. 2019. № 2 (8).

<sup>28</sup> Timofeeva J. Bolsonaro's 'Anti-Diplomacy'. In: *MGIMO Review of International Relations*. 2022. № 3 (15). P. 77–97. (In Russ).

<sup>29</sup> Martynov, B., Borzova A. *History of foreign policy and diplomacy of Brazil: Textbook* - Moscow: Aspect Press, 2021.

increased effort from Brazilian scholars to publish research encompassing this administration's foreign policy as a whole, therefore including Carlos França's mandate in the analysis. A vocal example is the selection of works organized by Maringoni, Marra and Schutte<sup>30</sup>. Nonetheless, the unprecedented ruptures occurred during Araujo's period were still granted far more attention in the analysis, when compared to the low-profile foreign policy of Carlos França.

The eccentric and highly controversial characteristic of Araujo's foreign policy generated perplexity among the significant majority of Brazilian scholars, often obfuscating the analytical quality of the works dedicated to his period. The astonished tone of most works dedicated to the Brazilian foreign policy during Bolsonaro's years have concealed the nuances of the period, leading a number of scholars to dismiss the differences between Araujo's and França's foreign policy conducts. There is a general tendency to brush aside the differences between the two foreign ministers, arguing that, despite modulations in tone, there were no significant changes in foreign policy course.

Maringoni, Schutte and Marra coined the expression "result-driven bolsonarism" to describe Carlos França's approach in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to the authors, França's approach was more moderate than his predecessor's, recognizing that he "executed a policy that, besides lacking spark, reduced the close to folkloric aspects of his predecessor and returned rationality to external relations". Nonetheless, the authors declare that França did not imprint significant changes in Bolsonaro's foreign policy, but rather maintained its strategies and ideological preferences.

Since the end of Bolsonaro's government Brazilian scholars are revisiting the administration's foreign policy with less perplexion, adopting a more restrained tone and approach<sup>31</sup>. In this context, the debate on the continuity and rupture is being revived, to include nuances within Bolsonaro's foreign policy. Pecequilo argued that, "despite the fact there indeed there were important ruptures in the national foreign policy during the 2019-2022 period, especially when considering the posture regarding multilateralism and international regimes (that is, regarding global governance as an instrument of international politics), other agendas cannot be detached from the history of international relations, such as the alignment with the US; the nationalistic views regarding climate change and human rights; and the diminished priority for regional integration." Pecequilo goes on to note that a number of traces of Bolsonaro's foreign policy (which this research identifies with França's period) had precedents in Brazilian foreign policy history, especially in periods when "particular coalitions of interest were in power (rural and urban oligarchies, the Armed Forces, the Church, among others) and associated to the military dictatorship of 1964-1985"<sup>32</sup>.

The contribution of Pecequilo is vital to understand that, despite the political preferences of the analyst, a number of elements in Bolsonaro's foreign policy were not

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<sup>30</sup> Maringoni, G., Marra, T., Schutte, R. Pragmatismo irresponsável. Política externa e inserção internacional do Brasil no governo Bolsonaro. São Paulo, Editora Telha. 2023.

<sup>31</sup> Hirst, M., Maciel, T. A política externa do Brasil...

<sup>32</sup> Pecequilo, C. Descontinuidades e Continuidades bilaterais Brasil-Estados Unidos...



unprecedented in Brazilian history and do not deviate from the country's diplomatic tradition. The neoliberal and North-South focus of França's foreign policy has precedents in Brazilian diplomatic action, even after redemocratization. This research identifies most of these precedents as associated to the mandate of Carlos França, while recognizing that Araujo's period did indeed incur in significant ruptures and oddities. The fundamental changes in Brazilian-Russian ties from Araujo's to França's administrations are clear examples of the contrasts between the two minister's approaches.

Belém Lopes, Carvalho and Santos clearly state that Bolsonaro's Brazilian foreign policy does not entail an actual rupture with core historical principles upheld by diplomats and top officials, as he was not able to pull social and institutional levers in order to deliver new policy contents<sup>33</sup>. After discerning Bolsonaro's controversial foreign policy statements from the actual execution of Brazilian foreign policy during the first years of his mandate, the scholars conclude that "there is much more continuity than foreign policy commentators would be willing to admit". Despite the will to change Brazilian foreign policy, notably during Ernesto Araujo's term, the inability of Bolsonaro's team, added to the lack of international adherence to his agenda, led to the failure to implement most of the president's foreign policy ideas.

Apart from the continuity and discontinuity debate, another issue of contention among authors specializing in Bolsonaro's foreign policy is its periodization and chronology. Due to its unprecedented level of alignment to the interests of the Donald Trump administration in the United States (2017-2021), scholars like Berringer have proposed that Bolsonaro's foreign policy should be periodized according to the changes in US leadership. Therefore, Bolsonaro's foreign policy should be divided between a first period, from January 2019 until January 2021, when the White House was led by Donald Trump and a second period, from January 2021 until December 2022, coinciding with the Joe Biden administration.<sup>34</sup>

Scholars Borzova and Martynov have contributed decisively to the study of Brazilian Foreign Policy and diplomacy in Russian language. Borzova's "*Diplomaticheskaya sluzhba Brazílii kak instrument realizatsii vneshnei politiki strany (1902-2014)*"<sup>35</sup> (The Brazilian Diplomatic Service as an instrument for the implementation of the country's foreign policy) is the only comprehensive work about the Itamaraty, its history, institutional culture, structure and principles of external action published in Russian language. A decisive contribution of Borzova and Martynov for the study of both Brazilian Foreign Policy and Brazilian-Russian relations is given by the innovative "*Istoriia Vneshnei Politiki i Diplomatii Brazílii*"<sup>36</sup> (History of Brazilian Foreign Policy and

<sup>33</sup> Belém Lopes, D., Carvalho, T., Santos, V. Did the Far Right Breed a New Variety of Foreign Policy? The Case of Bolsonaro's "More-Bark-Than-Bite" Brazil. In: Global Studies Quarterly. 2022. V. 2. P. 1-14.

<sup>34</sup> Berringer, T. Governo Bolsonaro e os EUA: O nacionalismo às avessas. Observatório de Política Externa e da Inserção Internacional do Brasil (OPEB). 2019. URL: <http://opeb.org/2019/06/21/governo-bolsonaro-e-os-eua-o-nacionalismo-as-avessas/> (retrieved in: 05.09.2023).

<sup>35</sup> Borzova, A. Yu. Diplomacy and diplomatic service of Latin American states: Textbook. Moscow: RUDN University, 2022.

<sup>36</sup> Martynov, B. F., Borzova A. Yu. History of foreign policy and diplomacy of Brazil...

Diplomacy). Their work recognizes the difficulties imposed by the domestic political crisis that culminated with the ousting of president Dilma Rousseff in 2016 to Brazilian external action. According to them, the period of 2016 until 2020 was characterized by an atypical deacceleration in Brazilian diplomatic activity, despite the maintenance of activities under the BRICS and G20 forums. However, for their work was published in 2021, the authors unfortunately could not delve upon Brazilian foreign policy under the administration of Jair Bolsonaro as a whole, including the periods of both ministers of Foreign Affairs, Ernesto Araújo and Carlos França.

2). **Secondary sources of Brazilian-Russian relations.** Relations between Brazil and Russia were comprehensively studied during the years of Brazil's left-wing governments (2003-2016). The focus on Brazilian-Russian relations during the two first administrations of Brazilian left-wing president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva is comprehensible, since it was indeed a period of great advances in bilateral ties. During Lula's administrations a significant leap in bilateral trade was identified, as well as the advancing of relations in spheres such as space, defense and humanitarian cooperation<sup>37</sup>. Furthermore, the president of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, consummated the first visit of a head of State of Russia to Brazil during Lula da Silva's first mandate, in 2004. In the following year, presidents Lula and Putin signed the Plan of Action for the Strategic Partnership, materializing this heightened status of bilateral ties agreed upon in 2002<sup>38</sup>.

A number of studies by L. Okuneva are devoted to the issues of articulation of domestic and foreign policy of Brazil and the evolution of Brazilian-Russian relations depending on the direction of the domestic policy course in Brazil. She carefully traced the stages of Russian-Brazilian partnership and convincingly demonstrated in a large number of works the dependence between the domestic policy courses of one or another Brazilian government and its foreign policy agenda.<sup>39</sup> The advances in bilateral ties during those years led to a widespread belief that Russia had more affinity with left-wing governments not only in Brazil, but in Latin America in general<sup>40</sup>. The result of the inquiry of Razumovsky clarified that Brazilian-Russian relations were not dependent on the Brazilian

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<sup>37</sup> Maslennikov A.V. New trends in the formation of political culture: Russian-Brazilian foreign policy relations (1990 - 2014). In: Vestnik KazGUKI. 2015. №3. (In Russ.); Sizonenko, A. I. Russia - Brazil: rich traditions, good present and promising future. International Relations. 2014. № 2. P. 184-188. (In Russ.).

<sup>38</sup> "We will give the world a new face". Results of the meeting between V.V. Putin and Lula da Silva. In: Latinskaya America. 2005. № 12. P. 56-59. (In Russ.); Dabaghyan E. S. Brazil on the world arena. In: World Economy and International Relations. 2012. № 3. P. 59-67. (In Russ.). Yakovlev P.P. From Brazil to Russia: directions of strategic partnership of the BRICS member countries // Prospects. Electronic journal. 2019. № 4 (20). P. 6-20. (In Russ.).

<sup>39</sup> See, for example: Okuneva, L.S. Brazil: Radicalization of the Political Process (2013-2019). In: Ibero-American Notebooks. 2019. No. 3. P. 7-11(In Russ.); Okuneva, L.S. Brazil: Political Season "Fall/Winter 2020". On the "500 Days" of President Jair Bolsonaro's Government. In: Latin America. 2020. No. 10. P. 21-38(In Russ.); Okuneva, L.S. Brazil: Political Confrontation and Change of Course (2019-2022) // Latin America: Political Landscape Against the Background of Turbulence / Ed. Z.V. Ivanovsky. Moscow: ILA RAS. 2022. P. 69-119 (In Russ.); Okuneva, L.S. Visit of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro to Russia. In: Latin America. 2022. No. 4. P. 23-41.

<sup>40</sup> "Left Turn" in Latin America. Moscow: ILA RAN, 2007. (In Russ.).

left-wing and were able to develop with different ideological and political groups within the country<sup>41</sup>.

A key issue to be debated is whether Bolsonaro's foreign policy presented an obstacle for the development of Brazilian-Russian ties.<sup>42</sup> Okuneva, Martynov, Ivanovsky, Davydov et al. have proposed that since 2016, Brazil has been living under a "new political cycle", during which new priorities were established for its foreign policy. According to the above-mentioned scholars "the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff [2016] initiated a crisis in the political system. The subsequent victory of Jair Messias Bolsonaro in the general elections of 2018 [...] in practice initiated a new political cycle, accompanied by a change in development priorities both in domestic and foreign policy of the country, which, ultimately, may affect the nature of relations with Russia and other BRICS member countries".<sup>43</sup> Another argument posed by the above-mentioned Russian scholars is that, during the Brazilian "new political cycle" the role of non-State actors will be fundamental to the development of ties between Brazil and Russia: "it is of particular importance to establish contacts between key representatives of the national entrepreneurial elite", argued the scholars.<sup>44</sup>

The position of Russian scholars coincides with N. Cull who has studied the role of non-state actors in International Relations and the importance of informal networks to the maintenance of bilateral ties.<sup>45</sup> These networks can be maintained, even when formal diplomatic relations deteriorate or go through a crisis period. In such periods, these informal networks are activated to maintain essential contacts and might eventually work to overcome the crisis, by helping rebuild official ties between their governments<sup>46</sup>.

Contrasting with the lively scholarly debate on the issue of Brazilian foreign policy under Bolsonaro, articles on Brazilian-Russian relations during this period are surprisingly rare. The research identified an almost absence of academic works on the evolution of Brazilian-Russian ties during Bolsonaro's government. Notable exceptions are L. Okuneva, M. Bezerra, Y. Timofeeva and M. Khvan<sup>47</sup>. Nonetheless, these works focused whether in one particular event of Brazilian-Russian relations (such as Bolsonaro's state visit to Moscow in February 2022, as in the case of Okuneva), or in the first period of Bolsonaro's foreign policy, mainly Ernesto Araujo's mandate. P. Yakovlev has included events of the Bolsonaro administration in his broad assessment of the evolution of Brazilian Russian

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<sup>41</sup> Razumovsky, D. Latin America. Request for a new social contract. In: Free Thought. 2021. № 1(1685). P. 107-122. (In Russ).

<sup>42</sup> Ivanovsky Z.V. Reformatting Russian-Latin American relations in the post-Soviet period // Latin America. 2023. No. 7. P. 98-109. (In Russ)

<sup>43</sup> Davydov V., Okuneva L., Martynov B., Ivanovsky Z., Ermolieva E., Konstantinova N. et al. Brazil: Change of Priorities in the New Political Cycle. Moscow. Institute of Latin America RAS. 2019. (In Russ). P.5.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. P. 95.

<sup>45</sup> Cull, N. Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past. CPD Perspectives on Public Diplomacy. Los Angeles: Figueroa Press. 2009.

<sup>46</sup> Noya, J. Diplomacia Publica para el siglo XXI: la gestión de la imagen exterior y la opinión pública internacional. Barcelona: Ariel. 2007.

<sup>47</sup> Okuneva, L. The visit of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro...; Bezerra, M. Jair Bolsonaro's diplomacy: dismantling the traditional Brazilian foreign policy. In: Iberoamerican Notebooks. 2020. T. 8, № 3(29). P. 35-42. (In Russ); Timofeeva, Y. Jair Bolsonaro's 'antidiplomacy'...; Khvan, M. Brazilian foreign policy during the presidency of Jair Bolsonaro. In: Society: Philosophy, History, Culture. 2020. No. 11(79). P. 81-97. (In Russ).

Strategic Partnership, although without singling out the peculiarities of Bolsonaro's administration, as opposed to his predecessors<sup>48</sup>.

Furthermore, B. Martynov and Yu. Borovsky have elaborated on Russian-Brazilian ties within the wider context of Russian-Latin American relations in their recent monography "Two Americas in contemporary International Relations (1991-2023)"<sup>49</sup>. Jeifets and B. Jubran have greatly contributed in assessing Brazilian-Russian relations within the BRICS forum, as have E. Astakhov and E. Astakhova<sup>50</sup>. Sporadic research has been done in Russia on bilateral cooperation in the fields of tourism<sup>51</sup>, culture<sup>52</sup>, language<sup>53</sup>, business<sup>54</sup>, scientific cooperation<sup>55</sup> and media<sup>56</sup>. It must be noted, however, that most of these works are descriptive and do not provide innovative findings to the analysis of Brazilian-Russian bilateral relations in particular. Moreover, a significant part was published before 2016, preceding not only the beginning of the Brazilian "new political cycle", but also outside of the chronological framework of the present research (2019-2022).

While there are many Brazilian scholars that study Russian history and Russian foreign policy, research on the Brazilian-Russian relations are, unfortunately, rare.<sup>57</sup> We can mention Mielniczuk and Segrillo<sup>58</sup> as scholars that have developed a consistent study in this area. Recently, Bandeira da Silveira<sup>59</sup> has developed briefly on Brazilian-Russian relations under Bolsonaro in works dedicated to bilateral ties in the post-Cold War period. Nonetheless, no comprehensive study has been conducted in Brazil regarding Brazilian-Russian ties under Jair Bolsonaro's administration (2019-2022) to this day.

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<sup>48</sup> Yakovlev, P. Russia and Brazil in the paradigm...

<sup>49</sup> Martynov B., Borovsky, Y. Two Americas in Contemporary International Relations (1991-2023). Moscow: Aspect Press, 2023. (In Russ).

<sup>50</sup> Jeifets V., Jubran B. M. The rise and fall of a strategic partnership: Brazilian-Russian relations within the BRICS framework. In: Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. International relations. 2020. № 3 (13). P. 310–325; Astakhov E. M., Astakhova E. V. Brazil- Brics: From Lula da Silva to Bolsonaro. In: Iberoamerica. 2020. № 1. P. 5–20.

<sup>51</sup> Sushkova N., Azarenko V., Problems of Business Tourism Development between Russia and Brazil. In: Bulletin of Voronezh State University. 2016. № 4. P. 71-73. (In Russ).

<sup>52</sup> Bragin V., Zhukova O., Zimin A., Komissarov B., Konstantinova N., Malkovskaya I., Moseikina M., Okuneva L., et al. Russia-Brazil: Transcultural Dialogs. Moscow: Lenand. 2012. (In Russ).

<sup>53</sup> Mikaelyan Yu. Study of Russian Language and Literature in Brazil: History of Development and Actual Problems. In: Human Capital Founders. 2018. №4 (112). P. 31-39. (In Russ).

<sup>54</sup> Salnikov P. Analysis of Business Relations between Russia and Brazil. New Trajectories of Development of International Financial Relations: Modern Model in the Digital Economy. Moscow: Knorus. 2018. P. 149-158. (In Russ).

<sup>55</sup> Baryshev I. Scientific Ties between Russia and Brazil Moscow City Pedagogical University. Scientific Notes of the Russian State Social University Founders. 2011. № 10 (98). P. 97-101. (In Russ).

<sup>56</sup> Filippova V. A. Media Systems of Russia and Brazil at the Current Stage of Mass Communication. In: Collection of the Higher School of Journalism and Mass Communications. 2014. P. 89-98. (In Russian).

<sup>57</sup> Jubran, B. M. Brasil e Rússia: política, comércio, ciência e tecnologia entre 1992 e 2010. Dissertation. Porto Alegre, 2012; Souza, I. Brasil e Rússia: A Construção Da Parceria Estratégica No Pós-Guerra Fria. In: Barbosa, P. Os desafios e oportunidades na Relação Brasil- Ásia na perspectiva de jovens diplomatas. Brasília: FUNAG. 2017. P. 135-172.

<sup>58</sup> Mielniczuk, F. O Conflito entre Rússia e Geórgia: uma revisão histórica. In: Estudos Internacionais. 2013. Nº2. P.157-166; Segrillo, A. A nova Rússia: balanço e desafios. In: II Conferência Nacional de Política Externa e Política Internacional. Brasília: FUNAG. 2008.

<sup>59</sup> Bandeira da Silveira, P. As Relações Bilaterais Brasil-Rússia pós-URSS: Sucessos, obstáculos e Potencialidades. In: Revista Cadernos do Cáucaso. 2021. V. 4. No 1.

## Evaluation of Primary Sources

The above-mentioned issues could be studied basing on different primary sources groups, selected according to the principle of reliability. The scrutinized documents were categorized in seven groups, namely: 1) published official documents, further subcategorized into Brazilian official documents, Russian official documents and documents published by International Organizations; 2) unpublished official documents; 3) speeches of government officials relevant to Brazilian-Russian relations; 4) trade, social and economic statistics provided by official sources; 5) mass-media articles and social media material; 6) documents published by non-governmental organizations; 7) interviews with public and private officials involved in the development of Brazilian-Russian ties and 8) private documents.

The *first group* of primary sources comprises **published official documents** of State institutions. These documents were essential to determine the main aspects and the place of Russia in Bolsonaro's foreign policy, as well as to assess its results. Official documents will guarantee the assessment of how Bolsonaro's foreign policy is executed not only in theory, but also in practical terms.

Documents of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs were crucial to determine the impact of Bolsonaro's foreign policy in relations between Brazil and Russia. The "*Concórdia*" database of the Ministry was a useful tool that provided access to agreements signed between Brazil and foreign countries, including Russia. For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs database provided the research with the full text of the Plan for Political Consultations between Brazil and Russia (2022-25), signed during the meeting between ministers Sergei Lavrov and Carlos França, in Moscow, November 2021.

The Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs also publishes an annual Management Report (*Relatório de Gestão*), containing fundamental aspects of the activities of the Itamaraty. The issuing of annual Management Reports addressed to the Federal Court of Accounts (*Tribunal de Contas da União*) is mandatory for most government agencies in Brazil, in an effort to increase public transparency. The reports are not only a relevant source of information on bilateral relations with Russia, but also of administrative changes in the Itamaraty, which reveal the priorities of each minister's mandates. This research has analyzed not only the Management Reports of 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022, but also of the preceding years, in order to assess disruptions and continuities in the ministry's works.

Other organs of the Brazilian Executive branch of power that publish documents and issue norms with significant impact in Brazilian-Russian relations were the Minister of Agriculture, the Ministry of Defense, and Mines and Energy and the Institutional Security Office of Brazil, which provided the full text of the Protocol to Amend the Agreement of the mutual protection of classified information, signed during Bolsonaro's visit to Moscow. The Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (APEX-Brasil, in the Portuguese acronym) also publishes annual Management Reports, which were thoroughly analyzed to assess the Brazilian export promotion strategy vis-à-vis Russia. Reports and technical notes of the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA), an

institution that provides subsidies for the Executive branch of government, were frequently used due to its timely assessment of pressing issues for Brazilian decision-makers.

Moreover, the Transparency Portal operated by the Comptroller General of the Union of Brazil (*Controladoria Geral da União*) provided fundamental information for the present research. It is worth noting the extensive database regarding public official international travelling schedules, which allowed this research to access all the official trips made by Brazilian federal government officials to Russia in the studied period. The library of the Brazilian presidency, that details the daily agenda of the head of the Executive, also provided an important source of information regarding the nomination of Carlos França, as well as a useful fact-checking tool.

Documents of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the State Duma, the Russian Ministry of Interior and other organs involved with Brazil-related projects between 2019 and 2022, were also relevant to analyze the Russian reception and reaction to Jair Bolsonaro's foreign policy. Documents published by the Russian presidency, such as the Conception of Russian Foreign Policy of 2016, were also valuable sources for the present research. State organs from the Judiciary, such as the Prosecutor-General of Russia, will also figure in our research, since it has signed cooperation treaties with Brazil in the period scrutinized, such as the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Prosecutor-General's Office of the Russian Federation and Brazil.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a strong impact on bilateral relations, especially due to the recognition process of the Russian-developed vaccine Sputnik V in Brazil. Therefore, documents issued by the Brazilian Health Regulatory Agency, the Consortium of Northeastern Governors and by the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry on COVID-19 installed at the Brazilian Congress were analyzed. Documents issued by the Russian Direct Investment Fund and by the Gamaleya Institute were also scrutinized.

Furthermore, the research has relied on official documents published by international organizations, particularly by the United Nations, its Security Council and the Organization of American States. The UN Digital Library's voting database was extensively used in the third chapter of the present dissertation, to accurately analyze Brazil's reaction to the beginning of the Ukrainian conflict in February 2022.

The *second group* consists of **unpublished official documents**, which this research had access due to the Law of Access of Information of the Federative Republic of Brazil (commonly known as LAI). The LAI regulates the fundamental right of access to information produced or stored by state institutions, guaranteed in the Brazilian Constitution of 1988. By using the mechanisms of this law, this research was granted access to unpublished diplomatic correspondence between the Brazilian Embassy in Moscow and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (SERE, in the Portuguese acronym) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brasilia. These documents are part of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives. The research had access to over 80 diplomatic communications that, despite being redacted to preserve personal information of public officials, have contributed to the study of important issues in the evolution of Brazilian-Russian ties under Bolsonaro, such as: the difficulties to convene the Brazilian-Russian

High Level Cooperation Commission (CAN), the imbroglio regarding the approval of the vaccine against COVID-19 Sputnik V in Brazil, the pardoning of a Brazilian citizen arrested in Russia by president Putin and the cooperation in the field of Defense during Carlos França's mandate.

The *third group* consists of **speeches of government officials**, that were extensively analyzed not only as a source of information, but also as tools to engage in content analysis exercises. Moreover, the research relied on Discourse Analysis methods to properly assess the intents of policy making and execution in both Brazil and Russia, as well as the eventual disparities between discourse and practice in Bolsonaro's foreign policy and in Brazilian-Russian relations.

The research had made substantial use of speeches of public figures like the Russian president Vladimir Putin, the Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro, the Russian minister of foreign affairs Sergei Lavrov, the vice-Russian minister of foreign affairs Sergey Ryabkov, the Russian Ambassadors to Brasilia Sergey Akopov and Aleksey Labetsky, the former Brazilian Ambassador in Moscow Tovar Nunes and the current Brazilian Ambassador in Moscow Rodrigo Baena Soares.

Regarding the Itamaraty, the Alexandre de Gusmão Foundation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil has assembled ministers Ernesto Araujo and Carlos França most notable speeches chronologically. In the case of Ernesto Araujo, the Foundation has published a book entitled “Política Externa: Soberania, Democracia e Liberdade”<sup>60</sup> (“Foreign Policy: Sovereignty, Democracy and Freedom”) compiling not only his allocutions, but also relevant interviews. Speeches often referenced in the present research were Araujo's inauguration speeches, delivered in January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019, and April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, respectively; speeches at the ceremony of graduation of new diplomats, delivered by Araujo in May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, and by Carlos França in September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021; yearly assessment of their own performances, delivered by Araujo in December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019, and by França in September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021; speeches at the meetings of ministers of foreign affairs of the BRICS, delivered by Ernesto Araujo in September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, in Rio de Janeiro, and delivered by Carlos França in June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, in a virtual format.

Another important source of this research was the frequent, lengthy and meticulous hearings that both ministers of Foreign Affairs were submitted to in the Commissions of Foreign Relations and National Defense of the Brazilian Senate and its analogue at the Lower Chamber of Congress. During these hearings the ministers often exposed new information to the public, detailed their foreign policy views in a wide range of issues, while also being repeatedly challenged by law makers, therefore engaging in lively debates. A particular relevant case was Araujo's hearing at the Senate in March 2021, which exposed the high degree of political animosity he was subject to in the Legislative, contributing significantly to his resignation. Besides, the repeated hearings of Carlos França in both chambers of Congress to explain the Brazilian position regarding the Ukrainian conflict were fundamental sources of information for the present thesis.

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<sup>60</sup> Araújo E. Política Externa: Soberania, Democracia e Liberdade. 2021. Brasília: Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão.

The *fourth group* comprises **statistics** on Brazilian and Russian commercial and economic data. Considering that Brazilian foreign policy has economic development as a permanent goal, economic and trade data are regularly analyzed to assess the successes and failures of diplomatic strategies. The present research also relies on economic and trade data to evaluate foreign policy results, particularly extracted from Brazilian and Russian official databases. Examples are: the Comex Stat database on flows on tradable goods, provided and updated by the Brazilian Ministry of Development, Industry, Trade and Services and its Special Secretariat for Foreign Trade and International Affairs and the Comex Vis database, also coordinated by the Brazilian Ministry of Development, Industry, Trade and Services Economy, that provides graphics and other visual aids to analyze Brazilian trade flows; the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics; the Russian Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat), guided by the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation; the Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation and the Open Data Russia Portal, administered by the Russian Ministry of Economic Development.

The *fifth group* consist of **media** articles published by major media outlets. Analysis of media and social media interactions were necessary not only due to the historical proximity of the research, but also to access declarations and interviews provided by high-profile diplomatic and political authorities. Furthermore, Jair Bolsonaro's communication team has made wide use of social media and platforms to communicate with his electoral base, often circumventing official channels. Therefore, it was not uncommon for relevant foreign policy decisions to be publicized exclusively through social media channels, designed for specific groups within Bolsonaro's electoral base.

Before assessing the media sources used in this research, it is important to emphasize some media sources used to scrutinize the worldview and International Relation conceptions of minister Ernesto Araujo. As an individual engaged in the propagation of his ideas, Araujo was particularly active on social media. Prior to his nomination as minister of Foreign Affairs, Araujo wrote several pieces in scholarly journals, as well as on his own blog "metapolitica", all dully examined in this study. Carlos França's approach was less focused on public relations, although he did publish opinion articles in the website *Interesse Nacional* (National Interest), coordinated by the think-tank Institute of International Relations and Foreign Trade (IRICE).

Following his resignation as minister, Araujo has temporarily left his duties as a diplomat in the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The former minister, relieved of his state obligations, has been very public about his experience in charge of the Itamaraty, recalling details and evaluating his performance in public interviews and in his own YouTube channel "Logopolitica". The information provided by Araujo, which was carefully examined to produce the current research's findings, offers an intriguing window into his assessment of Brazilian-Russian ties throughout his tenure.

As noted above, president Bolsonaro himself also made extensive use of social media and internet platforms to communicate with the public. The almost daily live transmissions that Bolsonaro conducted in his YouTube channel, often accompanied by



ministers and lawmakers, provided an important source of information to assess the president's thinking on foreign policy issues.

In relation to the media sources utilized in this study, the chosen articles were published by media outlets authorized to perform journalistic duties, in accordance with Brazilian or Russian laws. Media outlets were further subdivided into a) international news agencies, b) government or public-sponsored media, c) Brazilian media outlets and d) Russian media outlets.

Moreover, media materials whose authorship can be identified were given preference, for the heightened accountability of news articles signed by its elaborators. It is worth noting the works of particular journalists, whose works were relevant or quoted regularly in the present research, such as Jamil Chade, Igor Gielow, Eliane Oliveira and Thais Bilenky.

International news agencies whose coverage of the Brazilian-Russian relations were relevant to the present research are the Associate Press, Bloomberg News, and Reuters. Government of public-sponsored media outlets will comprise the Agence France-Presse, Agência Brasil, BBC, China News Service, Russian News Agency TASS, Xinhua News Agency and the news agency MIA Rossiya Segodnya, especially its Portuguese-language branch, Sputnik Brasil.

The Brazilian media outlets scrutinized throughout this research were Brasil de Fato, Carta Capital, Correio Brasiliense, CNN Brasil, DefesaNet, Estado de São Paulo, Folha de São Paulo, Jornal do Brasil, Nexo, Le Monde Diplomatique Brasil, O Globo, PiauÍ, portal G1, portal UOL, Veja, Valor Econômico, among others. Russian media outlets that have covered Brazilian-Russian relations since 2019 are Izvestiya, Krasnaya Zvezda, Kommersant, Komsomolskaya Pravda, Lenta.ru, Moskovskaya Pravda, Moskovsky Komsomolets, Nezavisimaya Gazeta, RBK daily and Vedomosti.

The *sixth* group comprises **documents of non-governmental organizations**. These materials were crucial to assess the influence of non-State actors in Brazilian-Russian relations, particularly during its crisis period in Ernesto Araújo's term. Non-governmental organizations can be further subdivided in a) Reports and declarations emitted by business associations and business interest groups, b) Reports, data and declarations published by private and State-owned companies c) material produced by business, forums engaged in issues concerning Brazilian-Russian relations.

The most relevant business forum for developing bilateral relations during Bolsonaro's administration was the Russian-Brazilian Business Council, that for a significant period of the present research was headed by the CEO of the Russian producer of fertilizers *Phosagro*, Andrey Guriev, and by the CEO of the Brazilian meatpacking company *Marfrig*, Marcos Molina. In order to foster mutually beneficial cooperation between the countries' business elites and safeguard their interests when interacting with governmental and commercial structures, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation established the Russian-Brazilian Business Council in 2004. The Council has issued a report presented to the Brazilian president, Jair Bolsonaro during his official visit to Moscow, in February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022. In the event, Bolsonaro awarded Andrey

Guriev with the Rio Branco honorific order, attesting for the relevance of his activities to Brazilian-Russian ties. The council's activities are sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation.

The *seventh* group consists of **interviews** with government officials, diplomats and relevant personalities to the Brazilian-Russian ties between 2019 and 2022. Interviews available for the present research include: minister of Defense of Brazil from 2021-2022, Walter Braga Netto; minister of Mines and Energy from 2019-2022, Bento Albuquerque; Ambassador of Brazil to Russia Rodrigo Baena Soares (2021 until present); president of the Brazilian Association of Beef Exports (ABIEC) Antonio Jorge Camardelli; president of the Brazilian Association of Animal Proteins (ABPA), president of the Brazilian Association for Development of Nuclear Activities (ABDAN) Celso Cunha; former Executive-Secretary of the Consortium of Governors of the Northeast of Brazil, Carlos Gabas; director of the Brazilian Agency for Export Promotion (APEX) in Moscow, Almir Américo; Brazilian member of parliament and current Secretariat for Institutional Relations of the Presidency of the Republic, Alexandre Padilha; Brazilian Ambassador Sérgio de Queiroz Duarte; former Ambassador of Brazil to Russia Tovar da Silva Nunes, among others.

The research also made use of **private documents**, classified in an eight group of primary sources. The particular case is that of the letter of renunciation sent from Ernesto Araujo to president Jair Bolsonaro, in March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The letter was published by the diplomat in his social media and made available to the public. In this document, Araujo explains the rationale behind his resignation to the president and expresses frustration over “the frontally adverse currents” and “false and hypocritical narrative” that, motivated by “vested national and international interests” made it impossible for him to continue “working for our ideals”<sup>61</sup>. The document was fundamental to assess the relations between these two relevant leaders for Brazilian foreign policy and Brazilian-Russian relations.

### **Original scholarly research contributions to the subject field**

The primary and secondary sources selected for the present research guarantee a relevant scholarly contribution. This research is the first to comprehensively analyze Brazilian-Russian relations under Jair Bolsonaro's administration. This study contributes to the scholarly debate by identifying the impact of this foreign policy in relations between Russia and Brazil and describing the place of Russia in Bolsonaro's diplomatic action.

The research also contributes to the study of Brazilian Foreign Policy, as it identified elements to establish that Bolsonaro's foreign policy underwent a significant change in March 2021, when minister of Foreign Affairs Ernesto Araujo resigned his post. Contrary to other Brazilian Foreign Policy analysts, this research sustains that Araujo's successor Carlos França imprinted significant changes to Bolsonaro's foreign policy. Therefore, this research innovates when proposing a chronology to the study of Brazilian Foreign Policy

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<sup>61</sup> Letter of resignation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Ernesto Araújo, to the president Jair Bolsonaro. 29.03.2021. URL: [pic.twitter.com/laHBOmUhIt](https://pic.twitter.com/laHBOmUhIt) (retrieved in: 20.02.2022)

under Bolsonaro, dividing it in two periods: the first extending from January 2019 until March 2021, the second from April 2021 till December 2022.

The research has established a particular interpretation of Bolsonaro's foreign policy, questioning the widespread belief that it represents an unprecedented rupture with Brazilian foreign policy tradition. This study has identified enough nuances in Bolsonaro's foreign policy to establish that, while ruptures were made during the mandate of Araujo in the helm of the Itamaraty, his successor França has conducted a foreign policy that is in tune with Brazilian tradition. This correction of course in Bolsonaro's diplomacy had significant influence in the dynamics of Brazilian-Russian ties during his mandate.

The research determined the main dynamic in the evolution of Brazilian-Russian ties under the administration of Bolsonaro: a significant crisis in the first period (January 2019 - March 2021), followed by a period of rapprochement and deepening of relations in the second period (April 2021 - December 2022). The research also identified the strengthening of networks of non-State actors during the first period, that guaranteed the maintenance of relations at an acceptable level. This network has contributed significantly to the rebuilding of relations under França and almost achieving the mark of 10 \$billion in bilateral trade in 2022— a goal established by Brazil and Russia under the auspices of the Strategic Partnership agreements in 2002. Taken as a whole, Bolsonaro's administration can be considered a turbulent but productive moment for Brazilian-Russian relations.

Moreover, the selection of non-governmental documents and reports, particularly those of private companies and the Russian-Brazilian Business Council, shed light to a lesser studied side of these bilateral ties: the influence of non-State actors and its role in maintaining relations during periods of crisis. The research will be the first to scrutinize official documents, meeting records and reports by the Brazilian-Russian Business Council elaborated during Jair Bolsonaro's visit to Moscow (from 15<sup>th</sup> till 17<sup>th</sup> of February, 2022).

The author also provides novel material on the Brazilian diplomatic position regarding Russia's special military operation starting in February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022, by carefully analyzing Brasilia's voting records at the UN throughout that year. The research also mapped the Brazilian response to the above-mentioned event in a series of multilateral organs, identifying the main patterns and principles of the country's response to this relevant geopolitical event.

Furthermore, the research brings to light unpublished archive documents that have not yet been analyzed by scholars. The access to documents of the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil illuminate the main themes of Brazilian-Russian relations and reveal eventual obstacles for further developing bilateral relations.

The research also scrutinized in detail official documents emitted by both Brazilian and Russian governments in its original versions, without recurring to translations by third parties. The same is true for the study of secondary sources by Brazilian and Russian authors, all read in their original versions. The ability to work with both Portuguese and Russian languages enhanced the reliability of the sources and the credibility of the interpretation of first and secondary sources.

### **Provisions for the thesis defense**

1) Brazilian-Russian relations under Jair Bolsonaro's government have experienced the following dynamic: a deep crisis during Ernesto Araujo's mandate as minister of Foreign Affairs (January 2019 until March 2021), followed by a rebuilding period and deepening of relations under his successor, Carlos França (April 2021 until December 2022).

2) The crisis period was installed due to the particular world view espoused by minister Ernesto Araujo, affiliated to the ideas of Brazilian philosopher Olavo de Carvalho. Araujo's conviction that Russia is an expansive power, engaged in establishing a world communist hegemony in partnership with China made him reluctant to engage with Moscow. Two other elements contributed to Araujo's skepticism towards Russia: his aim to align Brazilian foreign policy to the external objectives of the Donald Trump administration in the US and his strong opposition to the left-wing government in Venezuela -which he considered to be a Russian-Chinese satellite in Brazil's neighborhood.

3) Ernesto Araujo's negative perception of Russia was not necessarily shared by other relevant groups in Bolsonaro's administration, nor by specific segments of the Brazilian business elite, or by Araujo's peers inside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In order to avoid a greater setback, these groups engaged in a series of strategies to mitigate the influence of Ernesto Araujo's ideas in Russian-Brazilian ties. The damage control strategies identified were: a) avoiding the regionalization of the bilateral agenda, by refraining to include divisive issues such as Venezuela and the Bolivian crisis of 2019 in the bilateral agenda b) focusing on economic and commercial issues, considered pragmatic issues, sheltered from political influence and c) maintaining institutionalized relations, for example, the periodic political consultations meetings, provided for in the pre-existing Strategic Partnership agreement signed in 2002 between the parties.

4) The leadership vacuum in Brazilian-Russian relations left by Araujo and, therefore, by the higher echelons of the Brazilian ministry of Foreign Affairs, was fulfilled by non-State actors, particularly by business elites. The most vocal example is the rise of the Russian-Brazilian Business Council, whose activities contributed greatly to maintain bilateral ties. This research has identified and described the role of the "Guriev diplomacy" in the Russian side (a reference to the president of the Russian-Brazilian Business Council and CEO of fertilizers producer *Phosagro*, Andrey Guriev), which was mirrored by the Brazilian "fertilizers diplomacy" in 2022. The strengthened role of non-State actors not only prevented further setbacks in Brazilian-Russian relations under Araujo, but also guaranteed a relatively quick rebuilding and deepening of ties under Carlos França.

5) Ernesto Araujo's world view, which entailed a uncooperative approach and disengagement from Brazilian-Russian relations, led to widespread domestic discontent with his foreign policy course and, eventually, to his resignation. Araujo's subordination of pragmatic interests to a foreign policy agenda focused on values generated strong domestic opposition, eventually forcing him to resign due to increased pressure from the National Congress. Araujo's resignation can be considered an overdue realization from

different economic and social groups in Brazil that the values-based, messianic foreign policy conducted by the minister did not meet the complex, multi-leveled national interests of Brazil.

6) The domestic crisis that led to the resignation of Araujo revealed the urgency of including the demands of specific social groups into Bolsonaro's foreign policy agenda, such as the export agenda of the agribusiness sector, the technological international cooperation demands of the Brazilian military and the urge to go back to multilateral diplomacy manifested by the Itamaraty's diplomatic bureaucracy. In order to successfully include these domestic demands in his foreign policy agenda, president Bolsonaro nominated the career-diplomat Carlos França to succeed Araujo.

5) The minister Carlos França's approach was in tune with Brazilian diplomatic tradition, according to the constant principles of Brazilian foreign policy proposed by scholar Amado Cervo. Therefore, Carlos França's foreign policy constitutes a rupture with the practices of his predecessor, particularly by reducing the role of ideas and values in Brazilian diplomatic practice. Nonetheless, traces of continuity can be identified, providing Bolsonaro's foreign policy with unity, despite the change of leadership in the Itamaraty. The clear preference for North-South cooperation in detriment of South-South, including by sidelining political and social regional integration processes; the focus on trade liberalization and open regionalism; and the goal to join the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are examples of continuity between Araujo and França. Nonetheless, Carlos França's foreign policy represented a departure from Ernesto Araujo in strategic terms, considering the lowering of the role of ideology, restoring pragmatism, reinserting Brazil in the main international organizations and global governance, while rebuilding key-bilateral partnerships for the country, including rekindling the Strategic Partnership with Russia.

8) The relevant adjustments made in Brazilian Foreign Policy under Carlos França had significant impacts on Brazilian-Russian relations, which first entered a period of rapid rebuilding and then experience a deepening of ties. Strong indicators of the rapprochement with Russia promoted by França were his personal visit to Moscow in November 2021, the convening the second main bilateral Commission provided for in the Strategic Partnership agreement (the Brazilian-Russian Intergovernmental Agreement for Economic, Commercial, Scientific and Technological Cooperation, or CIC) and, finally, president Jair Bolsonaro's State Visit to Moscow in February 2022.

9) Furthermore, the evolution of Brazilian-Russian relations during Carlos França's administration was greatly determined by the strategic importance of the fertilizers trade for bilateral ties. The relevance of the fertilizer's agenda stems from the strengthening of the influence of business elites in bilateral relations occurred during Araujo's mandate. Other key issue in bilateral ties under França is the Brazilian interest in cooperation with Russia in the field of nuclear technology, not only for energy production, but also for the development of the Brazilian Navy's project to build a nuclear-powered submarine.

10) Moreover, the aggravation of the Ukrainian conflict in February 24th, 2022 brought challenges to Brazilian-Russian relations. The diplomatic position adopted by

Brazil during Jair Bolsonaro's administration was one of impartiality, focused on four main directives: 1) condemning hostilities; 2) advocating against the diplomatic isolation of Russia; 3) noncompliance with economic sanctions and 4) maintaining channels of dialogue with Moscow open.

11) The Brazilian position of impartiality regarding the Ukrainian conflict and its diplomatic choice to keep the pace of bilateral relations with Russia in both the political and economic spheres after the eruption of the security crisis in February 2022 led to strong results in the trade area, reaching an overall US\$ 9.812 billion in exchanges -a 34,7% year-on-year increase. The performance of Russian exports to Brazil in 2022 was the best in the history of bilateral relations and far exceeds the annual average of US\$ 2.74 billion between 2011 and 2020.

12) Despite the accomplishments, Brazil and Russia failed to achieve a professed bilateral goal, that was to convene the Brazilian-Russian High-Level Cooperation Commission (CAN), after a seven-year gap. This Commission is the main forum to develop the strategic partnership between Brazil and Russia, according to the Action Plan of the Strategic Partnership signed by the parties in May 2010. Thus, while Brazil did not refrain from celebrating in-person contacts in the ministerial level in the sidelines of multilateral meetings, as in the case of BRICS, G-20 and the UNGA after the events of February 2022, Brasilia adopted a more cautious approach in celebrating high-level in-person meetings in the strictly bilateral level, as would have been the case of convening of the CAN.

### **Research design**

The structure of the dissertation consists of an introduction, followed by five analytical chapters, and a conclusion.

The **first chapter** is dedicated to the theoretical and methodological foundations of the research, considering its relevance to the academic field of international relations.

The **second chapter** examines the key directions of Jair Bolsonaro's foreign policy, with particular emphasis on his role in the history of Brazil's foreign relations, especially within the framework of "presidential diplomacy." The author also addresses Bolsonaro's stance towards the Russian Federation, highlighting the prospects for bilateral relations during his presidency.

The **third chapter** focuses on the first phase of Jair Bolsonaro's foreign policy—the tenure of Foreign Minister Ernesto Araujo. Araujo's adherence to Olavist ideology shaped a unique approach to Russia, which had significant consequences for Brazilian-Russian relations. In this section, the author concentrates on the analysis of political, military-technical, and economic relations within the Brazilian-Russian agenda, and demonstrates the role of non-state actors in maintaining relations at a minimally acceptable level. Special attention is given to the political debates surrounding the Russian COVID-19 vaccine, Sputnik V.

The **fourth chapter** explores the second phase of Jair Bolsonaro's foreign policy—the tenure of Foreign Minister Carlos França. During his term, Olavist ideology receded in favor of Brazil's traditional diplomatic approach, and in this context, the author defines the period as one of restoring Brazilian-Russian relations, highlighting this through an

examination of structural aspects of the relationship, particularly the revitalization of military-technical cooperation. Special analysis is given to Jair Bolsonaro's visit to Moscow in February 2022.

The **fifth chapter** is devoted to an in-depth analysis of the consequences of the commencement of Russia's special military operation on Brazilian-Russian relations. The chapter assesses Brazil's diplomatic response to this event at both multilateral and bilateral levels. Quantitative and qualitative data are used to evaluate the impact of the event on bilateral relations.

In **conclusion**, Jair Bolsonaro's administration can be considered overall a relative positive moment for Brazilian-Russian relations, due to the following elements: a) it proved that Brazilian-Russian relations can continue its pace during right-wing democratic governments in Brazil; b) it has proven that bilateral relations can endure periods of crisis; c) the period of crisis has strengthened the ties among non-State actors, guaranteeing another relevant layer of contact networks for Brazilian-Russian ties; d) the period added in bilateral confidence, for Brazil has shown long-term commitment to its relations with Russia by resisting pressure and maintaining an impartial position during a decisive moment for Moscow's security, namely the escalation of the Ukrainian conflict in 2022; e) new issues were added to the agenda, including highly sensitive ones, such as the cooperation on the testing of the nuclear fuel for the Brazilian Navy's development of its first nuclear-powered submarine and f) bilateral trade has increased in volume, enhancing the weight of pragmatic interests in bilateral relations, contributing to its solidity and long-term stability.

Nonetheless, Brazilian-Russian ties have failed to overcome structural limitations of relations during Bolsonaro's administration, such as the lack of contacts among the countries civil societies and low engagement between mainstream social groups of both countries; the high concentration of trade relations in a limited range of products and economic sectors, with low incidence of higher-aggregated valued products and near absence of exchanges in the service sector.

#### **Applied results of the research and research approbation**

The main provisions and conclusions of this research were tested in the framework of Russian and International scientific and practical conferences:

- Brazilian-Russian relations under the geopolitical transformation: new dynamics and players // Fifth International Conference "The World Majority in New Realities: The Regional Dimension", HSE, Moscow, December 2023.
- Brazil's diplomatic neutrality: its traditional origins and manifestations under the administration of Jair Bolsonaro // Sixth International Forum "Russia and Iberoamerica in a turbulent world: history and modernity", Saint Petersburg State University, Saint Petersburg, October 2023.
- Brazil-Russia relations in the area of innovation: how can the countries find ways to cooperate in a new geopolitical dimension? // Academic Seminar at the event "Ukrainian Conflict: Origins and Consequences to Brazil. Federal University of Santa Catarina (Brazil), Florianopolis, May 2023.

- Sanctions policy and Brazilian-Russian relations in 2022: how the countries found paths of cooperation under the new geopolitical dimension // Fourth International Conference “The World Majority in contemporary international realities: from fragmentation to new institutionalization”, HSE, Moscow, December 2022.

- Brazilian defense industry and participation of Brazil in UN peacekeeping: do national industries benefit from Brazil’s role in UN? // Academic Seminar “Peacemaking, peacebuilding and mediation in Latin America”, RUDN University, Moscow, November 2022.

- Relations between Russia and Latin America: the examples of Brazil and Chile // Round Table "Chile and the causes of slow economic development", HSE, Moscow, September 2022.

- Ernesto Araujo and Russia: How the former minister of Brazil's former foreign minister influenced relations between Brazil and Russia? // Third International Conference “Iberoamerica and Russia: Diplomacy and Diplomats”. HSE, Moscow, May 2022.

- Brazil's reawakening to the BRICS during the COVID-19 pandemic – lessons on pragmatism and universalism in foreign policy // International Conference for Young Researchers "The world after the pandemic: global challenges and development prospects", Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IMEMO RAS), Moscow, April 2021.

- Brazilian Humanitarian Diplomacy: traditions and contemporary practice // Key note speaker at the Academic Seminar in the framework of the research project "Quo vadis Iberoamerica: internal transformations and a new role in international affairs", HSE, Moscow, April 2021.

The results and conclusions of the study can be used in courses for undergraduate and graduate students in international relations and regional studies, as well as practical recommendations for government and non-governmental bodies involved in developing relations with Brazil and other Latin American countries.

#### **List of publications relevant to the thesis**

1. Esteves A. L. Relações entre Brasil e Espanha sob Bolsonaro (Relations between Brazil and Spain under Bolsonaro's government) // Cuadernos iberoamericanos. 2021. Vol. 9. No. 2. P. 48-64. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46272/2409-3416-2021-9-2-48-64>
2. Esteves A. L. Ernesto Araujo and Russia: How the Brazilian ex-chancellor’s ideas influenced Bilateral Relations between Brasilia and Moscow? // ISTORIYA (“History”). The Journal of Education and Science. 2022. Vol 13. No 10. Article 120. DOI: 10.18254/S207987840023498-6.
3. Esteves A. L. Brazil’s diplomatic impartiality: traditional origins and manifestation during Jair Bolsonaro’s administration // Latin America. 2023. No 10. C. 6-25. (In Russ.) DOI: 10.31857/S0044748X0026793-1.



4. Esteves A. L., Zhukov N.N. History of Brazilian Federalism: From the First Republic to the Dictatorship of Vargas. Cuadernos Iberoamericanos. 2023;11(4):205-227. (In Russ.) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46272/2409-3416-2023-11-4-205-227>.
5. Esteves A. L. Latin American disintegration under Jair Bolsonaro during Brazilian chancellor Ernesto Araujo's mandate (2019-2021) // Vestnik RUDN. International Relations (article accepted for publication).