

## Articles

**Gisela Pereyra Doval** - *Forming coalitions: the case of Brazil in the BRICS* - pp. 1-15

**Ornela Fabani** - *An approach to non-traditional partners: the evolution of the ties between Argentina and the Gulf monarchies during the administrations of Cristina Fernandez (2007-2015)* - pp. 16-31

**Richard Rouseau** - *Russia's «conservative modernization»: how to silence the voices of the opposition* - pp. 32-43

**Sandrina Ferreira Antunes** - *The Scottish Referendum 2014: the Political Process Before and After the "No" Vote* - pp. 44-60

**Carolina Alves Pereira** - *The Security-Development Connection in the Post-2015 Development Agenda* - pp. 61-73

## Critical Review

**Matheus Gonzaga Teles** - *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1919-1939. An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (2001). Brasília: Ed. Universidade de Brasília: 305 pp. ISBN: 85-230-0635-4 - pp. 74-77

## **FORMING COALITIONS: THE CASE OF BRAZIL IN THE BRICS**

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### **Abstract**

This article examines the importance of belonging to a group that puts pressure internationally through a coalition pursuing similar goals. The process of coalition building has been central in Brazil's multilateral negotiations to balance the centre-periphery forces, but also with regard to the possibilities that this country has of belonging to the club of the powerful. We hold that the BRICS group is a step in Brazilian ambitions towards that end. We also emphasize the common views and differences of these five countries at multilateral level. The aim of this article is to analyse Brazil's strategy of coalition building to understand what kind of coalition the so-called BRICS countries form and ascertain the advantages and disadvantages of Brazil's participation in it.

### **Keywords**

Brazil, coalitions, BRICS, multilateralism, South-South cooperation

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## FORMING COALITIONS: THE CASE OF BRAZIL IN THE BRICS<sup>1</sup>

Gisela Pereyra Doval

### Introduction

With the rise of Lula to the presidency, Brazil has settled in the international system more strongly than in the past. Although its presence had been permanent and sustained in the past, the political and economic internationalization that this country went through in the Lula administration was unprecedented in its history. As argued by Soares de Lima & Castelan (2012), there are three instances in which Brazil has stood out:

1. through the internationalization of both public and private companies and their investments, with strong government support;
2. through political agreement and participation in coalitions bringing together common positions in multilateral fora; and
3. through the cooperation for development, whereby Brazil has ceased to be a mere recipient to become a donor to countries with lower relative growth.

The second instance is the most important for this work because it reflects the importance of belonging to a group that puts pressure internationally through a coalition pursuing similar objectives. At this point, and although Vigevani & Cepaluni (2007) call the model adopted by Lula Da Silva *Autonomy through Diversification*, we believe that *Autonomy through Coalition* is the correct expression to describe Da Silva's foreign policy, as its most distinguishing feature was the constant search for partners to form coalitions and coordinate policies in public fora. The process of coalition building has been central in Brazil's multilateral negotiations regarding the prospects of balancing centre-periphery forces (Nunes de Oliveira, Onuki & de Oliveira, 2006).

In this regard, it must be stressed that despite accusations that the coalition government of Da Silva was a return to the Third World of the 1970s, coalitions now are totally different because while coalitions in the 1970s were defensive, built against an unjust international order, twenty-first century coalitions are offensive groups that have the capacity to respond to the order and sufficient room for manoeuvre to be able to propose agendas and have a voice internationally.

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international organizations and in multilateral negotiations from a balancing viewpoint, instead of following the traditional bandwagoning of peripheral countries. That is, Brazil is a country that ceased to 'join' the decisions made by the strongest states in the international system. The idea of the "need to agree" with the rules imposed by others implied lack of options. However, under Da Silva's administration, other possibilities were opened aiming at attaining a balance through the pressure exerted by several states, united in search of a common goal.

In this sense, we could also talk about the possibility that this type of coalitions offers in that they enable a rule taker country to become a rule maker country. As suggested by Arbilla (1997), Brazil's self-identification as a mediator or "consensus builder" operationalizes the strategic need for Brazil to strengthen mechanisms for South-South cooperation and also North-South cooperation in order to take advantage of the approximation with emerging states without compromising the political and economic interests resulting from a confrontation with countries in the North.

Similarly, we can use Lechini's explanation of *Variable Geometry*. As the author states,

*"In aviation, a variable geometry wing is a wing configuration that allows altering the platform for various flight conditions, which allows taking advantage of aerodynamics of a swept wing at high speeds while avoiding their disadvantages at low speeds" (2008: 178).*

Thus, Brazil would *play* with the same actors in different scenarios using a

*"(...) building alliances system that can coexist or overlap to create a network of relations that enables acquiring greater degree of autonomy in the international context" (Lechini, 2008: 178).*

In this regard, *selective multilateralism* would be more of a legacy than a principle. This is because it is considered to be a pragmatic policy which can increase the room for manoeuvre, voice demands and eventually change rules considered to be unfair and create new standards accepted by other countries in the international system (especially peripheral countries through internal activism). Thus, we agree with Eiras when he says that Brazil is a country with a *voice* in the international system, having attained a prominent role in international discussions, not only participating in the most important groups but also being constantly invited to participate in other encounters.

*"Energy issues and climate change, agricultural commodities, and nuclear non-proliferation (we are, perhaps along with Japan and Germany, among the most important countries without nuclear weapons, acting as a kind of international poster boy) stand out, among others" (2011: 9).*



It should be noted that this work focuses mainly on the Da Silva administration, although it is known that the current president has increasingly lowered her profile regarding foreign policy. However, one can establish a line of continuity in terms of the importance of *strategic partnerships*. By *partnerships* or strategic alliances we refer to the

*"(...) interstate relationship which, for various reasons and factors, stands out, in terms of importance, from the other bilateral diplomatic relations that make up the universe of a country"*  
(Cortés & Creus, 2009: 120).

In some cases, including the one we now examining, daring to jeopardize one of these strategic partnerships would be deemed unwise, even in the Rousseff world.

Of all the coalitions that Brazil has participated in or initiated, this article deals exclusively with the BRICS and the place that Brazil has in the group. We believe that of all the groups that Brazil is part of, this is the one that has or will have a greater economic impact and greater influence in the global order in coming years (Almeida, 2010b).

### **The emergence of the BRICS**

The BRICS form a very special group. Usually a group is named after its formation, taking into account the characteristics it has acquired in practice; however, with the BRICS it was quite the opposite. From the acronym used to refer to the economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China by the Goldman Sachs investment bank in its 2001 report (O'Neill, 2001), these countries have made efforts to find common denominators, potential complementarities and prospective joint actions. As Baumann writes,

*"this case probably has no historical precedent, whereby an acronym is converted into motivation expressing diplomatic efforts and trade initiatives"* (2010: 5).

In 2006 the term gave rise to a grouping that, to date, resulted in more than 70 meetings at the highest levels, incorporating the fifth member - South Africa - in the 3<sup>rd</sup> BRIC Summit<sup>1</sup> in Sanya (China).

Especially since 2008 - the year when the international financial crisis broke out - the assumption that in the future China and India will become the largest suppliers of manufactured goods and services, respectively, while Brazil and Russia will also be key countries in the supply of raw materials, became fundamental to inform practical actions. In this line of thought, according to Armijo & Sotero (2007), the coherence of grouping these countries lies in the fact that they can have a similar kind of influence or

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<sup>1</sup> These summits have Head of State/Government status.



equivalent implications in the international political and economic system. That is, the idea that these states may, in the not-too-distant future, alter the conditions of international interactions for the rest of the actors, whether states, multinational corporations and international organizations, increases their importance in terms of academic analysis and opportunity for joint action. This means that discussions on the possible role the sum of the five largest emerging economies gain importance in the economic and political agenda.

It was just after the 2008 crisis that these trends began to show. The financial crisis intensified the perception of American failure to exercise control on global governance and also of the European Union's inability to replace or supplement the United States in the task of leading the international community, at least from an economic point of view. In the old continent, this was experienced as a triple crisis: sovereign debt, the banking system and the economic system in general. Although it originated in the United States, it quickly hit the oldest block, highlighting structural weaknesses, generating new imbalances and, most importantly, creating speculation about the continuity of the integration process. These features accentuated the relative power of the BRICS, whose uninterrupted growth in those years went hand in hand with the G-7 countries' loss of influence. At this point the importance of the economic model must be stressed. According to Morales Ruvalcaba (2013), one of the problems facing G7 countries (more beset by the crisis) is that they do not want to *let go* of the neoliberal model. In contrast, at the beginning of the millennium, countries like Russia (2000), Brazil (2003) and China (2004) adopted the guidelines proposed in the Power Vertical and the Buenos Aires and Beijing Consensus, respectively, as models to follow.

Whereas the Russian model comes under the ideological concepts of "sovereign democracy" and "dictatorship of law" - strong control of civil society and the media, reduction of regional autonomy and strengthening of presidential authority – that is, based on political principles<sup>2</sup>, consensus have more economic goals, as they emerge in opposition to the Washington Consensus. In this sense:

*"The basic idea of the Beijing and Buenos Aires Consensus lies in a total distrust of the benefits of the privatization processes and free trade, without a minimum control from the states. If the state participates, the countries will be integrated in the global economic system in a more autonomous way, safeguarding their life style, looking for their own solutions and keeping their national interests protected. The aim is to grow while preserving independence and sovereignty in the decision-making process" (Pereyra Doval, 2008: 16).*

Thus, the state gets back the importance it had lost in the nineties, becoming the controller of private processes and regulating the opening of its markets to foreign investment, which is crucial to its development<sup>3</sup>. This is true at least in the case of

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<sup>2</sup> Although it is noteworthy that the Russian state has played a leading role in the management of the national economy since Putin's presidency.

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed study of the FDI in Brazil see Pereyra Doval & Actis (2012).



Brazil, India and South Africa, since in the cases of China and Russia, the state is always present despite the liberal opening.

At this point it becomes necessary to refer to the economic crises that these countries have been facing in recent years. First, it is clear that most "middle class" countries are going through an economic crisis. In some cases, this has a simple explanation in the old terms of the ECLAC, which is called deterioration of the terms of trade and is nothing but falling commodity prices on the world market and these countries' dependence on the export market as a result of being producers of raw materials. This is what is happening now in Brazil and Russia. Moreover, the economic policies, particularly monetary ones, used by the United States deeply affected the economies of these countries (which are actually emerging, thus have not yet fully emerged). Accordingly, at the prospect of a rise in US interest rates, the currencies of the five countries often fall (which in all cases reached their lowest peak since 1999) together with the bonds; investment rates in these countries are shrinking; and they have enormous difficulties to sustain their stock markets:

*"(...) A confluence of powerful forces - especially a strong dollar, low commodity prices, a slowing Chinese economy and US higher rates - at least limit growth" (El Financiero, 2015).*

Particularly in the case of Brazil, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), a country is considered to have entered recession when it shows negative results for two consecutive quarters. Last year Brazil entered its first recession since 2008, then as a result of the aforementioned international financial crisis. At the same time, various studies project that the Brazilian economy will shrink by 0.58%, which represents the biggest drop in the last 25 years. Rousseff has already begun to take some steps to try to reverse this situation, but due to the corruption scandal plaguing her government, the Congress<sup>4</sup> would not be eager to adopt fiscal and budgetary measures allegedly necessary to revive the ailing economy.

Dilma began her second term in the aftermath of a bad 2014: rising inflation (even higher than the set target of 4.5% with a tolerance of plus or minus 2%); decline in exports; increase in the deficit in the capital account - to balance the deficit of the balance of payments, capital flows were increased through higher income from loans and bonds -; falling tax revenue; low level of activity, especially industrial activity - mainly the manufacturing and construction industries -; increase in public sector net debt (in a countercyclical effort, the government increased social spending and public investment); exchange rate volatility; significant fall in investment; positive rate of private consumption, but less than in the previous year (ECLAC, 2014). To this one adds the corruption scandal that has paralyzed not only Petrobras but several construction companies - all stars of the South American giant - so, no wonder that the president is trying different solutions to this situation. It comes also as no surprise that the president has paralyzed the international stage, although we agreed with Lafer that

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<sup>4</sup> It should be recalled that in the last elections her party bench lost almost 20 allies, strengthening the more conservative circles - evangelists, agricultural business and the so-called bullet block.





the main objective of foreign policy is to translate internal needs into external opportunities (2002).

### **A common agenda?**

Despite the economic crises mentioned in the previous paragraph, it can not be denied that there has been a reordering of international power. However, these changes have not yet been translated into the political arena. According to Pfeifer (2012), this is due to three reasons:

1. at plurilateral level, the difficult articulation of a common agenda, not only from the members of BRICS countries themselves, but also from the G-7 and from the most comprehensive financial formulation of the G-20;
2. at a multilateral level, the current architecture is not appropriate to the global economic and financial governance; and
3. at global level, the extreme uncertainty of the contemporary crisis in its economic, financial, political, and social aspects.

Now, the most interesting aspect about these countries that are so diverse is to ascertain to what extent they come together sufficiently to build an identifiable unit on the international stage, acting together in multilateral fora, given that, as Almeida (2010a) puts it

*"(...) the accumulation of economic power, military capability and technological innovation of these countries is significant enough to tip the axis of international relations in a different direction from the one experienced thus far."*

Changing power hierarchies are reflected on the institutional arrangements of international politics and manifest themselves in international organizations and pressure groups. At the same time, the emergence of these new powers coincides with the much discussed need to reform the multilateral system. There is a repeated need to develop new instruments of global governance because the most important multilateral organizations date from the post-war period.

Thus, it should be noted that all countries have similar views with regard to:

- *The governance of the IMF and the World Bank*: they emphasize the need for reform to ensure the legitimacy, effectiveness and representation of multilateral lending agencies. The most important measure adopted thanks to the intervention of the BRICS was the reform programme of the quota system<sup>5</sup>. This amendment strengthens the representation of the most dynamic economies through quota increases. It also strengthens the participation of low-income countries by increasing basic votes by nearly three times. This leads to the transfer of quota

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<sup>5</sup> Quota subscriptions are a central component of the IMF's financial resources. Each member country is assigned a quota, based broadly on its relative position in the world economy. The share of each country determines the maximum of its financial commitments to the IMF and its voting power in the institution. It helps determine its access to IMF financing.





shares to the economics of dynamic emerging markets. Thus, China became the third largest member country of the IMF, while Brazil, India and Russia are among the top 10 shareholders of the Fund (International Monetary Fund, 2012)<sup>6</sup>. However, the need for both this reform and for the reform of other multilateral organizations has two different readings. The first is more optimistic and aims at strengthening and democratizing the multilateral system to address threats to international peace and security and achieve real progress in the areas of development, security and human rights. The second view is that emerging powers want to have a more important role in the existing international order. In this regard, as Valladão suggests "(...) because of their heavy dependence on the European and US markets, they have been acting more like reluctant followers of one or the other Western powers than real powerful protagonists. BRICS countries want "voice", not "change". They are not fighting for another "order" but only to acquire the political tools to better defend their own national interests inside the present framework" (2012: 7). The main objective of countries such as the BRICS is the preservation of a status quo in which these countries have more influence.

- *Reform of the United Nations structure to ensure greater effectiveness, efficiency and representativeness*: the UN reform became more important after 2011 when five BRICS became part of the Security Council at the same time, China and Russia as permanent members and Brazil (2010-2011), India and South Africa (2011-2012) as non-permanent. In this sense, the last three countries claim the right and the advisability of permanently integrating the Council. For their part, Russia and China are not committed to their statements that emphasize the importance of the status of the rest in international affairs and support their aspiration to play a greater role in the organisation<sup>7</sup>. However, at this point, and specifically in the case of Brazil, one cannot help noticing the hostility of major countries in the region such as Argentina and Mexico to this reform. Both countries are part of the group Uniting for Consensus with Pakistan, Canada and Italy, which only support the creation of ten new non-permanent seats. In this regard, the entry of Brazil as a permanent member would jeopardize Mexico's chances of becoming the valid interlocutor of the region, as well as the traditional alternation that has always existed between Argentina and Brazil in the organization. Also, as we propose in the previous section, the intention is to reflect on the need to reform the United Nations Security Council. It is certainly a wanted and necessary reform for most of the 192 member states of the Organization. However, extending the Council without changing the ethics with which the states have exercised their power so far would be redundant; all one would get would be an increasing number of members that would impose their will upon others. For the Council to gain authority a change in the behaviour of states parties is needed, otherwise no institutional reform would be worthy of the name.
- *Fight against terrorism*: in this sense, Almeida (2010b) wisely suggests that three of the BRICS countries (Russia, India and China) could conduct joint actions as the three are considered to have the same warning signs against a possible terrorist

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<sup>6</sup> It should be stressed that to date the United States has not ratified these reforms.

<sup>7</sup> According to Lins da Silva (2012), the differences regarding the reform of the Security Council are irreconcilable: China opposes it, Brazil and India are in favour of including Japan and India as new permanent members. As for Russia, the longer the five permanent members' status quo remains unchanged, the better.



attack (Islamic fundamentalism based in Central and South Asia). With regard to this point, both Brazil and South Africa would be oblivious to this scenario and would only be minor partners in any action of this kind. However, this does not mean that all BRICS countries would not condemn terrorist acts, especially the inhuman acts of violence perpetrated by the Islamic State terrorist movement and the Al Nusra Front.

- *Environment:* It is interesting to note that for BRICS countries caring for the environment is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication. The latter is important because it shows that, despite great development in recent years, these countries have high socioeconomic inequality and disparity within their territories, which make them different from the world powers. Thus, the environment ministers of the five countries met for the first time in April this year and agreed to explore the possibility of creating a BRICS platform for exchange of best practices and clean technology for the environment and know-how.
- *Health:* the assistance provided by the BRICS to global health is still small when compared with the United States and Western Europe. However, in recent years it has increased rapidly. The chiefs of the five countries have met several times to discuss the subject, alone and with other authorities (the WHO Director-General and the Executive Director of UNAIDS) to share and compare their experiences. According to Minghui, Chenyue & Chen (2011), the BRICS countries face several very similar public health challenges, including unequal access to health services and medicine, funding, and growing rates in communicable diseases. Although significant progress has been made - from 2005 to 2010, the assistance provided by Brazil has grown up around 20.4% per year, India 10.8%, China 23.9%, and South Africa about 8%. Russian assistance has increased substantially in this period, stabilizing at around \$US 450 million per year (Global Health Initiatives Strategies, 2012) - The power of these five countries together can be a great engine to improve technology transfer and the current system of intellectual property rights.
- *Food Security:* the BRICS seem to see in the rise in the price of agricultural products (2006-2008), and in the subsequent drop in prices (2009), a chance to increase their share of the agricultural market - emphasizing increased productivity in the sector - as well as their leadership in the global governance on food security, due to the advancement of specific initiatives in the area of FAO (Naidin & Trindade Viana, 2012). Accordingly, the BRICS – based on the principle of common responsibilities, differentiated solutions – have declared that developed countries should provide financial and technological support to developing countries in the area of food production capacity, while still urging the former to lower production subsidies.

Also, progress is evident in the cooperation of these countries in other areas such as education, innovation policies, tourism, and infrastructure development, among others. This year alone (2015), and despite the crises these countries are going through, we can mention the following examples: the discussion by ministers of education to create a university network, cooperation in the area of technical and vocational education and



the development of education assessment methodologies. In the area of commerce, one of the projects is using local currencies for export and import operations among them. In the area of agriculture and agricultural development, a joint statement addressing the major initiatives of the block and drawing a cooperation agenda for the coming years has been agreed. The countries have agreed to take steps to expand access to their agricultural markets, to establish a favourable climate, eliminate export subsidies and reduce the level of domestic support hindering trade. In the financial area, despite problems involving the creation of the BRICS Bank, in May the Russian Duma ratified the creation of the pool of currency reserves. Thus, there has been an advance that is coupled with declarations that the investment projects will be approved at the beginning of next year. Even in the economic and trade area, the chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress proposed the creation of a market.

With regard to Brazil and the rest of the RICS, it is important to mention that China is its biggest trading partner. In 2015, Brazil signed 35 lucrative contracts with Chinese companies for infrastructure and energy projects, with investment of nearly 50 billion euros in the construction, mining, agriculture and energy sectors, including state oil company Petrobras. Brazil is the largest trading partner of Russia in South America. Brazil, South Africa and India are old acquaintances in the context of the India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA).

No less important is to mention that there are clear differences with regard to the scope of the WTO,- as well as the fact that Russia is not a member of this organization yet - in the discussions on the energy mix and the positions of the financial G20. However, despite the divergence among BRICS countries on vital issues, we believe that even in the context of crisis, cooperation among members continues to be crucial for an international order in transition.

### **Brazil and the BRICS**

With regard to Brazil, we believe that one of the most important things is that, through the BRICS, the country has gained international visibility and influence, which is one of the historic goals of the country, although in recent years it has figured less prominently in the international scene. With the extension of these international networks, Brazil's influence has increased markedly, and its performance on the world stage is valued for its ability to build bridges between countries with very different economic interests and ideologies.

Moreover, the rise of Brazil in the international system has to do with the fact that its interests are generally consistent with those of the Western powers. That is, Brazil has never had an agenda contrary to the status quo. At best, at multilateral level, it took a somehow revisionist position to join the club of the powerful and not to dismantle it. Indeed, the two constants priorities of Brazilian governments were to expand the margins of autonomy and gain space and influence in international affairs; these were the two objectives which guided foreign policy actions when it attempted to modify existing international regimes, at least during the administrations of Lula Da Silva.



As Rubens Barbosa suggested (2012), Brazil is the country that benefited the most from the creation of the acronym and has the most to gain in the future, given the importance of the countries whose group it is part of.

Thus, Brazil's foreign policy makers should act so as to:

- a. seek to encourage greater political presence of the BRICS in the international arena and try to extract higher gains from the group's existence;
- b. the role of Brazil in the BRICS should be defined on the basis of realistic analysis and not gloating ones about what could have been done;
- c. realism should not be an inhibitor that limits ambition in terms of using the group to serve the country's objectives.

In this regard, we believe it is important to make clear that during the first administration of Dilma Rousseff and so far the second, these maxims have not been carried out. The current president has too many problems to solve internally and, unlike her predecessor, she does not believe that foreign policy can help overcome them. Thus, the external lethargy of Rousseff contrasts with Russia's geopolitical projection and China's economic position, both converging in terms of jointly promoting their presences in Asia. However, it cannot be ignored that by participating in the group, Brazil increases its relative strength in international discussions, improves its image in the world and helps expand its potential influence in South America and elsewhere. It can also be a way for Brazil to work with China regarding the ambitions the two countries have in the dispute for economic and political influence in Africa<sup>8</sup>.

Brazil has always been a big country in absolute terms: regarding territory and population it stands among the top five in the world and among the top six in terms of nominal economic weight. It is the largest of its sub region, with almost half of the territory, population, production, and resources. Its economic and political importance, especially diplomatic, has grown to become an essential actor in several multilateral negotiations, such as the WTO with the G-20, NAMA-11 or G-4; the UN, with the G-4 and the demand for the reorganization of the Security Council; and in the financial G20, among others. According to Pfeiffer (2012), Brazil is a small multiple BRICS. It is large in population and territory, it is the most "Western" country in customs and institutions, and the most democratic, the better equipped in terms of environmental and natural resources, with increasingly valuable agrarian and energy assets because it has abundant water resources and solar energy. In economic terms, the pre-salt is a reality; it is estimated that in five or six years, when full production is reached, Brazil will attain oil power status. Domestic consumption indicates that this country will be one where the middle class will become the majority in the near future. This phenomenon is extremely valuable to gauge both the strength of household wealth generation and the redistribution of income carried out by the previous government.

However, Grabendorff (2010) notes some weaknesses. Brazil's participation in the global economy, especially in trade, investment and services, as well as its military

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<sup>8</sup> In this sense, there are two stances. One warns about Brazil's economic presence in Africa, showing that it is extremely limited and that, except for two or three large companies, few have plans to invest in that continent (Pereira da Costa, 2014); and another - most widespread in our opinion - which supports our hypothesis (Lechini, 2013a, 2013b, 2015; Alves, 2010; Alden, 2010).



capabilities, is still quite far from the hard power of the great powers. Despite its wealth in primary resources, Brazil still suffers from dysfunctions in its production system and its international competitiveness levels - with the exception of the aviation industry, it stands outside the most dynamic markets -.

As suggested by Almeida (2010a), the factors that contribute to reducing its productivity are historical and related to the low technical and educational training of its workforce, poor infrastructure, a credit market that is underdeveloped regarding the magnitude of its GDP (this despite the excellent work the Brazilian Development Bank - BNDES - has been doing in for some years), and especially to the excessive size of the state and high and unnecessary bureaucracy.

## Conclusion

As Gelson Fonseca Jr. (2012) wrote, since the end of the Cold War, and especially since the beginning of the twenty-first century, *there has been a demand for order and it is unclear who will produce the offer*. That demand, especially since the 2008 crisis, corresponds to the inability of traditional powers to create new paradigms. But it is also related to the emergence of countries (and groups) that have interests and ideas on how the order should be designed. Another thing to note is that there is nothing radical or revolutionary on the emerging side. The rise of the BRICS is a sign of the new multipolar international order, but it does not define what kind of multipolarity is emerging. Accordingly, although the actual economic crisis that these countries are experiencing is real, it is no less real than the international order has definitely changed. Traditional powers, despite retaining significant influence, are wondering about the reaction of these countries before making decisions that affect the system. In terms of their nature, the BRICS are only an informal association and are far from being a multilateral agency. However, together and separately, they have a strong enough international presence that enables the group to be used as a platform, and in coordination, make proposals to influence decisions of multilateral agencies, especially in the financial area.

These coordinated actions revalue multilateralism, place development at the centre of the agenda and stress the need for concerted efforts to promote sustainable development. These observations reveal an obvious fact: in almost all the issues on the international agenda, the BRICS have some leverage, showing that although it is a group that arises essentially due to its economic potential, the state of affairs has gone further, showing these countries have a say in other matters.

Still, the question is whether the "rise" of emerging powers is real or a product of the crisis of those that have already emerged. Will the BRICS fall into nothing when traditional powers readapt to the economic downturns? More importantly, does the current economic crisis in these countries mean that the BRICS have fallen from grace?

We believe the answer to this question is no, despite the enormous internal difficulties that have visibly diminished the influence of the group and its members on an individual basis. Moreover, except for some issues mentioned above, on many important issues the positions of the group's countries converge and they are planning better and increased cooperation.



In Brazil, the economic crisis and, above all, the current political and institutional crisis brought about by the *Lava Jato* Operation<sup>9</sup> paralyzed the country's foreign policy. Dilma Rousseff has been reluctant to take on great diplomatic initiatives and virtually disappeared from the international debate in addition to cutting the budget, starting at Itamaraty.

Already in Dilma's first government there were adjustments that had more to do with groups and personal temperaments than with a worldview different from the one held by the previous government. That is, from the election platform Dilma shared with Lula his way of seeing the world and his methods. However, Dilma has a much lower profile and is more used to domestic issues. Still, we must not forget that the rise of Brazil in the international system is a goal that has been pursued at least since the early nineteenth century with the Baron of Rio Branco. Therefore, it would be wrong to say that the "bad practices" of a single government can have long-term consequences in the long run when the path taken for so long has been constant.

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## **AN APPROACH TO NON-TRADITIONAL PARTNERS: THE EVOLUTION OF THE TIES BETWEEN ARGENTINA AND THE GULF MONARCHIES DURING THE ADMINISTRATIONS OF CRISTINA FERNANDEZ (2007-2015)**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to describe and analyse the evolution of the political-diplomatic and the economic and trade links between Argentina and the Gulf monarchies, as well as the factors that explain this evolution, during the administrations of Cristina Fernandez (2007-2015). Meanwhile, the premise that informs it is that during Fernandez's governments the political and diplomatic relations between Argentina and the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar became more dynamic as a result of the Argentine interest in strengthening economic and trade ties with those States.

The deepening of these ties is explained in terms of some of the main areas of Argentina's foreign trade policy, which focus on the following: to diversify trade partners, attract investment and increase the volume of trade. Moreover, the aforementioned actors are perceived as potential partners in that the Gulf monarchies need to ensure food security and advance technological cooperation, in a context marked by the international financial crisis.

### **Keywords:**

Argentina; Gulf monarchies; Cristina Fernandez; diplomatic political ties; trade and economic relations

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## **AN APPROACH TO NON-TRADITIONAL PARTNERS: THE EVOLUTION OF THE TIES BETWEEN ARGENTINA AND THE GULF MONARCHIES DURING THE ADMINISTRATIONS OF CRISTINA FERNANDEZ (2007-2015)<sup>1</sup>**

**Ornela Fabani**

### **Introduction**

The Arabian Gulf, located on the Arabian Peninsula in southwest Asia, is an area of geostrategic importance not only because it is the meeting point of three continents - Asia, Africa and Europe - but also because of its hydrocarbon reserves. The six Gulf monarchies - Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar have about 30% of proven global oil reserves. Moreover, these six states together control 23% of proven global gas reserves (Meltzer, Hultman, Langley, 2014: 18).

As a result, thanks to the importance that these resources have for these countries' economies, they have obtained economic benefits that have allowed them to experience exponential growth in recent decades. Argentina's interest in approaching those states falls within this context, as they not only have vast resources but also huge sovereign funds, and are potential partners due to their need to ensure access to food and technology. In fact, despite the significance of the human rights issue as one of the main axes of Argentina's political agenda and the tensions that it could generate, the link with the Gulf monarchies has deepened in recent years.

That said, the general aim of this paper is to describe and analyse the evolution of the political-diplomatic and the economic and trade links between Argentina and the Gulf monarchies, as well as the factors that explain this evolution, during the administrations of Cristina Fernandez (2007-2015). We have chosen this timeframe because we believe that it was during these governments that contacts increased, particularly between Argentina, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar. Moreover, Buenos Aires' approach to these states during the proposed study period is unparalleled in the history of the relations between them.

Taking into consideration the aforementioned points, we take the following initial supposition as a guideline hypothesis: during the governments of Cristina Fernandez,

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In this respect, deepening those ties results from Argentina's objectives in terms of foreign trade policy, including: diversify trade partners, attract investment and increase the volume of trade. Moreover, Argentina perceived the aforementioned actors to be potential partners due to Gulf monarchies' need to ensure food security and advance technological cooperation in a context marked by the international financial crisis.

Given the above, it is relevant to explain a number of ideas and concepts that are key to the analysis. In our view, foreign policy is

*"a particular area of government action encompassing three analytically separable dimensions: political-diplomatic, military-strategic and economic and trade, which acts externally against a wide range of actors and governmental and non-governmental institutions, both bilaterally and multilaterally"* (Russell, 1990: 255).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that this study aims to examine only two of these dimensions: the political-diplomatic and the economic and trade.

It should be pointed out that this public policy (Ingram, Fiederlein, 1988) aims to give visibility and translate the strategy of the political society, or part of it, to propose ways of inserting the state in the global context (Miranda, 1988: 22). In this regard, the inclusion or condition to be taken into account by politics and the world economy (Miranda, 2001: 169) has been a major concern both in the government of Nestor Kirchner (2003-2007) and during the administrations of his wife, Cristina Fernandez (2007-2015), which have sought to achieve it by expanding the margins for autonomous action.

Indeed, after a decade of exclusive insertion (Miranda, 2001: 173) or coupling according to Russell and Tokatlian (2013: 162), these administrations have opted to diversify their external links leading to greater relative autonomy regarding Argentina's external action.

We agree with those who point out that both during the Kirchner government and Fernández's administrations, Argentina's foreign policy has had a strong economic imprint (Zelikovitz, 2011: 6). This becomes evident if we consider the place the renegotiation of the foreign debt has had on the agenda, as well as these administrations' attempts for international links to translate into new business opportunities in different regions, in export diversification and in new investment.

It is in this context that Argentina's approach to the Gulf monarchies occurs, as the latter emerge as potential partners, since

*"they are markets that currently have low relevance with regard to the volume of operations, but which constitute important opportunities for Argentine products"* (Grosso, Moldovan and Todesca, 2009: 6).



Finally, it should be noted that the link between Argentina and the Gulf monarchies has scarcely been addressed by academia, while most of the analyses on the subject come from the media. In this regard, although academics have paid attention to the link Argentina established with another Gulf State, such as Iran (Botta, 2010, 2012), there are few works referring Argentina's foreign policy towards the Gulf monarchies. Among them we can point to a series of articles produced by the Centro de Estudios en Relaciones Internacionales de Rosario – CERIR (Centre for Studies in International Relations in Rosario) that examine Argentina's foreign policy toward the Middle East during the administrations of presidents Menem, De la Rúa (Carrancio 1998, 2001), Duhalde, Kirchner and Fernández (Paredes, 2008, 2010), although none pays special attention to our particular object of study. On the other hand, it is important to mention that trade and economic ties with these actors is the area that has been studied the most (Stumberger; Poggi, 2011). That said, we intend to advance the study about the future of these ties using various secondary sources - mainly articles in the national and international press - and also primary ones - official speeches, Proceedings of the State of the Union, press releases and semi-structured interviews.

### **The deepening of political-diplomatic ties**

The Middle East has not occupied a privileged place on the agenda of Argentina's external relations. Conversely, over time it has been a marginal area with regard to its political and economic relations. From an overall perspective this can be explained by virtue of the distance between Buenos Aires and those territories and also due to the absence of a shared idiosyncrasy, since in religious, social and cultural terms, Argentina is markedly different from those countries. These are countries with diverse ethnic and religious groups, as well as different political regimes, which in recent decades have gained notoriety internationally due to increasing conflict in the area. Nevertheless, during the administrations of Cristina Fernandez there was an approach to the states in the region, as attested by the following: proliferation of visits and high-level meetings with representatives of various Arab countries, very active participation in the ASPA Summits, the reopening of the Arab League Office in Buenos Aires in February 2008, and Argentine support for the Palestinian cause. One cannot ignore the involvement of Buenos Aires in the Palestine Donors Conference, the opening of Argentina's Diplomatic Representation Office in Ramallah in 2008, the sending of white helmets to Gaza following the Operation Cast Lead in 2009, and recognition at bilateral and multilateral levels of the Palestinian state, in 2010 and 2011, respectively (Fabani, 2012: 70 ff). Furthermore, Argentina's approach to the Palestinian cause and, as a correlation, adjustment<sup>1</sup> to its traditional policy of equidistance with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during this administration are signs of the greater scope for autonomous action that the country acquired during the reference period. In this framework, during Fernandez's governments the increase in political and diplomatic ties with a group of actors with which Argentina has not traditionally maintained a close relationship stands out. These countries are the Gulf monarchies, specifically Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and Qatar.

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<sup>1</sup> These are the variations in the intensity of effort and the adjustment of objectives against one or more items on the foreign policy agenda (Hermann, 1990: 5).



It should be stressed that these four countries share a common language – Arabic-, religion and a similar culture precisely because most of their inhabitants follow the Islamic religion. Meanwhile, at political level the four have a monarchical form of government and, in economic terms, they rely on heavily oil-dependent economies.

Nevertheless, one cannot overlook the fact that each of these states also has its peculiarities. They differ in terms of number of inhabitants, territorial extension, characteristics of the political system, foreign policy options, military capabilities, progress in terms of economic diversification, and in the proportion of Shiites and Sunnis faithful among them.

The population of Saudi Arabia exceeds 27 million and the extension of its territory reaches 2,149,690 km<sup>2</sup> (Diplomatic Information Office of Spain, 2015: 1), making it the most populous and largest of the four countries. It is the country with the largest army and the oldest alliance with the United States.

As for Kuwait, it stands out due to its greater political openness comparing with its neighbours. In fact, the emirate has the oldest and most entrenched pro-democracy institutions (Crystal, 2005: 1).

For its part, out of the four the UAE is the country that has made most progress in terms of economic diversification. So much so that Dubai has become an international tourism destination. It has also become a major economic, commercial and financial centre. Partly driven by this development, there has been a boom in construction (Sturm, 2008: 14).

Finally, Qatar has one of the highest GDP per capita in the world, and its income derives mainly from oil and natural gas exports. This country is the largest producer of liquefied gas in the world and owns 14% of gas reserves globally (Gulf Exporting Country Forum, 2015).

After this brief description, we refer to an increase in political-diplomatic ties with these countries. During the Fernandez governments there was a substantial increase in presidential trips, ministerial visits and high-level contacts with representatives of those countries and there was even opening of new embassies. So much so that, without being exhaustive, in 2009 Argentina received the visit of the UAE Foreign Minister, in 2010 the Emir and Prime Minister of Qatar, and the Prime Minister of Kuwait. In addition, in 2011, President Fernandez began a visit that took her to Kuwait and Qatar.

With regard to Fernandez's second government, in 2012 the Argentine Vice President Amado Boudou received the ambassador of Kuwait on a visit in which the latter expressed his country's manifest support for Argentina's claim to sovereignty of the Falkland Islands, as stipulated in UN resolutions (Ministry of Communication, 03/05/2012).

Later the Vice President travelled to Qatar to participate in the XIII Doha Forum on issues related to democracy, social development and free trade in the Middle East. Likewise, also in 2012, the UAE ambassador was received by our President; in 2013 Fernandez made the first visit by an Argentine head of state to that country, a gesture of high political impact that was followed by a visit of the UAE Vice President to Buenos Aires the following year.



Regarding Saudi Arabia, and comparing with the rest of the Gulf monarchies, relations with Riyadh go back longer, particularly if we consider that the kingdom was among the first Arab countries with which Argentina established diplomatic relations, which in this case date back to 1946. Argentina opened its first embassy in the Gulf in the city of Jeddah in 1948, becoming the first Latin American country to have a diplomatic representation in that country. Similarly, traditionally trade relations with this state have been smoother, but it was only in 2014, for the first time in the history of bilateral relations with the kingdom, that an Argentine Foreign Minister led the visit of a delegation to that country (Telam, 19.2.2014). Also in line with the strengthening of ties between the aforementioned actors, in 2008 the UAE opened its embassy in Buenos Aires, while in the framework of the visit of Fernandez to Qatar in 2011, a commitment to open an Argentine embassy in Qatar and a Qatar embassy in Buenos Aires was made, which materialised in 2013 when both states appointed their first ambassadors.

Thus, Argentina currently has embassies in four of the six Gulf monarchies, as in the case of Oman and Bahrain there is a concurrent representation in the Saudi kingdom.

Albeit with a lower weight, another indicator of that approach between the parties lies in the arrival of Qatar Airways and Emirates to Argentina. The Doha-Buenos Aires and the Dubai-Buenos Aires routes were initiated in 2010 and 2011 respectively, both with a stop in Brazil.

However, it is noteworthy that the momentum in the relations with the four actors studied here has not had the same drive as regards the link with Oman and Bahrain. As for contacts with the latter, we can only mention that in 2011, at the invitation of the provincial government, the Crown Prince of Bahrain visited Santiago del Estero accompanied by a delegation of investors and entrepreneurs (official site of the Province of Santiago del Estero, 22/06/2011). Meanwhile, a year later, the Argentine ambassador to that country, based in Saudi Arabia, was received by the Bahraini Vice Prime Minister and by the Minister of Electricity and Water, in October 2012, in two meetings where the parties manifested their willingness to deepen bilateral ties. Nevertheless, we were unable to collect data that account for higher level official visits either to or from Oman and Bahrain during this period. Moreover, it is noteworthy that during his visit to the country, the Crown Prince of Bahrain has not been received by senior government officials, particularly if we consider that neither a Bahraini prince nor a sultan of Oman have ever visited Argentina. It is also true that there is no record of a visit by an Argentine president to these nations.

Either way, even despite the incipient contacts with these two actors, our survey data show that in recent years the political and diplomatic relations with the other four Gulf monarchies have become increasingly more important.

As for the the government's view of these links, Foreign Minister Timerman stated: "We have to create a channel for direct dialogue with the Arab countries, as they are part of the G-77 we now preside to, and we need to make alliances. We have to realize that the things are happening today in other places, and that countries that 20 years ago had no relevance increasingly begin to have greater importance" (Page 12, 16/01/2011). Moreover, in another speech, he said that Argentina appreciates the opportunities for dialogue with these actors given that it has enabled coordinating positions on various agenda items, as well as providing new forms of South-South





cooperation (Ministry of Communication, 01/12/2010). Since the first meeting ASPA Summit, Arab countries have supported Argentina's claim to the Falkland Islands, calling on the parties to resume negotiations to find a definitive solution to the dispute, a position that also has been endorsed by senior officials from the Gulf monarchies within the framework of various bilateral meetings.

In order to explain the deepening of political contacts with the four Gulf monarchies, it is necessary to understand the context in which they began to take place, marked by the international financial crisis, and to examine the main lines of the foreign trade policy of the Fernandez's governments which, in continuity with the Kirchner administration, aimed at diversifying trading partners, attract investment and increase the volume of trade.

In fact, in our view, economic and commercial interests have played a central role in advancing the political and diplomatic relations between Argentina and the Gulf countries, in line with the said economist imprint that characterised foreign policy during this period. Moreover, it appears that Argentina's expectations in terms of business deals with these potential partners have even led the country to avoid criticising the regimes in those nations.

In this regard, although Gandini and Lambert state (2011: 1) that ideology and pragmatism are integral components of foreign policy - indeed of all political activity in the broadest sense – which are in continuous tension, with regard to the ties between Argentina and the Gulf monarchies the second prevails. Human rights are part of the internal and external agendas of the Kirchner and Fernández governments and they have preached in defence of democracy. However, Argentina has not committed to these principles at meetings with the Gulf countries, whether in the context of bilateral encounters or at ASPA summits, despite the characteristics of these regimes, which are often referred to as absolute monarchies (Levins: 2013, 388) due to the broad prerogatives held by the king, and the few opportunities for political participation of their citizens, in countries that do not even allow the formation of political parties. Not to mention other practices conducted by these states that have been condemned by organizations such as Amnesty International for violating human rights. The Argentine government's attitude allows us to conclude that with respect to the link with these actors there has been no consistency between official rhetoric and practice. On the contrary, we emphasize once again that in this case pragmatism has prevailed, and these principles that appear again and again in official speeches have been replaced by an approach to the Arab counterparts that aims to deepen a bond that is expected to result in increased economic and commercial benefits.

### **The promotion of economic and trade relations**

The analysis of the visits, meetings and high-level contacts between Argentine representatives and the Gulf monarchies during the governments of Cristina Fernandez clearly shows that their ultimate goals were to do business and promote investment. This in line with a series of "strategic objectives" of her administrations aimed at:

*"growth and diversification of our sales to the world; creating a strong export culture within the national productive sector; and*



*generating genuine resources to ensure the sustainable growth of our economy, boosting production and creating quality jobs, with the aim of achieving an increasingly equitable distribution of income" (Ministry of Communication, 21 / 12/2011).*

These objectives are consistent with the

*"economic accumulation model with diversified sources and social inclusion" (Fernandez, 2007).*

To this end, Foreign Minister Timerman said:

*"the growth of our sales to the world recognizes as one of its pillars the strategy of diversifying our exports and a trade policy that gives priority to opening new markets for Argentine exports, aiming at positioning domestic production in less traditional markets like Africa - particularly the Maghreb region -, the Middle East, India and Southeast Asia, among others" (Ministry of Communication, 21/12/2011);*

there are areas the government has come closer to, basically after the 2008 crisis. Indeed, after the outbreak of the crisis, which particularly affected developed countries and, among them, some of the largest economies in the world, they tended to react by increasing their protectionist policies. In this context, Argentina chose to redouble its efforts by promoting exports of products with higher added value and also by diversifying export destinations, with emphasis on the opening of new markets in emerging countries with high growth rates. With regard to the aforementioned non-traditional partners, a press release of the Argentina Foreign Ministry of 14 February 2014 stressed that the Gulf monarchies are strategic destinations for many reasons.

*"These include their prominent role in the oil and gas markets and the high current account surpluses that allow them to accumulate surpluses to spend on consumption and investment. Of these three destinations, Saudi Arabia is the largest economy. Like us, it is a member of the G20, a forum where we hold similar positions on many issues of the international agenda. In addition to the potential of bilateral relations, Saudi Arabia is an important trading partner of our country, given that in 2013 it joined the list of destinations to which we export over 1,000 million dollars annually. Qatar has the world's third largest gas reserves and is the world's largest exporter of liquefied gas. Because of this it is interesting to promote cooperation in technologies for the use of CNG. In this field, there are opportunities for both countries to*



*benefit from technological development and accumulated experience, either commercially or through investments. The UAE has one of the highest per capita income in the region and is a hub from which products are re-exported from around the world to Asia and the Middle East".* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, Press Release No. 028/14).

This official communication illustrates Argentina's interest in deepening ties with the Gulf states, hoping to benefit from economic and commercial opportunities.

However, despite Argentina's intention to deepen ties with these countries, the volume of trade both between Argentina and the twenty-two Arab States and between the former and the Gulf monarchies is still low. In this regard, we find that in 2013 Argentine exports to the Arab world totalled US\$ 5,992,475,840 FOB (Argentine Arab Chamber of Commerce, 2015th). Regarding the group of states we are interested in, Saudi Arabia was the third export destination within the group of Arab countries and the first among the Gulf monarchies. In 2013 Argentina exported to Riyadh US\$ 1,162,995,137 FOB (Argentine Arab Chamber of Commerce, 2015b). Meanwhile, in 2013, total imports from the Arab world totalled US\$ 1,334,538,665 CIF (Argentine Arab Chamber of Commerce, 2015th), making Qatar the country in the region from which Argentina imported the most, with a total of US\$ 1,060,504,730 CIF, followed far behind by the UAE, with US\$ 49,494,161 CIF, and by Saudi Arabia, with a total of US\$ 19,659,555 CIF, in the third and fifth places, respectively (Argentine Arab Chamber of Commerce, 2015b).

Regarding the composition of exports, while products sold to each of these countries are varied, it is important to note that approximately 60% of Argentine exports to the Middle East are foodstuffs (Poggi, 2011: 2). The sales of grain (mostly maize), fats and oils, oilseeds and fruits and meats stand out. In line with the above statistics, the manager of the Argentine Arab Chamber of Commerce, Pablo Foudaro<sup>2</sup>, says that although cereals and oils are the main export to Arab countries, Argentine food sales include more produces, such as dairy products, honey, vegetables, dried fruit and fish. Besides foodstuffs, Argentina also exports car parts, steel pipes, working machines, tools, and medicines for human and veterinary use.

Argentina's imports from the Arab countries are lean. The analysis of what is bought from these countries shows there is a huge diversity of products, ranging from food imports, such as cookies, dates and packaged products, to clothing, gas and fuel<sup>3</sup>.

On the other hand, exports to the Gulf countries under analysis are in line with exports to other countries, as foodstuffs are the main products of Argentina's exports to those markets, while gas, fuel and petroleum products<sup>4</sup> are the main imported products. 98%

<sup>2</sup> Interview by the author to Paul Foudaro, manager of the Argentine Arabic Chamber of Commerce, Buenos Aires, 12/03/2013.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> In this regard it is interesting that, broadly speaking, Argentine exports and imports are in line with the main items exported and imported by member countries of MERCOSUR. A fact to be taken into consideration is that the MERCOSUR and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), comprising Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the UAE block, in 2004 signed a Framework Agreement on Economic cooperation to promote cooperation in economic, commercial, technical and investment, and created a Joint Committee with the task of working towards concluding a Free Trade Agreement. Still, negotiations towards achieving that goal have slowed down since 2007. Moreover, it should be emphasized that among



of total imports from Qatar in 2013 was petroleum gas (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, 2013b), while about 40% of imports from the UAE in the same year was aviation fuel (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, 2013b)<sup>5</sup>.

Considering that the Gulf monarchies are among the countries with the largest proven oil reserves globally, the potential of exchanges with them present opportunities for those who manufacture machinery and accessories that may be needed for that industry. Furthermore, given their soil and climate characteristics, plus the population growth expected in these countries, there are possibilities for increased Argentine exports of raw materials and processed food, particularly considering that, according to recent estimates, the population of these countries will double by 2030, which would coincide with a downward trend in local agricultural production, which is already visible today (Moya Mena, 2011: 4).

Indeed, Saudi Arabia, a large consumer of wheat, in 2008 announced it would begin decreasing its production of this and other grains due to the water shortage in its territory (Blas, England, 2008), announcing it should be reserved only to meet the basic consumption of the population. Since then, Saudi wheat production has been reduced by two thirds (Lakis, 2011).

On this, Foudaro<sup>6</sup> notes that the Arab countries' need for food is expected to grow and stresses that Argentina has conditions to increase trade with those countries in the field of agribusiness. He adds that since 2010 Argentina has hosted delegations, particularly from Saudi Arabia, who arrived in the country to sign joint venture agreements. These agreements provide that the Arab side contributes to the sowing process with capital and then has a part of the production. Moreover, it has also been reported that Qatari authorities have held talks with their Argentine counterparts to finalize the purchase of land that would later be used for agricultural activity.

In addition, Gulf countries have shown interest in deepening technological cooperation with Argentina, for example, in terms of technology applied to agribusiness. These countries have expressed the need to gain knowledge regarding technology for intensive and extensive livestock breeding, animal genetics, industrial processing of agricultural products, sowing and soil management, irrigation and seed genetic improvement. Moreover, they have also expressed their desire to become familiar with CNG technology. Some of these countries are also interested in becoming familiar with

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the members of the South American bloc it is Brazil that is fostering trade with the GCC. So much so that in 2012 Brasilia was responsible for 86% of exports and 89% of imports from that area, followed by Argentina with 13% of exports and 10% of imports. The other members of MERCOSUR have little commercial presence in the Gulf monarchies. Furthermore, in diplomatic terms Brazil has a major presence in the area, since it has embassies in the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia, followed by Argentina, with diplomatic presence in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait and Qatar. Uruguay has embassies in Qatar and Saudi Arabia, and Paraguay has no diplomatic presence in the region, (Bartesaghi, Manghana, 2014: 17).

<sup>5</sup> Considering Qatar's significant natural gas reserves, already referred above, during the visit of Fernandez to this country in 2011 the Argentine Planning Minister, along with the Qatar's Energy Minister signed the Framework Convention Development and Implementation of Energy Integration Projects, which foresees the conduction of studies for the building of a regasification plant in the Gulf of San Matias, in the Río Negro, allowing Argentina to import 20 million cubic meters of liquefied natural gas (LNG) per day. Meanwhile, on the occasion of the presidential visit to Saudi Arabia in 2013, the two governments signed an agreement enabling the UAE to supply LNG to Energía Argentina Sociedad Anónima (ENARSA), from 2014 onwards for a period of 20 years. Specifically, this agreement foresees the provision of 5 million tons of LNG a year, making it the first long-term agreement that the Emirates signed with a country in South America. Reference is made to these agreements as it is considered that their accomplishment could bring with it a significant increase in Argentine imports from the above destinations.

<sup>6</sup> Interview by the author to Paul Fodaro, manager of the Argentine Arabic Chamber of Commerce, Op. Cit.



Argentine advances in nuclear energy and learning about its peaceful uses. This is mainly a result of increased energy demand in these countries due to the need to carry forward the process of desalination of sea water and the increasing consumption of water for refrigeration purposes. One must not forget that these countries tend to have temperatures above 45 degrees and have limited freshwater supplies, as in the particularly worrying cases of Kuwait, the UAE and Qatar, which face absolute water scarcity

(Luomi, 2011: 252)<sup>7</sup>. As a result, these states have chosen to overcome the difficult situation they are facing by resorting to desalination, which is an energy intensive process. The consumption of resources these processes entail, the environmental and opportunity costs that they involve with regard to the export of hydrocarbons or their use on an industrial level, makes the need for change in the energy mix of these countries evident. This explains their interest in developing nuclear energy and their approach to Argentina, a country that has made substantial advancements in this field. In any case, the links in this area between Argentina and the Gulf monarchies are at different stages, Saudi Arabia and the UAE being the countries with which Argentina has made the biggest advances<sup>8</sup>.

Considering the above, in recent years the Fernandez governments have fostered actions to enhance business opportunities with the Gulf monarchies, including official visits, participation in international fairs and trade missions. To this effect, in 2010 a delegation of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of Argentina visited Riyadh. Then, in 2012 senior officials of the Ministry returned to Saudi Arabia on a tour that also took them to the UAE. In early 2013 the head of the agricultural affairs returned to the UAE. This last visit took place as part of the tour made by President Fernandez, which was characterized by placing the emphasis on economic relations, evidenced by the fact that she travelled with a large number of entrepreneurs who were part of a multi-sector trade mission. Also towards this end, the first multi-sector trade mission in the framework of the Growth and Diversification of Exports Programme (PADEX)<sup>9</sup> was held in 2014 in Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, demonstrating Argentina's interest in penetrating those markets. Although a trade mission to Oman was planned for October of that year, it ended up being postponed (Centro de Despachantes de Aduana de la República Argentina, 09.08.2014).

Regarding the efforts of the Argentine Ministry of Agriculture to foster ties with the Gulf monarchies, it should be mentioned that, due to the importance of agriculture and livestock, the Argentine government sees them as keys to penetrate markets in the area (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, 09.10.2013). Still, these are other areas Buenos Aires wishes to deepen exchanges and cooperation with these non-traditional partners. In several meetings with officials from Qatar, Argentine authorities

<sup>7</sup> Countries that have less than 500 m3 of renewable fresh water per person per year face absolute water scarcity.

<sup>8</sup> For additional information see: KRKOWIAK, Fernando (2014). "La exportación de tecnología nuclear al mundo". *Tecnología nuclear para el desarrollo Edit U-238*. Año 2, No 18, 2014

<sup>9</sup> This export promotion programme is intended to "improve Argentine exports in quantitative and qualitative terms". Its specific objectives include: "increase traditional exports, contribute to export development of regional economies, increase the number of exporting companies, diversify export destinations and the export basket" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship). In order to achieve those goals twenty-four countries have been chosen as a focus of the shipments to be sent abroad: nine Latin American and fifteen emerging destinations. Among the latter are countries that meet the criteria of being BRICS and other large emerging and/or extra-regional emerging nations with large import capacity; Of these, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs chose: Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.



have referred to the associative potential between the two countries, given the compressed natural gas (CNG) technology developed in Argentina for cars and Qatar's plans to use part of its major gas production fuel for public transport.

Finally, the frequency of these visits is unprecedented, as not even during the Kirchner administration did so many visits take place. They indicate the interest of the Fernandez administrations to boost bilateral relations with potential benefits for all these states, particularly given the complementarity of their economies. This interest is also reflected in the negotiation and signing of agreements that were facilitated by the aforementioned high-level contacts<sup>10</sup>.

Outside the purely commercial level, the actions taken to promote links between the parties also aimed at attracting investment from the Gulf countries. In fact, contacts fostered by Argentine representatives are also part of the government's strategy to deepen its ties with countries holding surplus capital. In the 2011 official tour, Argentina submitted twenty five projects to the Kuwait Investment Authority and twenty one projects to the Qatar Investment Authority. It is worth mentioning that at that time both nations declared Argentina to be a "strategic investment destination" (Cibeira, 2011), a decision that is expected to pave the way for capital inflows, particularly at a time when Buenos Aires aims to raise funds, taking advantage of the current situation after the crisis of 2008, which took these funds away from financial assets<sup>11</sup>.

## Conclusion

In this article we have seen that during the governments of Cristina Fernandez there has been a boost in the political and diplomatic ties between Argentina and the Gulf monarchies, particularly the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar, attested by the multiplication of high-level contacts, presidential visits, the opening of diplomatic

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<sup>10</sup> Just to cite a few examples, in 2009 the negotiations for trade cooperation agreements with Bahrain and Qatar (Head of Cabinet of Ministers, 2009) were completed, while in 2010, progress was made in negotiations on economic-trade agreements with Oman and Kuwait (Head of Cabinet of Ministers, 2010). A posteriori, in 2011, as a result of Fernandez's Middle East tour, several agreements were signed, including the Agreement between Argentina and the State of Kuwait on Economic and Technical Cooperation, the Trade Agreement between the government of Argentina and the government of the State of Kuwait and the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of Argentina and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture of the State of Kuwait. As a result of the presidential visit to the UAE in 2013, a cooperation and technological exchange agreement in food safety, biotechnology and food supply was signed. It should be noted that this document provides for the exchange of technology and the possibility of selling through the establishment of a sales office in the UAE. Moreover, according to official declarations, Argentina would enable a small stand in the free zone of Dubai, where there would be a permanent exhibition centre for Argentine products (Ministry of Communication, 02/06/2013). The importance of this agreement is that the Emirate is a strategic point for the placement of products in the region, particularly considering that it has the biggest logistics centre that reaches all Gulf countries. Finally, in 2015, three new agreements with the UAE have been signed, this time in biotechnology, animal health and agricultural conformity assessment. There was also a memorandum signed between the INTA and the UAE Ministry of Environment and Water comprising issues related to biotechnology, animal and plant health, among other topics, through mutual assistance in the areas of education, research, development and technology transfer.

<sup>11</sup> An interesting thing to mention is that, although Argentina has to date not received funds from the above agencies, it has received a loan from the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. This fund, originally intended for the development of Arab countries, has long been open to other emerging destinations, mainly in Latin America. In this framework, the Province of Santa Fe was the recipient of a loan to improve its rail network (Cibeira, 2011).





missions, and the signing of agreements, among other indicators. Moreover, according to data from official documents, such as the Proceedings of the State of the Nation, the ties initiated during this period have no precedent in the history of bilateral relations with these actors. This approach must be understood in the light of Argentina's interest in strengthening its economic and trade ties with those countries, in line with the foreign trade policy guidelines of Fernandez's government. In fact, although the volume of trade with these countries is still low, in recent years Qatar and the UAE have become part of the countries Argentina imports the most from and currently there are several projects that, if they materialize, would enable Argentina to increase its oil purchases in these markets. Thus, we can conclude that although the depth and characteristics of the link with each of these six actors differs, Argentina has been making a major effort to approach this group of states, perceived to be potential partners, in response to the need to diversify its markets, attract investment and increase the volume of trade, combined with those states' urgency to ensure food security and advance technological cooperation, in a context that has been marked by the impact of the international financial crisis.

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## **RUSSIA'S "CONSERVATIVE MODERNIZATION": HOW TO SILENCE THE VOICES OF THE OPPOSITION**

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### **Abstract**

Under Dmitry Medvedev's and now Vladimir Putin's presidency, modernization was/is presented as a national imperative for the Russian government. It became a political slogan and a means by which to restore Russia's power internally and externally. This campaign serves to push the agendas of some of Russia's ruling elite within the larger ruling camp. This article tries to answer the following question: How do Russian elites understand modernization, both historically and within the current context? It concludes that Russian "political technologists", who have been in power in the last 15 years, have become masters in the art of silencing the voices of those who take a critical view of the government's policies.

### **Keywords**

Russia, Modernization, Putin, Medvedev, Conservatism

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## **RUSSIA'S "CONSERVATIVE MODERNIZATION": HOW TO SILENCE THE VOICES OF THE OPPOSITION**

**Richard Rousseau**

In 2011, under his "Go Russia!" *motto*, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev (2008-2012) called on citizens to take a fresh look at their country's history and direction. He was intent on introducing a debate on the need for economic modernization, which has been a recurrent theme throughout Russia's history, dating back to the time of Peter the Great.

Modernization is now being presented as a national imperative under the Putin administration, repackaged as a political slogan and embossed in the usual layers of rhetoric and nationalism. This campaign serves to push the agendas of some of Russia's ruling elite within the larger ruling camp. But how do Russian elites understand modernization, both historically and within the current context?

Russia is too often misunderstood by Western experts and politicians, as there appears to be no middle ground. Many either take a very negative and somber view of the country<sup>1</sup>, or they claim that Russia is so unique and exotic that it is in a category of its own, not comparable to other states<sup>2</sup>.

Both these views of Russia are misleading. The first paints a very gloomy picture of Russia's social and economic conditions, and uses historical precedent to argue that it has always been perceived as a dangerous country. It cannot be denied that there have been, and continue to be, many disturbing aspects to Russia's development, but this fascination with Russia's dark side underpins the perceptions of Russia most commonly heard in the West, which derives from an overly selective recalling of historical events. The second understanding, that Russia is an exotic, almost oriental place, full of paradoxes, mystery and intrigue, implies that it cannot be so easily understood by applying generic social science paradigms. The argument is that as Russia is culturally unique, it does not come close to adopting normal development paths, particularly

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<sup>1</sup> See Blank, Stephen (2015). Putin Celebrates Stalinism. Again. Atlantic Council, 27 May. Available at: <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/putin-celebrates-stalinism-again>; Pipes, R. (1991). *The Russian Revolution*. Vintage, 1st Ed; Brzezinski, Zbigniew (1990). *Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century*. Collier Books; Nolte, E., and Furret, F. (2004). *Fascism and Communism*. University of Nebraska Press, 1st Ed.

<sup>2</sup> See Getty, J. H., and Naumov, Oleg (1999). *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*. Yale University Press; Malia, M. (1995). *The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991*. Free Press; Applebaum, A. (2003). *Gulag: A History*. Doubleday; Raeff, M. (1994). *Political Ideas and Institutions in Imperial Russia*. Boulder, CO: Westview.



when compared to those of Western countries. Taking this view is, in effect, a means of avoiding making any definite statement about what Russia is.

Russia is different in many ways, not only from the other states that constituted the former Soviet Union but from countries of comparable size and population. It also stands apart because of the geopolitical role it plays in both Europe and Eurasia, and its strategic significance as the world's second largest nuclear power. It wields important political clout due to its status as a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council. Above all, Russia is unique because it perceives itself to be different – but all countries perceive themselves to be unique in some way, and wants to remain different.

The collapse and rebuilding of Russia's state structures, political institutions and economic system after the demise of the USSR in 1991 created enormous uncertainty for Russia and affected the way Russians defined themselves as a nation. For instance, although today's Russian Federation is the direct successor of a thousand years of statehood, the political forms and boundaries of the contemporary state differ from any that Russia has known. Like the Soviet Union, the Russian Republic was also formally considered a federation and had internal ethnic-national subdivisions. But in contrast to the larger USSR, only some of its constituent members are ethnic national territories. Why? Because most of the republics in the Russian Federation are pure administrative subdivisions populated by Russians. Under the Soviet system, Russia's internal ethnic national territories were classified by size and status into autonomous republics and autonomous provinces and by national districts. Today, all the former autonomous republics are simply termed republics. In many republics, the indigenous ethnic group comprises a minority of the population. Since 1991 the names and status of some of the constituent units in Russia have changed<sup>3</sup>.

The modernization imperative took root in the so-called third cycle of development, or post-communist cycle, which began in 1991, the first two cycles being the period from the Revolution of 1905 to the February Revolution of 1917 and the Communist period (1917-1991)<sup>4</sup>. In September 2009, Dmitry Medvedev wrote on the President of Russia's website that "previous attempts to modernize Russia – those initiated by Peter the Great and the Soviet Union – had partially failed and had come at a high social cost to Russia"<sup>5</sup>.

Looking back at the transformation of Russia since 1991, this period has been characterized by alternating pushes for reform and stability and has contributed in large part to the creation of a hybrid system combining elements of superficial Westernization with the remnants of a Soviet iron fist policy. The overall results appear to be an elite-led modernization of the economic system and society that has become fused with a greater degree of authoritarianism in the political domain<sup>6</sup>.

Government elites have been transformed into a new kind of ruling class – similar to royalty – which today controls the many layers of state and para-state bureaucracies, military and law enforcement institutions. This class is linked with Russian corporations through the use of administrative resources and in its rent-seeking behavior. For

<sup>3</sup> See Sakwa, R. (2008). *Russian Politics and Society*. London and New York, Routledge, Fourth Edition.

<sup>4</sup> See Figes, Orlando (2014). *Revolutionary Russia, 1891–1991*, Metropolitan Books.

<sup>5</sup> Medvedev, Dmitry (2009). *Go Russia!* President of Russia Official Web-Site, September 10. Available at: <http://eng.news.kremlin.ru/news/298>

<sup>6</sup> Mezrich, B. (2015). *Once Upon a Time in Russia: The Rise of the Oligarchs. A True Story of Ambition, Wealth, Betrayal, and Murder*. Atria Books.





instance, most of the firms run by former KGB colleagues of Putin – whether Russian Railroad President Vladimir Yakunin or Igor Sechin, the Executive Chairman of Rosneft – and hit hard by the EU and U.S. sanctions provoked by the war in Eastern Ukraine have received bailouts from the Russian government<sup>7</sup>. Such vested interests synergize and determine Russia's future.

The post-Soviet ruling class, particularly the group known as the "siloviki" (those 'men in uniform' reared in intelligence and law enforcement agencies and the Soviet Army), reached the helm of power under Putin's first presidency (2000-2008) and have effectively alienated themselves from the Russian social fabric<sup>8</sup>. The gap between the ruling class and ordinary Russians is similar in degree to that found in the poorest third world countries. Because of this widening gap between the rulers and those being ruled Russian sociologists have diagnosed a deepening social-economic crisis in contemporary Russia.

The Putinist, semi-authoritarian "new integration project for Eurasia"<sup>9</sup>, which purportedly aims to provide the possibility of a leap of civilization into the 21st century, has actually become a barrier to social change<sup>10</sup>. Putin's "conservative modernization", which has predominated in official discourse in Russia since 2011, has, in fact, sanctioned the social protection and prolongation of the status quo. It has come to symbolize merely the good intentions and esteem of the powers that be<sup>11</sup>. This style of modernization has little in common with the ideas of Western European modernizers of the 20th century<sup>12</sup>. For some Russian observers, it compares with that of the "obstructionists" and "reactionaries" of the epoch of "stagnation" under *Leonid Brezhnev's leadership*<sup>13</sup>.

## Conservative Modernization

Liberalism in the West has developed over a long time as private property, individual freedoms and rationalist thinking developed, whereas in Russia all three has been absent or were severely limited. The main problem in Russia was that the subject of liberalism, homo economicus, was largely absent, and therefore liberalism found its main support among the urban liberal intelligentsia<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Miller, Chris (2015). Russia's Economy: Sanctions, Bailouts, and Austerity. [Foreign Policy Research Institute](http://www.fpri.org/articles/2015/02/russias-economy-sanctions-bailouts-and-austerity), February. Available at: <http://www.fpri.org/articles/2015/02/russias-economy-sanctions-bailouts-and-austerity>

<sup>8</sup> See Hoffman, D. E. (2011). The Oligarchs: Wealth And Power In The New Russia. Public Affairs, Revised Edition; Illarionov, Andrey (2009). The Siloviki in Charge. *Journal of Democracy*, 20 (2), pp. 69-72.

<sup>9</sup> Putin, Vladimir (2013). A New Integration Project for Eurasia: The Future in the Making. *Izvestia*, October 3. (Reproduced on the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the European Union website). Available at: <http://www.russianmission.eu/en#sthash.H1eXjC3e.dpuf>

<sup>10</sup> Inozemtsev, Vladislav (2010). Russie, Une Société Libre Sous Contrôle Autoritaire. (Russia – A Free Society Under Authoritarian Control). *Le Monde Diplomatique*, No.10, p. 4-5.

<sup>11</sup> See Inozemtsev, Vladislav (2010). Istoriya i Uroki Rossiyskikh Modernizatsiy. (The History and Lessons of Russian Modernisations). *Rossiya i Sovremenniy Mir*, No 2 [67], April-June, p. 6-11; *Trenin, Dmitri (2010). Russia's Conservative Modernization: A Mission Impossible? SAIS Review, Volume 30, Number 1, Winter-Spring, pp. 27-37.*

<sup>12</sup> Von Laue, Theodore H. (1987). *The World Revolution of Westernization. The Twentieth Century in Global Perspective*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>13</sup> Inozemtsev, Vladislav (2010). O Tsennostyakh I Normakh. (On values and Norms). *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 5 March, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Raeff, M. (1994). *Political Ideas and... Op. Cit.*, p. 56.





In the West liberalism (including private property, individualism and the defense of the individual and property rights in law) has come before democracy, but in Russia it was the democratic revolution itself in 1987-1991 that created the bases of liberalism. This it tried to do by diffusing the economic power that is associated with private property to establish the basis for individual rights; but at the same time asserted the need for the concentration of political power, a post-communist Leviathan, in the form of presidential power<sup>15</sup>.

Economic liberalism but not necessarily fully fledged democracy was on the agenda. The deconcentration of economic power, moreover, succeeded in establishing a class of "new Russians" and oligarchs, but appeared to do little for the mass of the population, a large proportion of whom lost the social guarantees of the Soviet period and gained very little in return. Liberalism remained far from hegemonic, challenged by the counter-ideology of statism, and neither was it universal, limited to certain enclaves of globalism in Russia, Moscow, St Petersburg and some other cities. Nevertheless, despite the loss of territory and the collapse of the comforting certainties of an all-embracing ideology it would be false to argue that liberalism failed to take root in Russia.

At the heart of the liberal democratic revolution is the attempt to establish a market economy and representative government. But how? While the liberal reformers of the 1990s paid lip service to representative government, faced with what to them appeared intractable opposition from the conservatives in parliament many argued in favor of an "iron hand", the strong presidency and state acting as a type of enlightened despotism pushing through the reforms but preserving the main post-Soviet political institutions.

Boris Yeltsin, the first post-Soviet president, appeared to succeed where Mikhail Gorbachev failed in finding a mid-path between representative government and outright coercion, a type of virtual representation of political and social interests described by the various labels of delegative, illiberal or regime democracy. The collapse of communist power and the weak development of a democratic counter-system allowed bureaucratic and elite structures to establish a relatively high degree of autonomy.

This was most evident in the government itself in the 1990s, established as a sort of technocratic high command of the economic transition. In the regions, too, the control functions once fulfilled by the Communist Party were only weakly replaced by the system of federal representatives at the regional or federal district level. While social change and economic transformation were perhaps prerequisites for a liberal order, political development and democratization require more.

In reaction to the attempt to achieve a liberal modernization without liberals a type of post-communist Russian conservatism emerged. Conservatism in Russia has much deeper roots and philosophical traditions to draw on than liberalism; but at the turn of the century and at the onset of Putin's third presidential term (2011-2012) attempts were made to combine the two in a distinctive Russian ideology of conservative modernization.

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<sup>15</sup> Gill, G, and Merkwick, R., D. (2000). *Russia's Stillborn Democracy? From Gorbachev to Yeltsin*. Oxford University Press, pp. 127-150.



Perhaps the most potent source of conservative modernization, however, was the patriotic view of the need for a strong state combined with individual rights and a constitutional system<sup>16</sup>. Thus, in Russia a unique synthesis of economic liberalism, modernization and political conservatism took shape and assumed political form since Putin's return to the presidency in March 2012.

Putin's conservative modernization drew on pre-revolutionary traditions, those of the Soviet period, and in the post-Soviet period on world experience of liberal and social conservatism. It sought to combine the liberal emphasis on economic freedoms with gradual restraints on individual and political rights and an organic conception of the larger community, the attempt to preserve Russia's distinctive traditions, to revive the Orthodox Church and to salvage something of the social policies of the Soviet period. A distinctive brand of conservative modernization, espoused by neo-communists and some national-patriots, sought the roots of the 'new community' in Russian traditions. Putin's rule represents a powerful combination of these attributes and adapts the modernization drive to Russian current and historical condition.

The very concept of democracy in Russia now appears de-legitimized, while the word itself is used as a term of opprobrium. The credibility gap between the statements of the leadership and the realities of daily life gave rise to what has been called a mistrust culture and a pervading sense of social nihilism. The ideology of conservative modernization means that the political institutions of the state became more ordered, leadership more resolute and consistent. In other words, political stability is better assured by an authoritarian regime than by democratic disarray.

In his book *Political Order in Changing Societies* published in 1968, Samuel Huntington argued that societies in transition to modernity require firm, if not military, leadership to negotiate the enormous strains placed on society by period of rapid change<sup>17</sup>. In Putin's Russia the "praetorian" role is being fulfilled by the presidency and his closest allies rather than the army. The presidency recreated a center not only for the nation but also for political society, the center that had crumbled under Yeltsin. Since 2012 the fear, however, that the strong presidency would not act as a bulwark against lawlessness but would itself be the vehicle for a new form of arbitrariness has proved founded.

Russia today has a hybrid political system, both democratic and authoritarian, but more and more leaning towards the latter type. The freedoms that had begun during glasnost blossomed into genuine freedom of speech and the press, and the variety of publications and the openness of their content were unparalleled in Russia's history. Censorship was explicitly forbidden and only the courts could permanently ban newspapers, and then only on specific grounds and after due warning.

The hybrid nature of authoritarianism democracy in Putin's Russia arose out of the conflict between ends and means and has a dual function: to undermine the old structures of social and political power dominated by the oligarchs, while at the same time to provide the framework for the growth of conservative forms that could

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<sup>16</sup> Markov, Sergei (2009). Conservative Modernization. The Moscow Times, November 30. Available at: <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/tmt/390539.html>; Trenin, Dmitri (2010). Russia's Conservative Modernization: A Mission Impossible? Carnegie Moscow Center, May 25. Available at: <http://carnegie.ru/2010/05/25/russia-s-conservative-modernization-mission-impossible>

<sup>17</sup> Huntington, Samuel (1968). *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, p. 1.



ultimately stand on their own. Under Putin, moreover, regional and federal politics became more insulated from the pressures of economic interests, and the presidency operates less as a freeloading operator in the interstices of the state and society, as it had done under Yeltsin, but as part of a state order seeking to modernize the Russian state and society.

## Negative Effects

This conservative modernization model has had many negative effects. The most notable are the scale and systematic nature of corruption and legal nihilism. Valery Zorkin, Chairman of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation and one of the most powerful personalities in Russia, has publicly admitted that crime is ingrained in the state apparatus and economy and that the interests of members of the state apparatus and business class run parallel with the interests of criminal circles. In an interview with *Izvestia* in 2004, he said that 'bribe taking in the courts has become one of the biggest corruption markets in Russia'. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the level of corruption in the judiciary increases the further down the hierarchy and further away from Moscow one goes<sup>18</sup>. In 2004, Russia was ranked 90th out of 149 countries in the Transparency International Global Corruption Index, whereas in 2013 it was 127th, alongside notoriously corrupt countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Ivory Coast<sup>19</sup>. It also ranked poorly on the World Bank's Doing Business Survey; it was 112th out of 185 countries, putting it on a level with ex-Soviet republics like Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan<sup>20</sup>. The Medvedev and Putin governments have however taken some measures to combat corruption and change foreigners' perceptions that Russia is not an easy place to do business. In 2010, Medvedev signed the OECD's Anti-Bribery Convention, even though Russia is only a partner of this powerful economic organization.

The Institute of Contemporary Development (INSOR) and the Center for Strategic Analysis (CSR), two institutions close to the Kremlin, have drawn even more telling conclusions on the circumstances that Russia finds itself in the middle of the second decade of the 21st century. They maintain that the high level of corruption is the main factor causing the overall "crisis" Russia is currently facing<sup>21</sup>. The disdain for the state apparatus, which is felt by the vast majority of Russians, is slowing down the modernization of political institutions. The ruling power has 'slept through' the social changes brought about by a combination of a transitional economy and the loss of safety mechanisms for the vulnerable.

Russian society has undergone substantial changes in its structure and stratification and these are still in progress. With the development of global mass communication technologies and increased access to independent sources of information, post-

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<sup>18</sup> Blass, Tom (2007). *Combating Corruption and Political Influence in Russia's Court System*. Global Corruption Report 2007: Corruption in Judicial Systems. Transparency International. Cambridge University Press, pp. 31-34; Gilinskiy, Yakov (2006). *Crime in Contemporary*. European Journal of Criminology Russia, Vol. 3, p. 259.

<sup>19</sup> Corruption Perceptions Index 2013. Transparency International. (2013). Available at: <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2013/results>

<sup>20</sup> INSOR Experts Focus Attention on Fight Against Corruption. (2008). Institute of Contemporary Development (INSOR), June 26. Available at: <http://www.insor-russia.ru/en/news/890>

<sup>21</sup> INSOR Experts Focus Attention on Fight Against Corruption. (2008). Institute of Contemporary Development (INSOR), June 26. Available at: <http://www.insor-russia.ru/en/news/890>



Communist citizens have come out of hibernation and started developing skills in grassroots self-organization. Millions of middle class workers and hundreds of youth groups, radicalized by a lack of opportunities to improve their social status, have joined up with the opposition intelligentsia. In fact, the stereotypical image of Russians' incapacity to react and take to the street when confronted with their government's abuses and incompetence was shown to be a thing of the past during Putin's third term as president in May 2012.

In reaction to what was perceived as widespread election fraud, a number of parallel institutions and social organizations sprung up to campaign against the authorities' manipulation of the electoral process and other undemocratic undertakings during the 2012 election. Social networks and projects such as the "Online Parliament" quickly gained popularity, often in response to the Kremlin's blatant disregard of people's fundamental civil rights. This heedless form of elite rule explains in part why freedom has been constantly decreasing<sup>22</sup>.

Many analysts predict that the next few years will bring forth a dynamic opposition force which might even surpass the one that swept away the USSR between 1986 and 1991<sup>23</sup>. They conjecture that a serious deterioration of the economic situation and revived social disturbances in the Northern Caucasus will be major catalysts to opening the gates of discontent and letting loose a flood of political activism within Russian society. In the context of the crisis in Eastern Ukraine, and the economic sanctions that the EU and the U.S. have imposed on Russia in retaliation, the year 2015 may indeed be extremely dangerous for the Kremlin. This is the opinion of Igor Yurgens, Chairman of the Management Board of INSOR, who has openly acknowledged that Russia is "in a recession now, and soon we'll be in a free fall"<sup>24</sup>.

International economic conditions have the potential to play a dynamic part in Russia's future. Growing global interdependence has caused the country's economic growth to become more dependent on foreign trade, forcing it to pay more attention to its competitiveness in world markets. Meanwhile, the "Great Recession" of 2008-2009 painfully disclosed the fallibility of resource-based economies.

The 8% decrease in GDP that Russia experienced in the wake of the 2008-2009 world economic crisis has brought about the realization among Kremlin insiders that not only is proper trade diversification of paramount necessity but encompassing economic modernization must be implemented promptly. There are serious economic vulnerabilities, not least Russia's heavy dependence on the export of its natural resources and the weakness of its manufacturing, service and hi-tech industries. Russia's educational, scientific and technological potential, like the industrial facilities inherited from the Soviet Union, have either run their course or been exhausted. Many

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<sup>22</sup> Livejournal, Online Parliament and Freedom House. (2011). The Voice of Russia, April 21. Available at: [http://sputniknews.com/voiceofrussia/radio\\_broadcast/36172287/49273362/?link-1](http://sputniknews.com/voiceofrussia/radio_broadcast/36172287/49273362/?link-1)

<sup>23</sup> See Fauconnier, Clémentine (2011). Conflit et Compétition Politiques Dans La "Démocratie Souveraine" : L'Opposition Vue Par Russie Unie. *Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest*, 42 (1), March, p. 17-36; Narzhnaya, Kristina (2013); *Russians Go West*. *The World Policy Journal*, March 30, p. 95-103. At available: <http://www.worldpolicy.org/journal/spring2013/russians-go-west> ; Caracciolo, Lucio (2015). *Democratorship: The Ancient Heart of Putin's Regime*. Stratfor, March 27. Available at: <https://www.stratfor.com/the-hub/democratorship-ancient-heart-putin%E2%80%99s-regime>

<sup>24</sup> Yurgens, Igor (2014). We Are in a Recession Now, and Soon We'll Be in a Free Fall. Institute of Contemporary Development (INSOR), November 19. Available at: [http://www.insor-russia.ru/en/\\_news/11319](http://www.insor-russia.ru/en/_news/11319)



are no longer appropriate to the global economy, and have no place in a world of fierce competition between states, economies of scale and outsourcing.

## Different Factions

Russia is thus facing another historic turning point. What political and economic direction should it now pursue? The specter of unfinished modernization processes has hung over the country since the time of Peter the Great in the early 18th century and the dilemmas faced by former and present elites are almost identical in terms of goals and constraints.

Russian political leaders, as so often in their country's history, are seeking some kind of magic economic formula which will satisfy everyone while preserving the political and economic status quo. Many believe a return to the pre-crisis situation is possible, while others are of the opinion that inertia will result in an uncontrolled and detrimental chain reaction which could nevertheless finally bring true democracy to Russia<sup>25</sup>.

A good number of alarmist reports and analysis share a common conclusion: deep political changes, in particular an unwavering turn towards democratization and the rule of law, are necessary ingredients for a broader economic recovery and social well-being<sup>26</sup>. Only such modernization will enable a cultural transformation decisive enough for the creation of a solid modern Russian identity and, from a legal point of view, a state based on the respect towards the law<sup>27</sup>. Russia must take the Westernization track again in order to change the political tyranny of the few into a new value-based political system conducive to good governance, responsible leadership, innovation, efficiency and freedom<sup>28</sup>.

Classifying the ruling elite into two factions – conservative and liberal – is an oversimplification, as the political debate is many-sided within political circles. For instance, the reactionary faction in the Kremlin defines modernization as a means of optimizing the power of the current political regime, as it improves its ability to rule the country. Belief in a long term and stable 'contract' between the state and the people is emblematic of this view of modernization. However, such a paradigm does not preclude liberal economic policies, a multi-party system and the use of social mobilization in bringing about economic modernization to catch up with the West – and now with many East and Southeast Asian countries – such as President Medvedev's "modernization program", launched in 2009 but consigned to the past after 2012, exemplified<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> See Vstrecha s Vedushimi Rossiyskimi i Zarubezhnimi Politologami. (Meeting With the Leading Russian and Foreign Political Science Experts). (2010). Available at: [www.kremlin.ru/news/8882](http://www.kremlin.ru/news/8882); For a detailed evaluation of relevant literature see: Diskin, Iosif (2009). *Krizis... I Vse Zhe Modernizatsiya!* (Crisis... Yet It's Still Modernization!). Moscow: "Evropa" Publishing House, p. 7-16.

<sup>26</sup> See Aslund, Anders (2009). *Why Market Reform Succeeded and Democracy Failed in Russia*. Social Research, Spring; *Russia's Economy to Reach Pre-Crisis Level by Late 2012*. (2009). RIA Novosti, December 16. Available at : <http://en.rian.ru/business/20091216/157255443.html>

<sup>27</sup> Rousseau, R. (2015). *Russia's Attempt To Deliver Democratic Transition Is A Non-Starter*. Eurasia Review, News & Analysis, July 14. Available at: <http://www.eurasiareview.com/14072015-russias-attempt-to-deliver-democratic-transition-is-a-non-starter-analysis>

<sup>28</sup> See Lindley-French, J. (2014). *Greater Russia: How Moscow Exploits and Misunderstands History*. The Europe's World, Match 17. Available at: [http://europesworld.org/2014/03/17/greater-russia-how-moscow-exploits-and-misunderstands-history/#.Ve5wn\\_mSyRQ](http://europesworld.org/2014/03/17/greater-russia-how-moscow-exploits-and-misunderstands-history/#.Ve5wn_mSyRQ)

<sup>29</sup> Andrey Issayev, Andrei (2011). *Konservativizm: Oplot Modernizatsii*. (Conservatism: The Pillar of Modernisation). *Vestnik Edinoy Rossii*, 4 (83), April, p. 2.



In foreign policy, the conservative faction's perception of Russia's place on the world stage borrows from Samuel Huntington's concept of a "Clash of Civilizations": the "Eurasian civilization" against the "European". It also assumes that the current international system is characterized by multipolarity and the predominance of military power over what is now commonly called "soft power".

The "Conservationists", as they are often referred to in the Russian media, are not a homogenous group. There are advocates of cosmetic changes and proponents of *tabula rasa* (the "ultras," so to say) who advocate starting with a blank slate. The "Chekists" and "orthodox" factions believe that democracy and liberalism pose a deadly threat to Russia<sup>30</sup>. To some extent, the conservative modernization strand, in which the Russian Communist Party could be included, is ideologically close to the thoughts of the Russian traditionalists. It comes as no surprise that state bureaucracies, defense and law enforcement institutions as well as the army and large state-owned enterprises, especially in the natural resources sector and the military-industrial complex, have proven themselves bastions of conservatism<sup>31</sup>.

For its part, the 'liberal' faction within the ruling party, United Russia, which emanated from the Soviet and post-Yeltsin institutional structures (i.e., the Soviet and the post-Soviet *nomenklatura*) has a narrow view on modernization: it sees gradual political transition and liberal economic reforms as the means for preventing sudden and costly political revolutions, especially as the nation's temper is expected to become increasingly restive and assertive<sup>32</sup>.

The current situation in Russia is a remnant of – and reminiscent of – many wasted historic chances to modernize Russia for good and never look back. Such personalities as Nikolai Speranski, Pyotr Stolypin and Boris Chicherin, known as reformers in Russian history, strove to update Russia's political, social and economic fabric at the turn of the 20th century. The program of the historical Kadet Party (Constitutional Democratic Party) in the early months of the February Revolution of 1917 put forward reformist ideas which are still relevant in today's Russia<sup>33</sup>.

During the 2011 celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation of the Serfs, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev identified himself with the modernizing tsar, Alexander II. The 'liberals' of today are loyalists who adhere to Pushkin's 19th century famous phrase: "the only European in Russia is the government". The impulse for reform, they believe, must come from above in response to the cultural process that comes from below. A contemporary political scientist would call this a "top-down approach" – the only one used in the last two centuries in Russia<sup>34</sup>.

Despite some dithering over the reform issue, enlightened Russian technocrats, politicians and academics of today (Grigory Yavlinski, Anatoly Chubais, Mikhail Kasyanov, Alexei Kudrin, the late opposition politician Boris Nemtsov etc.) back a policy

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<sup>30</sup> Idem.

<sup>31</sup> Kateb, Alexandre (2014). *La Russie, l'Europe et l'Émergence d'un Monde Multipolaire*. La Tribune, August 19. Available at : <http://www.latribune.fr/opinions/tribunes/20140819trib000844968/la-russie-l-europe-et-l-emergence-d-un-monde-multipolaire.html>

<sup>32</sup> See: Russia After Nemtsov. *Uncontrolled Violence* (2015). *The Economist*, March 7.

<sup>33</sup> See Tuminez, Astrid (2000). *Russian Nationalism Since 1856: Ideology and the Making of Foreign Policy*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

<sup>34</sup> See Kennedy, Paul T., and Danks, Catherine J. (2001). *Globalization and National Identities: Crisis or Opportunity?* Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire. New York: Palgrave; Kortunov, S. (1998). *Russia's Way: National Identity and Foreign Policy*. *International Affairs: A Russian Journal*, 44, no. 4.





of integration with transatlantic institutions, although which institutions they mean is not specified. They consider Russia to be an integral part of Europe, and their hope for completing Peter the Great's work rests on the establishment and burgeoning of a truly Russian middle class<sup>35</sup>. Under Medvedev's presidency, the liberal faction relied on the so-called program of the "four Is" or four key areas: Institutions, Infrastructure, Innovation, and Investment. Establishing the conditions for the development of small and medium-size businesses was a cornerstone of this program<sup>36</sup>.

It is not far-fetched to imagine a political faction uniting the new faces of the democratic opposition (the oppositionist intelligentsia, mostly anti-Putin) and the Kremlin's liberal faction, however small and shadowy it is, and presenting a modernizing platform to the leaders of political institutions and the people. For this to happen, however, the two camps will have to pour some water into their wine. The oppositionist intelligentsia considers the liberal faction to be a PR project and liberal in name only, which, in fact, serves to strengthen the existing status quo. Yuri Afanasiev, a famous Russian historian, gave an interview to Ukrainian Week in 2012 in which he dissected the alleged liberalization mission of the liberal camp and drew the conclusion that expectations of real reforms are overdone<sup>37</sup>.

The conflict between Kremlin factions about how to respond to Russia's decline in competitiveness has been intensifying in the wake of the 2007-2008 American-born global economic slowdown. Under these dire circumstances, ongoing squabbles about ideas and strategies of modernization are being used by the political classes to try to strengthen their position within the different factions. Nevertheless, the sheer effervescence among the growing middle class implies that a large number of Russians are now mobilized on issues of far-reaching political and economic importance, such as public-private ownership, the authoritarian political system, the corrupt and criminalized economy, government – federal and regional – accountability, infringement on press freedom and on the independence of the justice system.

The public debate has become infused with a new dignity and with new policy options. This unique development became more apparent in the run-up to the elections to the December 2011 State Duma and the 2012 presidential election. Russia now faces a momentous political crisis. The abuses of the Putin regime are so numerous that, without profound change, the protest movement is unlikely to be stopped. However, it is doubtful Putin will agree to reforms that would threaten his hold on power. The stage is therefore set for a protracted conflict between Putin and the opposition.

Along with political and socioeconomic changes, Russian identity needs to evolve, or else modernization will continue to be nothing more than an empty buzzword which fills campaign rhetoric and gets invoked for political gain. The root of Russia's dilemma is the total absence of any modern and integrated social or cultural binding force – using propaganda dating from the Great Patriotic War and Russia's imperial past does not play a major role in shaping a national collective mindset geared towards a modernization project. That's why, for many, future hopes lie in the initiatives of *civic associations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)* to de-totalitarianize Russia

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<sup>35</sup> Vstrecha s Vedushimi Rossiyskimi i... Op. Cit.

<sup>36</sup> See Rousseau, R. (2011). Modernization of Russia: Real or a Pipedream? G8 Summit Magazine, June. Available at: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/55959348/1/G8-G20-France-2011-New-World-New-Ideas>

<sup>37</sup> Afanasyev, Yuri (2012). Russia Is Ruled by Feudalism. Ukrainian Week, February 13. Available at: <http://ukrainianweek.com/World/42179>





and safeguard the country from renewed authoritarian tendencies like Communism and Stalinism or their offspring.

## Conclusion

The current economic recession, magnified by the Western sanctions, will unleash social tension throughout the vast Russian territory, although the likelihood of a serious political disruption is low in the short term. The capital of trust that Putin enjoys since his first presidency will not quickly melt away. Russians still remember that he managed to raise their living standards throughout the 2000s.

In addition, the armada of "political technologists" working for the Kremlin is constantly on its toes to find ways to divide and exercise mounting pressure on the opposition. When opposition leader Alexey Navalny filed for permission to hold an anti-crisis protest on March 1, 2014, the political technologists made sure that the Communist Party and about ten other groups held protest that same day, a classic post-Soviet states' tactic<sup>38</sup>. After 15 years in power, they have become masters in the art of silencing the voices of those who take a critical view of the government's policies.

As inflation kicks in and the ruble's value stays low against other currencies, Putin's and the ruling party's reputation of being competent in running the economy will fade away. The modernization of Russia's political and economic systems has been put on the back burner in 2011 and reliance on nationalism, repression and frustration against the West will be the preferred strategy for the years to come.

The Russian transition was an attempt to provide an institutional framework for pluralism in society, to guarantee property rights and to overcome Russia's isolation from global processes. While democratic institutions have appeared, however wobbly and incomplete, it will take longer for the democratic culture and economic structures that can sustain them to emerge, for the unwritten rules of convention to impress themselves onto the written word of the constitution. The first post-communist Russian leadership laid the foundations of a new political order in the belief that Russia could only enter world civilization if it remade its own. In the second decade of the twenty-first century it was clear that both Russia and the world face challenges that cannot be resolved in isolation from each other.

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<sup>38</sup> Englund, Will (2014). In Moscow, Tens of Thousands Turn Out to Protest Russian Intervention in Ukraine. The Washington Post, March 15. Available at: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/in-moscow-tens-of-thousands-turn-out-to-protest-russian-intervention-in-ukraine/2014/03/15/a3b35c34-caa3-49ee-9612-d6e883535eb8\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/in-moscow-tens-of-thousands-turn-out-to-protest-russian-intervention-in-ukraine/2014/03/15/a3b35c34-caa3-49ee-9612-d6e883535eb8_story.html)

## **THE SCOTTISH REFERENDUM 2014: THE POLITICAL PROCESS BEFORE AND AFTER THE 'NO' VOTE**

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### **Abstract**

On 18 September 2014, Scottish voters narrowly rejected political independence, losing 44.7% to 55.3%. Yet during more than 16 weeks, two opposing campaigns – Yes Scotland versus Better Together – strove to convince Scotland that political independence versus keeping the Union was the best choice for Scotland's future. Filled with many unexpected moments, the campaign was intense, vibrant and almost breath-taking. The purpose of this article is to deliver a coherent and consistent account of the Scottish campaigns in order to make sense of the 'No' vote. In this article, we will proceed in four sections: first, we will put the referendum in context; second, we will highlight major aspects of the campaigns; third, we will bring the political process up-to-date and clarify the terms of the agreement reached under the Smith Process. Finally, in the last part, we will summarise the lessons to learn from the political outcome of the referendum.

### **Keywords:**

Scottish referendum; Scottish campaigns; Scottish politics; political independence

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## **SCOTTISH REFERENDUM 2014: THE POLITICAL PROCESS BEFORE AND AFTER THE 'NO' VOTE<sup>1</sup>**

**Sandrina Ferreira Antunes**

### **Introduction**

On 18 September 2014, the Scottish decided to stay in the United Kingdom, with 55.3% voting for the motion and 44.7% voting against (Curtice, 2014a). After a record turnout of voters, Scotland overwhelmingly rejected political independence with 55.3% of Scotland voting to remain in the 307-year-old union. During more than 16 weeks, two opposing campaigns – Yes Scotland versus Better Together – strove to convince Scotland that political independence versus staying in the Union was the best choice for Scotland's future. Regardless of the final result, the campaign was intense, vibrant and almost breath-taking (Antunes, 2014: 1).

The purpose of this article is to deliver a coherent and consistent account of the Scottish campaigns in order to explain how 'did it all happen'. In order to do so, we will proceed with four sections: first, we will put the referendum in context; second, we will highlight major aspects of each side of the campaigns; third, we will bring the political process up-to-date and clarify the terms of the agreement issued by the Smith Commission (Smith Commission, 2014). Finally, in the last part, we will summarise the lessons to learn from the political outcomes of the third Scottish referendum.

Since we are dealing with recent political events that lack strong evidences in the literature, our research will be based on scientific analysis presented by the Centre on Constitutional Change<sup>2</sup> since the beginning of this process and even before the referendum. Additionally, these pieces of research will be further reinforced by the analysis of relevant official documents issued either by Scottish political parties involved into this political process or by the British government. Finally, opinion polls collected before and after the referendum will allow us to explore relevant aspects of our argument at particular moments of the article. To conclude, by the means of a systematic analysis of these elements, we hope to deliver an interesting and rigorous account of the Scottish campaigns.

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<sup>2</sup> In <http://www.futureukandscotland.ac.uk/>.



## 1. Scottish referendum put in context

The referendum was suggested by the Scottish National Party (SNP) in May 2011, as the party achieved a majority in government with 47% of the votes. However, the political debate started only as two opposing campaigns – Yes Scotland versus Better Together – which came into play in May and June 2012<sup>2</sup> respectively. Whereas Yes Scotland campaigned for the independence of Scotland and was supported by the SNP, Better Together's Scottish Green Party and the Scottish Socialists campaigned for the 'No' vote, supported by the three pro-Union political parties in Scotland: Scottish Labour, the Scottish Conservative Party and the Scottish Liberal Democrats.

### Scottish referendum 2014: how did we get here?

As we look back in time, we realise that Scotland has already had two referendums on self-governance (one in 1979 and another in 1997), but at that time the SNP was not a major political player in the Scottish political arena (Lynch, 2002). Moreover, although opinion polls prior to the first referendum appeared to suggest that the 'Yes' vote would win comfortably (McGarvey and Cairney, 2008: 33), the 'Yes' campaign was divided by a lack of cooperation among those parties in favour. If on the one hand, the SNP was lukewarm, with the party fearing that unqualified support may be seen as a sell-out by the fundamentalists within the party (Finlay, 2004: 338), on the other hand, the Scottish Labour Party was divided on the issue with many Members of Parliament (MPs) joining with Conservatives in the 'No' campaign. Overall, the 'No' campaign appeared to be better organised and more coherent than those urging for a negative response coalesced under one clear message. The 'Yes' campaign in contrast appeared divided and incoherent, with two separate campaigns run by and excluding the SNP. The referendum held on 1 March 1979 had a slim majority of 51.6% voting in favour (versus 32.9% against), with the required 40% threshold not being achieved (McGarvey and Cairney, 2008: 33).

In September 1997, a second referendum on the proposal for a Scottish Parliament with tax-varying powers was held on the basis of Scottish Labour's (SL) proposal in 1997 (Hassan, 2009; Hepburn, 2006: 233) and unlike the first devolution referendum, the Scotland Forward's Campaign saw an unprecedented level of co-operation between the three main Scottish parties. In other words, the Scottish Labour Party, the Scottish Liberal Democrats and the Scottish National Party campaigned for a 'Yes' vote, which many hailed as evidence that the new Scottish politics could, and should, break the adversarial Westminster mould. The result of the referendum can be seen as reflecting this consensus with an overwhelming endorsement for the 'Yes' campaign. With a turnout of over 60%, 74.3% of Scotland voted for a Scottish Parliament and 63.5% voted for tax varying powers. Even though the poll was slightly lower than in 1979, the result definitively demonstrated the 'settled will' of the Scottish People. The UK quickly passed the relevant acts to establish a devolved Parliament for Scotland, with the Scotland Bill being far more extensive than that proposed in 1979. Foreign affairs, defence and social security were powers retained by Westminster, whilst Edinburgh's 129 MPs were given the power to legislate on an extensive range of domestic policies including education, economic development, health, housing, law, home affairs, local

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<sup>2</sup> The official campaign started on 30 May 2014.



government as well as the ability to vary taxation.

The 18 September 2014 was therefore the third time that Scotland was facing a referendum, but this time the question was on political independence, a question that could precipitate the break-up of the United Kingdom (Pittock, 2014: 2). After a minority government between 2007-2011 (Cairney, 2011), in 2011, the SNP was back in power with a majority in its hands that allowed Alex Salmond to launch a third referendum. However, for Alex Salmond, this third referendum was targeted towards the British constitutional flaws that prevented Scotland performing better in economic terms and being fully responsible for its own policies. Indeed, although the United Kingdom can be defined as a unitary devolutionary state, its constitutional arrangement is comparable to federal arrangements, which make it difficult to characterize, as it shares a key characteristic with federal states: an often-unclear division of responsibilities when governments pursue the dual aims of devolving decisions and maintaining central control (Keating, 2005; Keating, 2009; Cairney, 2011: 88-89).

In other words, although the British constitutional settlement appears functional and transparent, trying to prevent cross-border conflicts between layers of governance (Lynch, 2001: 17), policy practices acknowledges an unbalanced relationship that does not translate into a cast iron-division of powers between the two sets of institutions. Foreign affairs, agriculture, fisheries, environment and structural funds are devolved competences, but Scotland lacks the ability to conduct its own international affairs; for energy, Scotland can promote renewable energies, but it lacks any direct control. According to Schedule 5 of Scotland Act 1998, a number of policy areas are overlapping and interlinked. Energy regulation, including regulation of energy sourced in Scotland and the supply of electricity are reserved competences; with child poverty, Scotland has the power to distribute health and education services, but lacks fiscal powers to amend taxes and social security benefits. On the other hand, fiscal and monetary policy, employment and social security are reserved responsibilities. In other words, for the SNP, this third referendum represented a unique opportunity to question the internal division of responsibilities within the UK in order to legitimise their nationalist demands of full self-governance, using an economic argument to justify these claims.

In January 2012, the UK government agreed to provide a legal framework for the referendum, and in October 2012 an agreement between the two governments was reached (Jeffery and Perman, 2014). The Edinburgh Agreement<sup>3</sup> allowed the Scottish Parliament to arrange a single-question referendum on political independence. On May 2012 and June 2012, Yes Scotland and Better Together launched campaigns. Through intense debate that lasted for more than 16 weeks, the two opposing campaigns tried to convince Scotland that political independence, on the one hand, and the maintenance of the Union, on the other, was the best choice for Scotland.

### **Yes Scotland versus Better Together: the propositions**

During the campaign, all political parties sustained distinctive nuanced propositions for Scotland, although the political debate revolved around three main issues: fiscal competences, the welfare system (NHS, pension and healthcare) and the pound

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<sup>3</sup> The document can be consulted here: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Government/concordats/Referendum-on-independence>.



(Jeffery and Perman, 2014). In spite of the diversity of the proposals that were exhaustively debated, many decisive questions remained unanswered, such as the pound, the future of the National Health System (NHS) and European membership. In this section, we will summarise the propositions presented by the major proponent of the 'Yes' campaign that is, the Scottish National Party, and by the proponents of the 'No' campaign, comprising of the Scottish Labour Party, the Scottish Conservative Party and the Scottish Liberal Democrats.

## **The 'Yes' campaign: Yes Scotland**

### **Scottish National Party**

The Scottish National Party was the party that incarnated the idea of political independence during the campaign. Although Alex Salmond was the main protagonist of the independence campaign, Blair Jenkins was nominated the 'formal' head of the campaign and Nicola Surgeon as the 'effective' head of the 'Yes' campaign. As the campaign started, the SNP once more reproduced the ideas contained in the Scottish government's 2010 report 'Your Scotland, Your Voice'<sup>4</sup>, where they argued for political independence, considering 'devo max'<sup>5</sup> as the second best alternative to political independence.

Additionally in November 2013, the Scottish government launched a new report – '*Scotland's Future: Your Guide to an Independent Scotland*'<sup>6</sup> – where the SNP made (once more) the case for political independence, equating demands of 'self-government' with 'good governance'. In this report, the idea of 'Scotland's future in Scotland's hands' is constantly repeated in order to enhance Scottish's opportunity to secure more self-government for the benefit of Scotland's future. Demands for political independence were seemingly made in dissatisfaction with policy choices coming from Westminster.

One of the most curious aspects of the SNP vision of independence is how closely it would remain tied to the rest of the UK. Indeed, for the SNP, an independent Scotland would keep the Crown, seek to cooperate extensively in achieving at least broad parity with UK pension and welfare provision and would hope to continue to use the pound as its currency. With the idea of political independence, Alex Salmond expected to reach full self-government, which would allow Scotland to make all the decisions affecting its governance, ranging from external affairs to fiscal, social, economic, welfare and immigration policies. With this political message, Alex Salmond wanted to highlight British constitutional flaws that prevent Scotland from being fully responsible for its policies in order to perform better economically, socially and politically. In other words, emphasis was put on the social and economic advantages of political independence, using consensual examples such as the 'bedroom tax', the renewal of the Trident

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<sup>4</sup> The document can be consulted here: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/11/26155932/16>.

<sup>5</sup> "Devo max" is an abbreviated form of the word *maximum* and *devolution*. *Devo max* refers to an alternative constitutional option for Scotland. According to this constitutional framework, Scotland would have full economic independence from the United Kingdom, but it would remain part of the Union and would be subject to UK governance in a minimal number of areas, crucially foreign policy and defense issues.

<sup>6</sup> The document can be consulted here: <http://scotgov.publishingthefuture.info/publication/scotlands-future>.





nuclear programme or the impossibility to collect revenues from gas and oil extraction to justify its political cause.

### **The 'No' campaign: Better Together**

In a distinctive manner, the 'No' campaign came into existence as a reaction to the political challenge of Alex Salmond. The three unionist parties supported the Better Together campaign and Alistair Darling – a British Labour politician – was appointed as the chairman of the campaign. In clear contrast with Yes Scotland, the Better Together campaign failed to articulate a well-prepared and consensual proposition. Nevertheless, and in spite of nuanced propositions, all three parties pledged to increase Holyrood's powers, namely in finance, welfare and taxation.

### **Scottish Labour**

In March 2014, Scottish Labour's devolution commission issued its final report – *'Powers for a Purpose: Strengthening Accountability and Empowering People'* – where it reasserted the will to meet the Scottish people's legitimate desire for more powers and enhanced accountability within a strengthened union (Scottish Labour, 2014: 1). In this document, Scottish Labour reminded the electorate that it had always been a party of both devolution and the Union. By making the case for more devolution within the Union, Scottish Labour brought a proposition that reaffirmed the benefits of social solidarity.

Faithful to its principles, Scottish Labour suggested that a new political arrangement for Scotland could only be considered as long as it contributed to make the Union stronger. For the United Kingdom to be an effective union, it would be critical for certain core matters to be reserved for the UK Parliament, *i.e.* financial and economic matters, including monetary policy, the currency, debt management and employment law; foreign affairs (including international development) and defence; the core of the Welfare State, pensions, the majority of cash benefits as well as the constitution. Other reserved issues would also include immigration, broadcasting, civil service and abortion.

Beyond these competences that should remain reserved competences, Scottish Labour believes that there is significant scope to strengthen the powers of the Scottish Parliament on tax-varying powers and control over some elements of welfare and benefits policy. Following rigorous examination of the relative merits of devolving tax responsibility, Labour believes that the Scottish Parliament should have the power to raise about 40 percent of its budget from its own resources. This would mean that three quarters of basic rate income tax in Scotland would be under the control of the Scottish Parliament.

As for welfare, Labour suggested that certain policies should be devolved. These include housing benefit, which would allow Scotland to abolish the Bedroom Tax; attendance allowance, paid to disabled people over 65 and a work programme that manages services for the unemployed. All other pensions and benefits should stay at Westminster. Finally, Labour has pledged for the maintenance of the Barnett Formula





and has asked for a better distribution of powers within Scotland asking for the empowerment of local governments.

### **Scottish Liberal Democrats**

Scottish Liberal Democrats produced their own report *'Federalism: the Best Future for Scotland'* (Scottish Liberal Democrats, 2012) where they, once more, reasserted their belief in the maintenance of Scotland within a federal solution. Under this federal plan, the Act of Union, between Scotland and England would be replaced with a declaration of federalism. In fact, for Scottish Liberals, home rule in Scotland would be better if it were part of a move towards a federal UK, where every part of the United Kingdom would have similar levels of responsibility.

Moreover, under the Liberal Democrat's Scottish 'home rule' vision, Holyrood would raise and spend most of its own taxes (income taxes, bands and rates) and borrow on its own terms. Fiscal federalism is clearly mentioned in the report, as it would support a move towards federalism. For the Liberal Democrats, fiscal federalism would be assisted by a new needs-based payment system, to be agreed by a federal United Kingdom government, the Scottish Parliament and the relevant assemblies to ensure fiscal equity across the UK. Within this particular context, the Barnett Formula would continue to operate until a new formula is agreed.

On the other hand, a federal United Kingdom government would retain major areas of competency – foreign and defence affairs, the currency, situations of national emergency, immigration, trade and competition, pensions and welfare, macro-economic policy and the preservation of the UK single market for business. Under federalism the home rule governments across the UK would normally work on matters of their own responsibilities, but a reinforced form of partnership between different tiers of government should be considered for a new category of powers additional to 'reserved' and 'devolved' powers ('partnership' powers'), which would require the co-operation of both home rule and federal governments. These areas of partnership powers would include job skills and employment, research and innovation, strategic planning of welfare services, energy resources, election law and administration, marine policy and cross-border transport.

### **Scottish Conservative Party**

For the Scottish Conservative Party, the third referendum was perceived as an opportunity to build a stronger Union with a clear division of responsibility and accountability. In other words, in face of a new process of devolution, the Scottish Conservative Party have tried to react positively, asking for the empowerment of the Scottish people, on the one hand, as well as for the empowerment of the Scottish institutions, on the other. In a complementary manner, they also managed to link the Scottish issue with demands for a greater institutional reform across the UK.

In their report, *'Commission on the Future Governance of Scotland'* (Scottish Conservative Party, 2014), the Scottish Conservative Party portray themselves as a modern conservative party that recognises the benefits of a stronger Union with a stronger Scotland. Among their key recommendations we could highlight the devolution



of income tax powers, which would see the Scottish Parliament accountable for 40% of the money it spends. Moreover, they have also recommended that the Scottish Parliament should be able to decide on rates and bands as much as it would be responsible for welfare issues that are related to devolved areas, such as housing benefits and attendance allowance. Beyond this new responsibility, the Scottish Parliament would confer the power to supplement welfare benefits legislated at a UK level.

## 2. Scottish campaigns in further detail

### Communication strategies

The 'Yes' and the 'No' campaigns were launched in May and June 2012, respectively. The tone and content of the two campaigns varied greatly (Mitchell, 2014). Whilst supporters of independence offered a much more positive and imaginative message, supporters of the Union focused on the perils of independence, on the economic uncertainties and the difficulties of public finance in an independent Scotland. The 'No' campaign failed to generate a positive vision of a reformed Union to the benefit of the 'Yes' campaign (Antunes, 2014: 2).

Added to that, Yes Scotland offered a vision that went well beyond dry constitutionalism and did so with verve and energy, whereas Better Together fought a fairly conventional campaign based on expertise drawn from party election campaigns. SNP leader Alex Salmond invested in grassroots campaigns in stark contrast to his opponents who opted for a traditional campaign that focused on the Holyrood bubble and traditional media coverage. Better Together mobilised the political elite of Westminster in the final stages whereas Yes Scotland was a social movement. Yes Scotland has been remarkably confident and consistent despite many bad moments, most notably following the first debate between Alex Salmond and Alistair Darling. Yes Scotland did not panic despite the polls. It anticipated most of the challenges and proved to be technically prepared to answer unexpected questions.

In global terms, the 'Yes' campaign was seen in positive light<sup>7</sup> with a 60% approval rating in September 2014, compared to the 'No' campaign, which had 60% of respondents rating them negatively in September 2014<sup>8</sup> (What Scotland Thinks, 2014). Moreover, Scottish voters appreciated the performance of Alex Salmond more with 45% stating that he was the right person to lead the 'Yes' campaign, compared to Alistair Darling; 52% considered him to be a bad choice to lead the Better Together campaign (see chart line no.1 and no.2 below). Irrespective of the final result obtained on 18 September, the 'Yes' campaign had been more dynamic and confident than the 'No' campaign and Alex Salmond had been the more popular campaign leader.

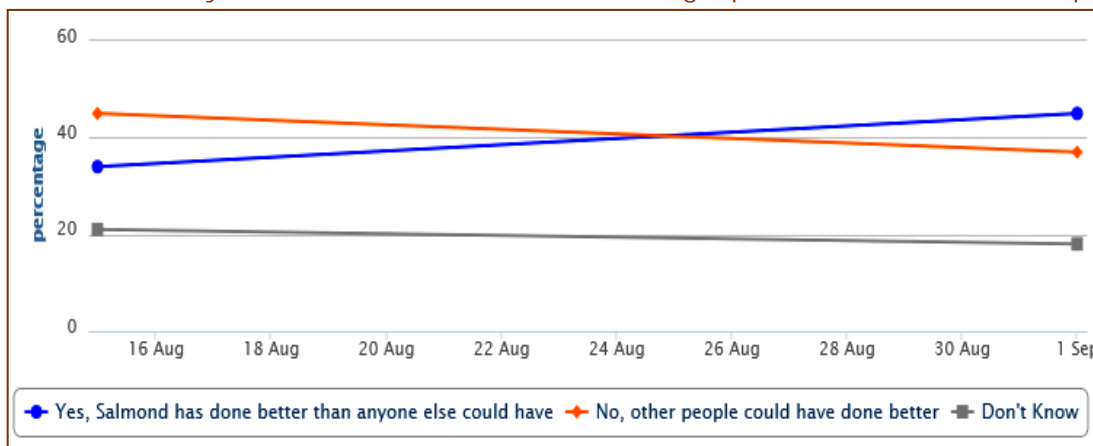
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<sup>7</sup> In <http://whatscotlandthinks.org/questions/do-you-think-the-yes-scotland-campaign-so-far-has-been-positive-or-negative#table>.

<sup>8</sup> In <http://whatscotlandthinks.org/questions/do-you-think-the-better-together-campaign-so-far-has-been-positive-or-negative#table>.

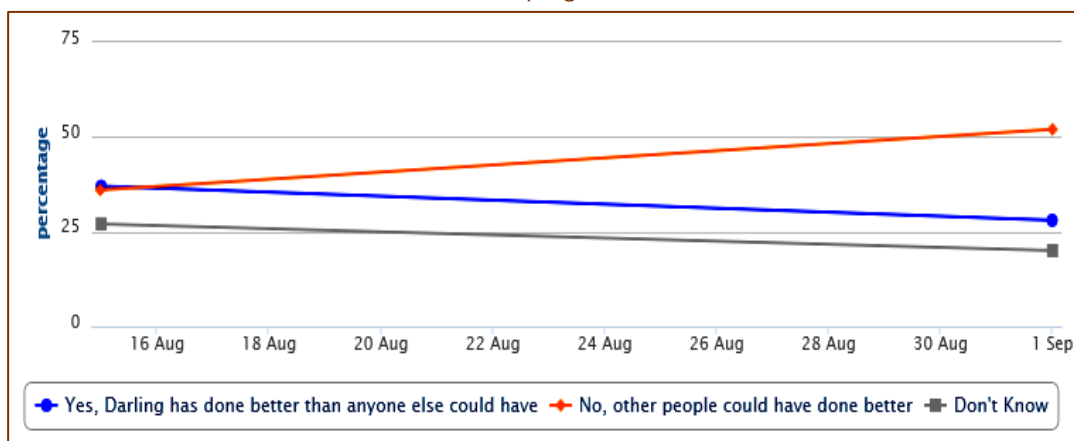


Chart line n° 1: Do you think Alex Salmond has been the right person to lead the 'Yes' campaign?



Source: What Scotland Thinks 2014<sup>9</sup>

Chart line n° 2: Do you think Alistair Darling has been the right person to lead the 'No' campaign?



Source: What Scotland Thinks 2014<sup>10</sup>

### Key arguments of the campaigns

As for the arguments put forward during the campaign, Better Together focused on a number of areas where an independent Scotland could run into trouble – or at least show uncertainty. These included doubts on potential Scottish membership of the EU; the use of sterling; the unreliability of oil revenues; threats to pensions and the precarious state of the major Scottish banks. Yes Scotland tried to minimise these doubts by promoting an independent Scotland as a wealthy energy state fuelled by vast North Sea oil reserves and ever growing renewable energy reserves (Centre on Constitutional Change, 2014).

<sup>9</sup> In <http://whatscotlandthinks.org/questions/do-you-think-alex-salmond-has-been-the-right-person-to-lead-the-yes-campaign#line>.

<sup>10</sup> In <http://whatscotlandthinks.org/questions/do-you-think-alistair-darling-has-been-the-right-person-to-lead-the-no-campaign#line>.



In short, whereas the 'Yes' campaign pushed an image of Scotland as an economically sound, small and independent state closer to her Scandinavian neighbours, the 'No' campaign has placed an emphasis on the uncertainty that a 'Yes' vote could cause. As Alistair Darling emphasised when launching the campaign: 'We can't give our children a one-way ticket to a deeply uncertain destination'.

Among the most relevant arguments of the campaigns, we will highlight the following ones:

### 1. Scottish membership of the EU

As for the 'Yes' campaign, supporters of independence argued that Scotland would remain in the European Union more or less automatically by following either Article 48 or 49 of the current European Treaty. Whereas under Article 48, there would be a treaty change to add Scotland as a 29th member state (allowing for a rapid transition), under Article 49 they would have to apply in the normal way, but could be assured rapid progress since Scotland already meets the entry criteria. The 'Yes' campaign strongly believed that European membership could be taken for granted, whereas the prevailing tendency of the European Institutions, namely José Manuel Barroso as former President of the European Commission, was to point out the absence of an automatic mechanism to ensure Scottish membership within the European Union. Additionally, the Scottish government proposed to keep the present UK terms of membership, including opt-outs on the Euro, the Schengen free travel area, and Justice and Home Affairs. They have also envisaged negotiations on the details of membership being concluded in the 18-month transition period for independence, so that Scotland would not remain outside the EU for any time. As for the 'No' campaign, the position was less clear. Whilst the House of Commons' Scottish Affairs Committee accepted that Scotland could join, but insisting on the Article 49 accession process and that the conditions would be extremely onerous, less intransigent people on the 'No' side accepted that Scotland could join the EU, but that it would have to adopt the Euro, enter the Schengen Agreement and would lose the current UK opt-outs.

### 2. The use of the Sterling

One of the most important questions in the Scottish independent referendum was the currency arrangement that an independent Scotland would use. Both sides of the debate accepted that if Scotland became independent, the existing currency would come to an end. The Scottish government proposed the use of sterling in a formal monetary union arrangement, which would involve sharing the Bank of England (Jeffery and Perman, 2014: 14). However, as the Bank of England is an institution of the UK, this would require the full support and participation of the rest of the UK. As the campaigns approached the day of the referendum and opinion polls started to incline towards the 'Yes' vote, namely on 5 September 2014, the UK government became relentless on this issue. In other words, whereas Alex Salmond insisted that Scotland would continue to use the pound, the Conservatives, the Liberals Democrats and Labour claimed otherwise.

### 3. North Sea oil and economic independence

Among the pro-independence arguments was the belief that independence would see more revenues from Scotland's oil reserves flowing into the Scottish economy. Control over oil revenues and the opportunities offered by renewables were two major



arguments in the 'Yes' campaign's economic strategy that received strong support among small- and medium-sized businesses in Scotland. By doing so, the 'Yes' campaign also seized upon the Westminster-imposed austerity measures as a perfect opportunity to promote the idea that Scottish interests are very different to those of the remainder of the United Kingdom. The 'No' campaign insisted that the revenue coming from the North Sea would collapse, leaving Scotland in worse shape than the UK overall.

#### 4. Threats to pensions

The 'Yes' camp largely relied on the pension argument – and on the consequences of the privatisation of the NHS by the UK government – to convince Scottish voters of the benefits of political independence. The Scottish government argued that pensions rights and benefits would not be affected by independence and also promised minor changes, that would make pensions slightly more generous for certain people and temporally delaying the increase in the State Pension age. The Scottish Government guaranteed a delay in the rise in the pension age to 67 until 2034, which was against the UK plan to increase it gradually to the age of 67 by 2028. Additionally, it promised the retention of the Savings Credit element of Pension Credit, an income-related benefit top-up for pensioners on low incomes that benefits 9,000 pensioners in Scotland, which the UK government plans to abolish after 2016. In contrast, the 'No' camp stressed the inability of the Scottish government to afford these costly measures, due to a society that is projected to age more quickly than the rest of the UK.

#### **The turning point of the campaign**

Regardless of the contrasts that have been pointed out, the 'No' campaign always had a clear lead until the last few weeks, when the race suddenly tightened. The first week of the final 6-week phase of the referendum campaign was quite difficult for the 'Yes' campaign, especially after the currency union dominated the news agenda in the aftermath of the televised debate between Alistair Darling and First Minister Alex Salmond. However, it regained confidence with a harsh critique of the UK government's welfare reforms and the promise of a fairer welfare state in an independent Scotland.

The 'Yes' campaign even took the lead for the first time two weeks before the vote on 5 September 2014 (even though subsequent polls put the 'No' vote back in front). However small this advantage looked, it sowed panic in the ranks of the 'No' side, which led Gordon Brown to intervene on 8 September for the first time. He spoke about the endorsement from the three pro-Union leaders (David Cameron, Nick Clegg and Ed Miliband) to deliver additional powers to Scotland by May 2015.

Additionally, on 16 September 2014, the three party leaders produced the 'Vow', as recorded on the front page of Scotland's *Daily Record*<sup>11</sup>. This reaffirmed the commitment of delivering additional devolution through Brown's timetable, and gave additional pledges on the NHS in Scotland and on the continuation of the Barnett Formula, which determines the funding available to the Scottish Parliament. On 17 September Gordon Brown spoke emotively to Scotland and more specifically to the undecided, which represented more than 10% of the votes. By doing so, the 'No'

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<sup>11</sup> See *Daily Record* on 16 September 2014 in <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/david-cameron-ed-miliband-nick-4265992>.



campaign was now delivering (for the first time) a more positive agenda for Scotland to stay in the Union.

Given the clear margin of the 'No' victory at 55.3% to 44.7%, it seemed to work. On 18 September 2014, 84.59% of the Scottish went to the polls and the outcome of the referendum was clear: 55.3% of Scotland against, with 44.7% deciding to stay within the Union. On that same day, on behalf of the British government, David Cameron announced the establishment of the Smith Commission, which would be responsible for convening cross-party talks on more devolution.

### 3. The 'No' vote and the Smith Process

On 19 September 2014, David Cameron<sup>12</sup> established the Smith Commission and Lord Smith of Kelvin<sup>13</sup> agreed to oversee the process to take devolution commitments forward. This included powers over tax, spending and welfare, which were all agreed by November, with draft legislation published by January. Subsequently, on 26 September, Lord Smith wrote to the political parties currently represented in the Scottish Parliament, calling for submissions on further powers for the Scottish Parliament within the UK by 10 October. All five Scottish political parties were engaged in formal talks by 22 October and committed to 'Heads of Agreement' that was published on 27 November.

#### The Smith Commission

The starting point of discussions in the Smith Commission was the devolution of additional powers over taxation, with a second area of emphasis around welfare powers. This had been set by the commitment of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrats prior to the referendum in order quickly establish additional powers for the Scottish Parliament. The positions of the three pro-Union parties had some overlap, with core issues about tax devolution.

The main emphasis was on income tax devolution, with the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives proposing almost complete income tax devolution. This included the ability to vary tax rates compared to the rest of the UK. Labour proposed less extensive devolution of income tax. They offered the devolution of the Work Programme, but to local government in Scotland rather than the Scottish Parliament. Additionally, both Labour and the Conservatives set out a number of commitments for welfare devolution, but the Liberal Democrats were less clear in this field. Both advocated devolution of attendance allowance and housing benefits in Scotland.

The Greens and the SNP each presented much further reaching proposals. Just as the pro-Union parties, submissions were the result of their earlier commission deliberations. More particularly, the SNP's submission replicated the earlier proposition of the 2009 White Paper *'Your Scotland, Your Voice'*<sup>14</sup>, where they set out an initial prospectus for Scottish Independence that had explored the option of 'full devolution' (or 'devolution max' as the best second choice), that is the maximum possible

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<sup>12</sup> On behalf of the British government.

<sup>13</sup> Lord Smith of Kelvin was the leader of the organising committee of the Glasgow Commonwealth Games.

<sup>14</sup> The document can be downloaded here: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/11/26155932/16>.





devolution consistent with continuing membership of the UK. That particular option was set out more systematically in the Scottish government's submission to the Smith Commission. According to the SNP, maximum self-government within the Union would mean that the UK Parliament would have powers in relation to Scotland in only a small number of areas, including aspects of the UK constitution, monetary policy, aspects of citizenship, defence, intelligence and security and foreign affairs.

Finally, the Greens did not go so far on their demands, but they proposed more than the pro-Union parties. They had a fuller commitment to tax devolution (including full devolution of income tax and tax assignment) and to full welfare devolution (accepting pensions). They also emphasised the need for devolution in a number of fields that have a particular resonance with the green tradition, including quality of democracy, human rights, energy policy and immigration.

### **The Smith Report**

The Smith Commission's report was published on 27 November 2014, with the terms of the agreement being rather deceptive. The document is not particularly extensive, comprising of only chapters. The first chapter deals with the working arrangements of the Smith Commission. In this chapter, Lord Smith of Kelvin explains the different moments and actors involved into this process of reform. Additionally, the second chapter introduces the terms of the agreement reached, which are subdivided into three pillars: the first pillar elaborates on the constitutional details of the new settlement of governance for Scotland (electoral procedures; inter-governmental relations; Scottish representation in the European Union); the second pillar explains the powers retained and further delivered on the economic and welfare policy areas; the third pillar deals with the powers retained and delivered in finance.

Reading the report, we realise that major responsibilities over fiscal and welfare policies such as state pension, Universal Credit, National Insurance contributions and corporate taxes were preserved in Westminster. Additionally, income taxes remained a shared responsibility, but Scotland gained new powers in this particular area. Within this framework, the Scottish Parliament now has the power to set the rates of income tax and the thresholds at which these are paid by non-savings and non-dividend Scottish taxpayers.

However, all other aspects of income tax, such as the imposition of a annual charge to income tax, the personal allowance, the taxation of savings and dividend income remains reserved in Westminster. Overall, 'minor' concessions were granted in welfare, i.e. benefits for carers, disabled people and those who are ill <sup>15</sup>, and in economic policy, i.e. employment provision (the Work Programme and Work Choice). On the other hand, some aspects of energy and onshore oil/gas extraction were devolved (Smith Commission, 2014), as well as a new political compromise for the improvement of the current '*Concordat on the Co-ordination of European Union Policy Issues*' has been sealed.

According to Michael Keating (2014), with this new agreement, Scotland has received new powers to set the rates and bands of income tax, but the tax itself has not been

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<sup>15</sup> Child benefit, maternity allowance or statutory sick pay and widowed parent allowance have remained under the control of the UK Parliament.





devolved. That is, taxation on investment income, National Insurance, Corporation Tax, Inheritance Tax and Capital Gains Tax have remained the reserve of Westminster. Air Passenger Duty has been devolved but the SNP intends to abolish it. Similarly, devolution of welfare has been limited to bits of existing programmes, whose functioning have proven to be problematic, with the rest remaining as a UK programme. Elements of housing benefits are to be disentangled from it, which could complicate matters further. The administration of the Work Programme is to be given to the Scottish Government, but not the power to link welfare, labour market and economic development policies together effectively.

### What does Scotland want?

Now that the Smith Report has been issued, it would be interesting to understand what Scotland thinks of the terms of the agreement reached. Is Scotland fully satisfied with the outcome of cross-party talks? What powers did Scotland expect to be delivered?

An opinion poll conducted by YouGov in December 2014 clearly shows that Scotland feels disappointed with the terms of the agreement reached so far. In fact, 51% think that the Smith Commission has not gone far enough and that more powers should be devolved to the Scottish Parliament (see table 1 below).

Table nº 1: What does Scotland think of the Smith proposals? (December 2014)

<b>Thinking about the proposals from the Smith Commission to devolve extra powers to the Scottish Parliament, do you think these ...</b>	
Go too far, and devolve too many extra powers to the Scottish Parliament	14
Do not go far enough, and do not devolve enough extra powers to the Scottish Parliament	51
Get the balance about right	23
Don't know	12

Source: YouGov December 2014

Scottish public opinion states that the Scottish Parliament should have gained increased powers in the fields of fiscal, welfare and economic policy (YouGov, October 2014). Indeed, 71% of Scottish people think that working-age benefits like housing benefit and jobseekers allowance should be devolved to Scotland; 67% think that powers to set and collect income taxes should have also been devolved to the Scottish Parliament as well as 60% who believe that the minimum wage and health and safety regulations should have also been delivered to Scotland.

These results match perfectly with the 2013 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (Scottish Government Social Research, 2014), which concluded that Scottish voters wanted Scotland to retain its membership of the Union, but have almost complete ownership of its revenue and welfare system. Interestingly, this opinion could be a critique of pro-Union parties that fell sort of their promises. Ironically, it also expresses support of a



political solution that is not that far from the version of independence that the SNP offered in 2007-2009. To put it differently, the final outcome of the Smith Process could benefit the obvious 'loser' of the referendum, the Scottish National Party, at the next general and regional elections in 2015 and 2016.

#### **4. Conclusion: what can we learn from this referendum?**

The purpose of this article was to shed light on the political process before and after the referendum. By the means of a systematic analysis of the Scottish campaigns, we have tried to deliver an interesting and accurate account of the Scottish campaigns in order to make sense of the 'No' vote.

In this article, we have introduced the political context that paved the way to the referendum; explained the propositions of the 'Yes' and 'No' campaigns; highlighted the most relevant arguments of the political debate and captured the most decisive moments of the campaigns. In the final section, we explained the Smith Process, summarised the terms of the agreement and mentioned Scottish public opinion regarding the whole process. Now that the analysis is concluded, we can say that if it is true that the issue of political independence has been put to bed (at least, for now), it is also true that the political solution for Scotland (and for the rest of the UK) is far from settled.

For the time being the political process is still under way. Negotiations between the Scottish Government and the UK Government are still being conducted, and the final outcome of this thorny political and institutional process is still unresolved. Scotland and the UK, as a whole, are now facing the many challenges of a constitutional reform. This could balance an enhanced form of devolution or a new step towards British federalism to accommodate Scottish constitutional demands. Meanwhile, Nicola Sturgeon, the new SNP leader and current First Minister of Scotland, continues to threaten David Cameron with a new referendum on political independence to be held in 2016 if current policy demands are not fully satisfied.

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## **THE SECURITY-DEVELOPMENT CONNECTION IN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

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### **Abstract:**

This article<sup>1</sup> analyses the influence that political constraints and technical issues have on the connection between security and development, particularly in discussion on the post-2015 global development agenda. After theoretical grounding, an analysis is done to contextualise the most influential elements. Following some discussion, the practicalities of the post-2015 agenda for development is exposed, contributing to the materialisation of the problems (and opportunities) with the connection between security and development, as well as perspectives on the inclusion of concrete goals that seek this connection in a future global agenda.

### **Keywords:**

development aid; security; security-development link; constraints; global agenda for the post-2015 development.

### **How to cite this article**

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## THE SECURITY-DEVELOPMENT CONNECTION IN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA<sup>2</sup>

Carolina Alves Pereira

### Introduction

From the 1990s, multidimensionality has come to characterise the concept of development. This combined with changes in world geopolitics at the end of the Cold War and the important changes in the approach to the concept itself has meant that security has to take place in discussions on development. Security is no longer associated exclusively with the State or military matters; it relates to a much broader field of analysis that includes concerns about the theme of human rights. Living conditions of populations and their freedoms and rights have to be highlighted as key prerequisites for the full development of societies, with insecurity elements being considered obstacles to that condition (Fukuda-Parr, 2003: *passim*).

The current theoretical developments that defend the concept's multidimensionality, as well as current critical Security Studies (particularly from the contributions of the Schools of Copenhagen – like Barry Buzan, Ole Waever – and from Aberystwyth – Ken Booth and Richard W. Jones), support the extension of the respective concepts<sup>3</sup>. In this way, they favour greater convergence of areas that they involve. As a result, a vast and interesting discussion has been generated, albeit with little consensus, raising questions about the 'securitisation of development'.

Consequently, despite being a much debated topic, security tends to show very little consistency in discussions about international development. The vast body of literature reveals that there is indeed room to debate security and its consequences for development, highlighting the security/insecurity duality that corresponds to prevention/reaction dimensions – the preferred approach in the discourse. Security as the absence of threats to collective well-being (based on prevention in view of the likelihood of those threats), and insecurity when such threats exist, is evident and

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<sup>3</sup> For example, Ken Booth argues that security itself 'can only be achieved by people and groups if they do not deprive others of it' (Booth *apud* Diskaya, 2013). This immediately shows the rupture with the traditional perspective that determined security as the exclusive responsibility of the State, as it puts the individual at the centre of the discussion.





*Security* implies more than the simple absence of threats. It should, in fact, be associated with the inability to guarantee the means and conditions necessary for the pursuit of sustainable and lasting development policies. The absence of threats, the availability of resources to meet the needs of all, equality, justice, stability, confidence (in government institutions) and build strong, robust and capable societies, can all be seen as security factors (Fitz-Gerald, 2004: 10).

*Insecurity* implies more than the absence of peace. From the perspective of endogenous factors (internal factors that influence the events in a given territory), insecurity is characterised by the prolonged existence of dangerous situations that threaten the well-being and stability of societies. Conflicts, armed and physical violence, discrimination, governmental and institutional breakdown, power struggles, shortages of resources or economic hardship and corruption, black-market economies and trafficking are factors that exist as threats, because they all fuel disputes and situations of instability and insecurity (McCandless & Karbo 2011: *passim*).

The aforementioned duality works as an argument to link the fields of security and development, which favours a consensus among theorists who work on it. The concepts turn out to be inextricably linked since it is the combination of factors that matters most. The impact of insecurity on low levels of development, however, is one that brings great consensus.

### **Inherent political and technical constraints of the security-development connection**

The question of causality involving security and development encases the main issue of the link between those concepts. This raises political reluctance and technical difficulties that significantly influence decision-making when introducing a specific security objective in the global development agenda.

The more approached constraints of political order often relate to overlapping interests, benefits and privileges of actors in the international political agenda, particularly the donors that hamper the harmonisation of security and development agendas.

According to Blunt *et al.* (2011: 176), the real needs of the least developed countries are not yet satisfactorily covered by donor communities' aid programmes since they are more conditioned by the will and interests of donors, who are beneficiaries. The economic financial, economic and monetary capability of countries decisively influences the parameters of their aid programmes and, invariably, means an increase in disparities between developed and developing regions (Blunt *et al.*, 2011: 175-177). This coupled with the existence and implementation of a single model of development based on Western and neoliberal development patterns is often seen as a form of interference in the internal affairs of countries, discrediting their authority and legitimacy (Buur *et al.*, 2007: 31).

The consequence of these focuses in aid programmes is reflected primarily in the prevalence of the pursuit of donors' own goals as well as economic and political benefits. This is seldom done transparently, seeking to mask intentions and interests and increase geopolitical advantages. This trend is associated with the paternalist character and pretensions of Westernisation so often pointed to by donor countries, as



well as the prevalence of development models responsible for the handling and usurpation of official development assistance (ODA) (Blunt *et al.*, 2011: *passim*).

As a result, this eventual manipulation of programmes by power and political structure often turns out to be responsible for further damaging already-weakened situations, characterised by violent (or post-conflict) environments. Camouflaged securitisation and militarisation through aid programmes, together with the effects that this may have on the living conditions of receiver populations, is feared (Bonnell & Michailof 2012: *passim*).

This risk of misrepresentation and perversion that the concept can suffer, especially by political actors, reflects its conceptual vulnerability. This is due to the fact that it is at the mercy of needs, objectives, purposes and contexts of those who employ it or where it are located. The misuse of the term, considering the possible inclusion of security in the agenda as a way to legitimise the use of force under pretexts of ODA (humanitarian interventions or the case of the fight against terrorism, for example), distorts the nature of aid and contributes to the weak development of disadvantaged areas and deepening external dependence (Bonnell & Michailof 2012: *passim*; Buur *et al.*, 2007: 31; Cammack *et al.*, 2006: *passim*). Maybe to circumvent these reluctances, suggestions for the topic's inclusion in the political development agenda will involve security objectives in other areas, such as governance, justice and the rule of law (Denney, 2013<sup>a</sup>: 7-8).

In the context of ODA in situations of insecurity, it is therefore recognised that the matter in question is the maintenance of a tricky balance between the interests and expectations of donors and beneficiaries. However, the self-interest of some donors has proven to be a real and difficult obstacle that is not restricted to isolated cases. In fact, just as some donors manage their programmes according to their own benefit and status, it is also true that some uphold more moderate actions. For example, rising economies seem to engage in an aid system that is more orientated towards cooperation and mutual assistance. In these cases, donors are faced with the difficult task of managing their interests with those of others. On the one hand, the importance of organising themselves as political actors and financiers remains, with duties that require a firm stance and efficient results to justify their investment. On the other hand, an actor has responsibilities in regards to the beneficiary's expectation and the need for support in economic terms, as well as training at a governmental and institutional level (Driscoll & Evans, 2005: *passim*).

There is a need for political harmony in ODA, which is as important as complex. When extended to contexts of violence and post-conflict that proliferate insecurity factors, this aspect becomes paramount.

Another aspect is technical constraints, which are related primarily to measurability. These include collecting data and creating viable monitoring systems to establish a causal link between security/insecurity and development factors, as well as standardisation (or generalisation) of policies and development programmes.

Measurability relates generally to the possibility of measurement based on indicators and goals that set out the results of a given action in order to reveal its impact. This definition also applies to the context of development and security. In these contexts, measurability appears to be associated with the opportunity and ability to measure the



impact of security policies applied in development programmes, and is considered to be a decisive factor in international aid in contexts of insecurity (Bush *et al.*, 2013: 45).

When discussing security and development agendas in conjunction, measurability or evaluation of impacts and results appears to be associated mainly with programmes of Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) or Reform of Security Systems (RSS), as well as the tasks of peace-building and peacekeeping in post-conflict contexts and to all that is inherent to them: number of victims, the number of displaced people, the number of refugees, level of institutional and governmental performance, proliferation of arms, arms trafficking, the existence of mines, etc.. Monitoring these indicators allows one to evaluate the evolution of these programmes and missions, i.e. missions dealing with insecurity factors that endanger the lives of citizens, their means and resources, which are needed for daily activities. This corresponds with negative effects on the affected territory's development indices that take into consideration mines, weapons, violence and fragility (Menkhaus, 2004: 3; Bush *et al.*, 2013: *passim*).

Measurability tries to measure and evaluate the impact projects and programmes initiated under these missions have on those cited indicators, when the mission agenda is defined as a set of objectives with targets, indicators and assumptions. These indicators guide the pursuit of goals and objectives, contributes to their achievement and consequently enables the programme to reflect on the level of success after its completion (Menkhaus, 2004: 4-6; Bush *et al.*, 2013: *passim*).

According to Bush and Duggan (2013), the interaction between the context of the conflict and the evaluation system consists of four parts: methods, logistics, politics and ethics. These four strands interconnect and decisively influence the evaluation process of results obtained from the policies applied through peace-building and peacekeeping missions (Bush & Duggan, 2013: 8).

The interconnection between the mentioned aspects can put some limitations on measurability (manifested in the obstacles to evaluators' work). In particular, information restrictions, the action of external actors (those who require the evaluation, whether political authorities or other) and the actual physical environment that, due to insecurity, geographical formation or accessibility, impedes evaluators' access to a situation. Weakness or lack of information can also prevent data collection, preventing the formulation of results. These limitations ultimately put into question the reliability of interpretation of a programme's true impact (Bush & Duggan, 2013: 9-11).

The first limitation to be studied involves those responsible for projects and the proponents of the evaluation. It tries to condition access to documentation, allowing evaluators to use only properly 'filtered' sites and information 'of reference'. When submitting results, conclusions sometimes do not coincide with reality (assess positively when data indicate otherwise, for example). However, this encompasses problems associated with the choice of assessment methods as the client requires the use of dispersed and varied methodologies instead of others, endangering the soundness of the evaluation (Bush & Duggan, 2013: 9-11).

Another concerns the typical complications of conflict and post-conflict situations, i.e. when it is necessary to evaluate the impact of a programme in this context, the process becomes more complicated compared to other situations. This is because these environments have harmful characteristics, including instability, insecurity, corruption, institutional and governmental breakdown, lack of resources, poor access to



information (the basis of the evaluation process and essential to the effectiveness of measurability). These are essentially common elements of fragile states and places where armed violence proliferate (Bush *et al.*, 2013: *passim*).

Another issue is related with the obstacles to the evaluators when aggregating data, studying results and the subsequent reporting on the executed programmes. If the information collected is not reliable or consistent, the evaluation's work results become weak and obsolete (Menkhaus, 2004: 6).

Despite difficulties, measurability remains one of the conditioning principles of acting within the scope of development cooperation, particularly in regards to security issues. In fact, a main argument associated with the measurability/evaluation claims that including security in the international agenda through concrete and measurable topics (such as the number of weapons, mines, the number of violent deaths, etc.) contributes to regular interventions under the pretext of security and controls the interference of political pretensions (Denney, 2013<sup>a</sup>: 8). This seems to help to establish a causal relationship between security and development, justifying the possible introduction of goals and objectives associated with the theme.

The ability to evaluate a programme and present the respective impacts in the form of concrete results is one of the key issues underlying donor initiatives, as seen in the CAD reports, DAC Statistical Reporting Directives (OECD, 2010) and '*Evaluating Peace-building Activities in Settings of Conflict and Fragility: Improving Learning for Results*' (OECD, 2012c). Of course, the perspective of donors and their respective criteria has a focus, i.e. donor countries of the OECD are considered to be beneficiaries under certain criteria and have certain actions that can be incorporated in the context of ODA. This means that the ODA programmes respond from the outset to the ability to measure results (OECD, 2012c: *passim*).

The development of monitoring is an equally important technical constraint. To find and formulate analytical indicators and ensure their viability, impartiality and reliability is a real challenge. Indicators permit the pursuit of objectives so that they are consistent with the work and success other aspects it is concerned with. Indicators are the most specific data monitoring formulation (along with the objectives and goals) and refer to the state of the achievement of goals. The purpose is for the agents responsible to realise, through indicators (collected from reliable sources), the goals that are to be met. This means that verifying the weakness of the indicators inevitably has repercussions on the rest of the programme, putting into question the soundness of conclusions drawn about the achievement of goals and consequently the achievement of objectives (UN, 2013: 23-25).

Also, contextual negligence when formulating ODA projects or programmes, in relation to the contexts in which they are inserted, is seen as a technical constraint (although some political dimension here does exist) to the formal presence of the security theme in the development agenda, especially by beneficiary countries. This underlines the trend towards generalisation, so often associated with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), based on the approach 'one size fits all', as well as the existence of applicable categorisation (although susceptible to adaptation) in the various situations of fragility and conflict or violence. This approach is harmful to the proper pursuit of objectives, underestimating the realities to which the aid must fit (Bonnell & Michailof, 2012: *passim*).



As such, the recipients of assistance suggest greater attention to specifics and more personalised approaches, since they consider this 'standardisation' of projects to be detrimental to the pursuit of sustainable results. However, if the 'standardization' of projects by the donor community devalues the specifics of a given context, the context as a basis for those projects calls into question the feasibility of a global goal, i.e. it becomes unaffordable to justify or manage a goal based on the context of each reality, conflict, fragility or exposure to the use of armed violence (Bush & Duggan, 2013: 26).

Of course, neither the political constraints nor the technical constraints are isolated and merge and influence each other. Politicians, marked by confidence in policy, by investment, the maintenance of interests between donors and recipients and by the balance between universality and context, mainly focus on the struggle between the need to build universal objectives that significantly balance the various interests involved, and enforce the specificities of the different contexts and realities in which they apply. Already, the technical aspects end up being related to the collection, processing and presentation of data and results as well as their evaluation. However, interests and political wills inevitably affect the formulation of objectives and indicators to be included in the agenda, in addition to being present in each stage of the evaluation, because their definition through the methods chosen affect the formulation and presentation of results. Fundamental questions arise such as 'who asked for the evaluation? What are the methodology's chosen criteria? What is the form for the presentation of results? Which interests are served?' (Bush & Duggan, 2013: 10). Nevertheless, the ability to measure the impact of policy conditions the decisions of States, which require knowledge about the application of funds that they attribute (Bush & Duggan, 2013: *passim*).

It should also be noted that both political and technical constraints are susceptible to fluctuation, depending on how they fit on the level of global political discussion, on the level of development programmes and on the project level applied in specific contexts. The macro level (global) predominates the difficulty of involving areas of security and of development as well as the needs and interests of donors and beneficiaries concerned with it. The median level (organisations, diplomatic initiatives, etc.) can be seen largely as an obstacle related to the scope and the evaluation of results, which are more technical (Bush & Duggan, 2013: *passim*).

Both technical and political constraints emphasise the importance of clarity in the semantics used, because it is here that many of them result. It is essential to clearly define the contours of development policies and their respective objectives and indicators, as these will affect the verification of results. In turn, this verification will facilitate policy confidence in the view of donors and receptivity as well as beneficiaries, from which funding conditions will depend.

### **International discussion on security in the post-2015 era**

The presented framework supports the practical discussion around the future of the ODA. This discussion takes place primarily in the context of the MDGs. Their expiration in 2015 means that the definition of goals and objectives that succeed them is urgent. It is fundamental to reflect on the work done with the MDGs and use them as a starting point for the creation of a new guiding international policy agenda for development. The



new policy must be able to combine a more updated, more flexible and assertive character with a continuity that reflects the learning lifted from the work on the MDGs (Aryeetei, *et al.*, 2012). We could conclude that the work carried out so far would serve to stimulate the decision-making of policy makers at the ODA level, and reflect more concrete action, as well as being less influenced by the constraints mentioned above. This is particularly important in terms of security issues, which at this point cement concepts and transcend clashing interests, allowing the existence of an international cooperation agenda that is workable and successful.

The Open Working Group (OWG)<sup>3</sup> was established for this very reason. This working group was chosen at the United Nations General Assembly (the Rio+20 Conference) in January 2012 and was constituted of about 30 members (representatives of civil society, the scientific community and the UN). Its main function was based on the document '*A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development*' (2013) from the UN High-Level Panel<sup>4</sup> to create the potential proposals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a successor to the MDGs. After 13 sessions in July 2014, the OWG released a document where 17 goals and respective indicators could come to constitute the SDGs. Among them, the 16th goal ('To promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels' (OWG, 2014b: 5)) encompasses the theme of peace, the importance of post-conflict reconstruction and draws attention to the negative consequences of insecurity factors in the development of States (OWG, 2014b: 2 and 18-19).

In the OWG's eighth session to discuss the SDGs in February 2014, the agenda specifically included the topic 'Conflict prevention, post-conflict peace-building and promotion of durable peace, rule of law and governance' (OWG, 2014). In this session, groups representing various sectors intervened – namely civil society (such as the Quaker United Nations Office, the International Peace Bureau and the Global Task Force), donor countries (including South Korea, Germany, France and Switzerland, and Australia, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands) and beneficiary countries (for example, East Timor, Rwanda and Zambia)<sup>5</sup>. This reflects the multiplicity of values, perspectives and goals that must be managed in the debates on the future global agenda for development (the macro level in this case).

Interventions by the participants at that session initially showed the predominance of contained political and technical dimensions. Indeed, these are conditioned by questions related to the connection's approach (should it be reactive or preventive; consider insecurity factors or encourage factors of security); the approach to the theme's presence on the agenda (direct or mediated, depending on whether they should insert a specific objective on security or assign it to other topics); the ability to assess and measure impacts and results; and the existence of monitoring systems and statistical data that help to measure these same results.

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<sup>3</sup> References to the work of the Open Working Group and the analysed documents are available on the official website <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/owg.html> [last visit on 6th October 2015]

<sup>4</sup> This panel was appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to delineate the first outline of the post-2015 development agenda.

<sup>5</sup> The documents relating to the interventions are available on the official website at OWG <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sdgs/group8> [last visit on 6th October 2015].





Thus, when discussing the security-development link, those items involved are seen as fairly reasonable. By stating:

*'The UN High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda calls for a transformative shift to recognise peace and good governance as core elements of wellbeing' (IPB, 2014:1)*

or

*'Inclusive, accountable and effective institutions are important aspects of dealing with the past and preventing countries relapsing into conflict or violence' (Gerber, 2014: 2)*

or

*'resilience and peace are central to eradicating poverty, and achieving sustainable and inclusive development' (Borges, 2014: 2),*

civil society, recipients and donors are clearly cautious with regard to this connection in the future development agenda through a concrete goal.

These references express a preference for a preventive and mediated approach that means developing an objective that includes security issues, mostly from the association of these issues to other subject areas, such as justice, law and good governance, which include empowerment, ownership, efficiency, reliability and capability. In fact, in the new agenda it is crucial to promote the construction of solid, robust and capable societies, so as to progressively and effectively increase their accountability and subsequent development of policies.

This approach must therefore be based on the definition of objectives, targets and indicators that would favour a coherent evaluation of their outcomes. On the other hand, there is considerable concern about the existence of the means and resources for aggregating the necessary items in the evaluation (data collection and statistics, existence/creation/improvement of monitoring systems), since most interventions make reference to them, yet this is not verified in considerable numbers.

This is particularly noticeable in the discourse of donor countries where the importance of measurability/evaluation, such as access to statistical data and the existence/creation/improvement of monitoring systems, while legitimising assumptions of including the issue of security in the post-2015 global agenda largely feature. Statements like

*'What can be measured gets done' (Gerber, 2014: 3);*



*'progress towards building peace and safe societies as well as rule of law and governance should and can be measured'* (Gerber, 2014: 3);

or

*'We want to see goals and targets on governance and the rule of law, peace, safety and justice for all'* (Australia *et al.*, 2014: 3).

These show that the existence of statistical materials that can be used to measure the results of aid flows is one of the conditioning principles for the criteria of ODA donors. These seem to reflect more the technical aspects inherent to the inclusion of security on the post-2015 agenda when discussed.

There is a clear merging of both dimensions: although discussion on the introduction of a direct or mediated form of the theme is more affected by political issues, the technical component of creating a goal always underlies it. In fact, many allusions to the technical dimension are precisely directed to avoid the possibility of some political constraints (security aims and objectives, for example) and, through that causality, legitimise the possible presence of the security topic in the future agenda for development. An example of this is the perspective of donors such as Australia, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, who claim that the assessment and monitoring instruments favours convergence among agents of development:

*'Formulating tangible goals and targets will rally the international community'* (Australia *et al.*, 2014: 3).

## **Conclusions**

Analysing the work of the OWG allows interesting reflections, particularly in relation to existing theory about the connection between security and development, for example, with regard to the security/insecurity duality. This serves its theoretical framework which involves two types of approach (preventive/reactive) to the security-development connection. The definition of these concepts has become essential to understand the complexity of the studied connection. However, the very duality – part of the political dimension associated with the connection – eventually shows one of the main constraints of the security-development connection. Indeed, the fact that it involves the above approaches, which vary according to the encouragement of the pursuit of security factors or combating insecurity factors, reveals the conceptual vulnerability associated with the field of security and, invariably, the issues revolving around it. This vulnerability, which makes the concept subject to multiple interpretations, permeable to interests and objectives of who apply them, will significantly influence the decision-making by actors in the discussion of the SDGs.



However, it appears that the opinions among literature and practical discussion (in this case the OWG's 8th debate) differ in the degree of influence that associate each dimension, but converge on the constraints/opportunities that are part of them. This means that while some agree on the same opportunities and the same problems posed to maintaining the security theme in the development agenda, they differ on the level of impact that the dimensions in which they are embedded have on decision-making. As a result, the theory emphasises technical aspects while the practical work of designing the future agenda highlights the political dimension.

Finally, evaluation safeguards for political manipulation is a frequent arguments by the most optimistic literature in regards to the convergence between security and development, demonstrating the link between political issues and technical aspects. From this viewpoint, the technical elements appear to contribute to a greater sense of confidence in the security-development link (which is well structured), while monitoring will serve to moderate the most ambitious political intentions. Despite this – and being made important references through proposed goals and objectives on the part of actor – the technical dimension including this type of concern does not appear to be so prominent in practical work.

This finding therefore demonstrates that the political and technical dimension decisively influence the maintenance of a security goal in the post-2015 development agenda, in so far as they are necessary conditions to the process. These constraints will invariably occur when debating the existence of a concrete objective about security in the future global agenda for development.

The work of policy makers is undeniably more subjugated to political constraints, something particularly evident in the constant concern to bring consistency and coherence to the discussion and the topic itself. Effectively finding soundness in this debate is crucial, since security turns out to be a theme among many others seeking place in the future development agenda. In this way, only strong foundations and well-founded arguments can contribute to the increased receptivity of political agendas to the theme's presence in the discussion<sup>6</sup>.

Despite this, as well as more responsibility given to the political dimension, the truth is that in the concrete discussions the most strategic component is not highlighted exponentially beyond the aforementioned concern for discourse consistency. Clear Interests and political positions on the inclusion of security issues in the agenda are ultimately not observed with clarity in the statements in question. The areas of security and development thus remain connected with difficulties, especially in the context of international cooperation for development. In this way, even when appearing in debates, any presence of the theme in the global agenda for development remains somewhat uncertain.

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<sup>6</sup> It is worth referring briefly to the debate on 'human security' and attempts to introduce the notion of the international agenda. It was its conceptual vulnerability to political agendas which turned out to derail the progress of discussions around the concept and its respective operationalisation. Universalism identified as a feature of *human security* presupposed the possibility of multiple interpretations which could represent, according to the less enthusiastic, any distortion and perversion of the concept. This could consequently be more harmful than beneficial to the safety of people in discussions on *human security* were they not much later on (Freitas, 2002).



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### ***Critical review***

*"The twenty years' crisis, 1919-1939: an introduction to the study of International Relations"* (2001). Brasília: Publisher Brasília University: 305 pp. ISBN: 85-230-0635-4<sup>1</sup>

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*"The SCIENCE of international policy is in its infancy" (pp: III)*

The science of International Relations originated in the nineteenth century, before the two great world wars. The main object of this new science was to prevent ills in the international body politic and to avoid the causes and pressures leading to a new war. The fervent desire to prevent war determined the first observations of the discipline's study, as well as its direction.

It was not easy for the international society of the early twentieth century to understand the motive for Archduke Franz Ferdinand's assassination, which preceded World War I, or why this led to trench warfare. Furthermore, Germany was considered "guilty", leading to the demands for large economic reparations and so halting Germany's expansionist policies. The major powers of that time quickly found that these past practices would not be enough to bring back peace and stability to international society. It is in this critical context, in a time of profound disturbance in the political and economic order, that Carr writes this unique work. Like the major realists of the English School of International Relations, he demonstrates that the wars were responsible for the ruin of the old world order, an era of colonialism and aggressive territorial expansion.

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body politic has given its impulse and its inspiration to political science" (Carr 2001: 5). One of the reasons to create this science was the need for the United States to understand the international political landscape and to exercise its hegemony as a superpower. Accordingly, the science itself met all the requirements necessary to inspire and instruct this new superpower. Strengthened by the losses of its allies in World Wars I and II, it became possible for America to change the domination of the world political order influenced by the old continent.

The new science lacked a serious body of thought. The development of knowledge in International Relations did not build soon enough, leading to serious consequences for the international order during the "twenty years' crisis", a period of serious political tension between the two wars that strongly influenced the writing and production of this work. Carr regarded as naïve the early utopian aspirations of this new science. The events of 1931 revealed the limitations of pure aspiration as the basis for international political science and this has led, since the beginning, to the development of serious analytical and critical thinking on international issues.

For Carr, the utopian ideals of the twenty years' crisis period have their roots in the Enlightenment, and essentially prioritised the non-use of force. Such utopian thinking led to failures of agreement in the League of Nations and the collapse of the European status quo.

The ideological line of thought that unfolds in the work, especially that concerning utopianism, shows how ideas struggle and unite with politics to transform the world order over time. Utopianism obscures the role played by external factors and material limitations, because once utopian ideas engage with them, the utopian ideas themselves acquire an alien function. Contemporary realism emerges in contrast to this line of thought, a theory that emphasises power and military and economic processes, though ignoring how important resistance is to the consolidated order (from a technological or utopian point of view), as well as how important it can be to the transformation or substitution of the established order. From a practical point of view, power is one and indivisible, but, for better understanding, the author has distinguished three parts: military, economic and power over opinion.

The rehearsal of realist and practical commentaries engages considerable attention. With unparalleled insight, Carr makes reference to Machiavelli, whom he considered the first major realist political scientist, and to Hobbes, who puts political events in their proper context. He criticises their excessive use of realist measures, which for Carr made political action extreme or impractical (Carr, 2001: 85). One of his main contributions has been to show that the balance of political order essentially depends on the balance between idealism and realism. Utopia often did not appear completely "unvirgin" or theoretically pure. Thus, it was interpreted in many international policies as a good and assumed other propositions, such as "all men are created equal", "the indivisibility of peace" and "the liberalisation of trade" (Carr, 2001:18). These ideas were promptly unmasked by realists who classified them as simple private interests – or in the case of Great Britain's trade liberalisation, as the claim to full sovereignty over its thriving trade.

Realists have described and identified these alleged universal interests through the so-called doctrine of the harmony of interests. Adam Smith's school of laissez-faire economics was mainly responsible for popularising the doctrine – in other words, it



promoted the disguised liberal ideals of Victorian society. Unmasking the doctrine also had another function, showing that power politics is always an essential element.

It is important to note that even though Carr was a devout realist he was sure, as any political scientist conscious of their particular scientific study, that realism fails. One criticism relates directly to the impossibility of realists being consistent and complete, which appears as one of the most correct and curious lessons of political science. Consistent realism excludes four essential factors of all effective political thought: a finite goal, an emotional appeal, a right of moral judgment and a ground for action. According to Carr, pure realism would not attract voters or loyal followers because the perspective is too tough for those seeking a spiritual promise, seen as something almost mechanical, while it is evident that mankind as a whole "rejects this rational test as a universally valid basis for all political judgment" (Carr, 2001: 120). Above all, realism fails because it does not provide grounds for action destined for goals and meanings. The most valid clarification in the author's critique of realism is that there is no fully static situation. Carr explains that there is always something that man can think and do, while making it clear that neither thought nor action are robotic or devoid of meaning. Thus, he returns to the point at which there should always be a constant balance between utopianism and realism, for pure realism offers nothing more than the naked struggle for power, and so prevents any manifestation or type of international society. To complete this criticism, he recalls that the whole political situation must unite in some mutual form those incompatible elements of utopia and reality, morality and power.

It is of interest that Carr regarded warfare not simply in terms of military power (an essentially realist proposition), but in many other ways. For example, during his time there were many disputes over treaties (territorial or not), economic expansion and monetary influence. Thus, interventions and negotiations in many countries were more than a simple exhibition of power, they configured from a form, like before, a requirement and need for moral compensation. A good example of this is Germany during the inter-war period. Many conflicts are of a purely ideological nature. In the case of Germany, there is the bitter dispute between the Nazi-fascist and democratic regimes, where the latter found few supporters at the time of war. To broaden their support, these regimes created a broad structure of propaganda, whose most influential exponent was Hitler.

One of Carr's most notable assertions is that a major power wants always to be at the forefront of global leadership in order to establish world peace. This happened during the *Pax Romana*, the *Pax Britannica* and can be seen now with the *Pax Americana*. The author notes US aspirations to become a global hegemony since the beginning of the twentieth century as well as a shift in its political tactics towards global isolationism and unilateralism. However, when extending these policies to its own advantage, the US bombarded Vera Cruz in Mexico in 1914, affirming its purpose to serve mankind. The author also notes that the global aspiration for Pax was a peculiar feature of imperialist nations. Thus, it was not strange for Japan to think of a *Pax Japonica* or for Germany a *Pax Germanica*. As may be appreciated, the author was a wise strategist in the field of International Relations and noted the finer details of the struggle for power.

Carr goes on to assess the important contributions to political science made by Karl Marx, whose critique of the historical bias of facts and analysis of history and economics has an eminently deterministic, though not over-rigid character and, further,



to consider the continuity of facts, such as the tendencies which work out with an iron necessity towards an inevitable goal. According to the "scientific" hypothesis of realists, reality is identified as the whole course of historical evolution, whose laws it is the business of the philosopher to investigate and reveal. One cannot conceive of any reality divorced from historical process. To highlight this argument, the author explains as follows: "to conceive history as evolution and progress implies accepting it in all its aspects, and therefore to deny the validity of judgments about it" (Carr, 2001: 89). For Carr, what was, is right. History cannot be judged except by its own historical standards (Carr, 2001: 89).

The book consists of four parts and fourteen chapters, with an introduction and conclusion. The first part consists of chapters one and two, which contain the conceptual foundations of the science. The second part consists of chapters three to six, presenting empirical evidence that bases the author's claims not only in the context of the two wars, but also in the real motivations that lead to the "universality" of facts. The third part consists of three chapters, where political motivations are analysed based on the nature of politics, as well as power and morality, explaining its great influence in the context of international order to dictate the course of nations, concepts based on realist theory. In the fourth part comprising of chapters ten to thirteen, the author presents changes in the political scenario through various legal examples, and brings to light the discourse and principles that enhance and secure coexistence in international relations. In the concluding chapter, the author brings important perspectives and forecasts to the international order, including one question that remains current among internationalists about the survival of the nation-state as a unit of power. This indicates that the features of the future international order are intimately linked to the future of group unity. In relation to group units, the author's diagnosis is fully confirmed as the new international order is arranged into economic blocs, with groups of countries that have developed complex power relations.

*The Twenty Years' Crisis* offers a profound interpretation of theories of realism and utopianism, showing that connections can be articulated between them which do not originate from simple theoretical tensions. Carr offers humanity a magisterial overview of the old world order and an acute insight into the realities of power games and domination. His themes remain contemporary and contain precious lessons on how to avoid the constraints and afflictions endured by humanity in the troubled context of war.

Carr remains one of the most considerable authorities in the international political community. This famous and timeless book is an essential read for academics and professionals of International Relations, History, Sociology and related fields.

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