

LATIN AMERICA LOOKING FOR ITS AUTONOMY: THE (IM) POSSIBILITY OF CONCERTING BETWEEN THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF BRAZIL AND MEXICO

*A América Latina em busca de sua autonomia: a (im)possibilidade de concertação
entre as políticas externas do Brasil e do México*

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ABSTRACT

Latin America as a region, has been losing relevance and agency capacity in the Global Order. Regionalism continues to be a pending task, which is why it is not presented as a unitary actor in the Global Order. Therefore, this research aims to analyse the impact that the divergence of the foreign policies of Brazil and Mexico has had on the search for Latin American autonomy. The hypothesis that guides this research is that the impossibility of concerting the foreign policies of Brazil and Mexico has made it difficult for Latin America to present itself as a unitary regional actor in the Global Order, which prevents its autonomy.

Keywords: Autonomy; Regionalism; Foreign policy.

RESUMO

A América Latina, como região, vem perdendo relevância e capacidade de agenciamento na Ordem Global. O regionalismo continua sendo uma tarefa pendente, por isso não se apresenta como um ator unitário na Ordem Global. Portanto, esta pesquisa tem como objetivo analisar o impacto que a divergência das políticas externas do Brasil e do México teve na busca pela autonomia latino-americana. A hipótese que norteia esta pesquisa é a de que a impossibilidade de concertação das políticas externas do Brasil e do México dificulta que a América Latina se apresente como um ator regional unitário na Ordem Global, impedindo sua autonomia.

Palavras-chave: Autonomia; Regionalismo; Política estrangeira.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary Global Order is characterized, by greater interdependence, and the increase in common challenges. for which co-operation and co-ordination are especially important. However, processes contrary to these needs are observed. The United States of America (USA), since the administration of George W. Bush and especially with that of Donald Trump, has shown its lack of interest in multilateralism, and in co-operating to meet common global challenges. Also, the European Union (EU) sees its main foundations questioned with the Brexit process. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has also shown the global inability to co-operate on fundamental issues. But, on the other hand, a set of North-South and South-South clubs, have emerged that seek to co-ordinate and concert actions for global governance.

In this scenario, Latin America as a region has been losing relevance and agency capacity in the Global Order. Regionalism continues to be a pending task, which is why it is not presented as a unitary actor in the Global Order. Additionally, the foreign policies of its main powers, Brazil and Mexico, have been divergent.

Therefore, this research aims to analyse the impact that the divergence of the foreign policies of Brazil and Mexico, has had on the Latin Americans looking for autonomy. The hypothesis

that guides this research is that the impossibility of concerting the foreign policies of Brazil and Mexico has made it difficult for Latin America to present itself as a unitary regional actor in the Global Order, which prevents its autonomy.

The article is presented in two parts. In autonomy and regionalism in the contemporary Global Order, the importance of regionalism in the contemporary Global Order and its relationship with autonomy is analysed, and how in Latin America regionalism is considered as a premise of autonomy. In the second part, divergences in the foreign policies of Brazil and Mexico, the foreign policy differences of Brazil and Mexico are analysed, and their impact on the efforts of regionalism.

AUTONOMY AND REGIONALISM IN THE CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL ORDER

Regionalism already has a long history in international relations, and since its beginning, has been associated intrinsically with the goal of autonomy. The Global South countries, based on their past and common challenges, have articulated a series of efforts to co-operate and work together.

Regions are not only geographic entities, but are also, configurations of political, economic, and social dynamics (Acharya, 2014). Regionalism is understood as the formal, and informal associations at inter, and transnational level between the States and the non-state actors, of a macro-region. Which is not limited to the geographical dimension but is constructed deliberately in its political, economic and social (Hettne and Söderbaum, 2000).

The first efforts at regionalism, date back, at least, to the Congresses of Panama organized by Simón Bolívar in 1826; and to the pan-Americanisms, pan-Africanisms, pan-Arabisms, and pan-Asianisms that emerged throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Regionalisms were founded on the shared conception of a common culture and identity. They were complex in the sense that they addressed various issues such as decolonization, development, and political unity, and later were consolidated informal institutions such as the Organization of American States, the Arab League, or the Organization for African Unity (Acharya, 2018).

Latin America in particular, is one of the regions in the world, which has the most common elements in political, cultural, linguistic, and religious matters, consolidating a base of identity consensus. Additionally, since its independence processes, it developed a significant set of political agreements, institutions, treaties, conventions, and regional regulations, multilateral and bilateral resolutions that gave a normative framework to its regional relations. And the synchrony of several of their political processes, and shared problems such as inequality and poverty, have made common interests evident (Miranda, 2019).

Autonomy has been one of the priority objectives of the foreign policy of Latin American countries. The region has a significant intellectual tradition, which reflects on the importance of autonomy and the policies to achieve it, one of the most significant variables being regionalism.

As van Klaveren points out, Latin American international relations have traditionally been dominated by two great challenges: autonomy, and the diversification of its ties with the world. Indeed, it can be added that the diversification of international relations was mainly instrumental in achieving autonomy, (Van Klaveren 2012: 132).

Latin America is one of the world regions where the idea of regionalism as a mechanism of autonomy has been more current. From independence to the present, regionalism in various expressions, has unfolded in the region. During the promotion of the regional unity of Hispanic America in the war of independence, a Hispanic-American identity narrative was conceived which will support regionalization initiatives, with Francisco de Miranda and Simon Bolívar being the main actors of this regional unity. Brazil joined this narrative late, not so much because of cultural distance but because of its monarchical form of government, but when it became a Republic in 1889, it became an undisputed part of this Latin America. Historically, and regionalism has been motivated by looking for autonomy, development, and a supranational cultural identity (Briceño, 2014); (Rivarola and Briceño, 2013).

On the other hand, reflections on autonomy have found regionalism like the main instrument. The autonomy school has two main founders, Juan Carlos Puig and Helio Jaguaribe. For Puig (1984: 74), autonomy is "[...] the maximum capacity for self-decision that can be achieved, taking into account the objective constraints of the real world." (Puig

These authors conceive of autonomy as intrinsically associative, a joint activity. This has no major difference concerning the first systematic reflections on autonomy.

For example, Puig (1980: 754 – 155). points out, that it is a primary condition that dependent countries are aware of their situation and overcome isolation, and that their internal development models are consistent, and based on strategic solidarity, to then implement pool their power resources, However, he warns that not all integrations are autonomist, that deep down it is instrumental, and that its function for autonomism will depend on the objective that is set. Finally, he suggests that in Latin America there has been no decisive progress in the integration process because its aim had not been strictly autonomous.

Thus, integration and regionalism are presented as a prerequisite for achieving autonomy. Even other efforts to achieve autonomy such as the diversification of international relations with other extra-regional countries can be frustrated by the weakness of regionalism.

As Miranda (2020), argues, contemporary international relations in Latin America have been characterized by the diversification of relations, and the greater dynamism of interactions with non-traditional countries, such as China, Russia, India, and Turkey. However, this greater diversification of international relations, has not had the expected impact on the region's autonomy, due to the inability of Latin American countries to present them as a region.

Latin America was born as a region in looking for its autonomy. From the struggle for independence and defensive positions against extra-regional threats, there was awareness of the need for union and, regional actions for sovereignty and autonomy were advanced. Despite the tradition and importance of the regionalization of Latin America, it remains speculative and fragmented. Latin America is an international society in the sense, that it has shared interests, values, and norms but does not have common institutions that allow them to negotiate as a bloc with other global actors.

As Acharya and Johnston (2007) point out, since World War II, but especially since the end of the Cold War, regionalism has had a greater preponderance in the configuration of the Global Order, due to the increase in the number of this initiative, and for its complexity, addressing issues such as development, human rights, democracy, refugees and pandemic.

This period was characterized by multilateralism and co-operation, and especially by the awareness of the Global South regions of the importance of regional and interregional co-operation.

During the Cold War period, the so-called Third World emerged, made up of all those countries whose interests remained outside the agendas of the main powers, and had the Bandung Conference in 1955, as the moment of birth of their self-awareness and union. In addition, the USA lost the Vietnam War and its economic superiority against its main allies in Western Europe and Japan. Therefore, to avoid its total decline, it sought greater multilateralism and associations expressed in institutions such as the Trilateral Commission, the G-7 meetings, and the World Economic Forum in Davos (Wallerstein, 2006).

In Latin America, the processes of economic liberation, the peace agreements in Central America, and the democratization of the Southern Cone also concurred. Those allowed the revitalization of regional and sub-regional dynamics, intra-regional trade grew, developing co-operation mechanisms, and border disputes to be resolved peacefully (Domínguez, 2007).

In contemporary times, the Global Order is characterized by the fact that the actors are more deeply interconnected and interdependent. Different actors and levels of government overlap and decentralized power are articulated in the sense that, although asymmetries and hierarchies continue to exist, there is no global hegemony. Actors such as international institutions, non-governmental organizations, and transnational networks have greater influence. The global agenda is diversifies and, especially, the agency capacity of all actors is pluralized. For the first time in the history of humanity, several States emerge simultaneously and in different locations, can interact and affect the Global Order as a whole (Acharya, 2018). This dynamic has been called complex interdependence, due to the increase in mutual dependence in various areas and multiple channels, such as interstate, intergovernmental and transnational relations. Interdependence leads to co-operation since, to obtain results, other actors need to participate or feel some benefit (Keohane and Nye, 1997).

Especially important for the Global South is what (Acharya 2014) observes of this Contemporary Global Order regarding the greater importance that regionalisms, and the regional order take on since the emerging powers present themselves as regional powers, and the weakest countries have greater potential. Agency capacity at this scale, conditions are created so that regional powers with aspirations to project their power at the global level are legitimized at the local level, which is an incentive to offer public goods and a more constructive relationship in general.

In this scenario, Latin America is presented as a region that shares interests, values, and norms. That resolved its inter-state differences peacefully. Almost all political systems are democratic. A legalistic culture like no other region in the world has promoted a prolific number of multilateral treaties, conventions, and resolutions. Which maintains its commitment to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and which does not represent a threat to international security.

In Latin America, during the 1990s, regionalism was characterized by following market incentives and a greater opening of foreign trade, in a context of the intellectual and political predominance of the neoliberal school. Since 2003, the process of regionalism has been called post-hegemonic and post-neoliberal and has been characterized by a redesign and change of weight in the objectives and spheres of action, with the political, social, and productive spheres gaining prominence. The main examples of this regionalism are the Union of South American Nations (Unasur) created in 2008 and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) created in 2011. Mercosur also expanded its objectives within the economic sphere, adding to its traditional aim of commercial opening, those of productive articulation (Briceño, 2018).

We call this regionalism complex. We consider that the post-liberal term distinguishes but does not define and the post-hegemonic term defines but only in a reactive way to its international context. Complex regionalism is characterized by the expansion of the spheres and objectives set. Its policies are more interventionist since they do not necessarily follow market incentives, and synchronously set objectives in various spheres, economic, political, and security in its broad conception.

Currently, the polarizations of the region's political systems, the rise of right-wing and far-right governments, have brought regionalism to a crisis. Mercosur, until now the most resilient and successful, and the Union of South American Nations (Unasur), the most ambitious since it brought together all the countries of the sub region, have been seriously affected by the arrival to the presidency of Jair Bolsonaro. Even bilateral relations with key countries for the maintenance of regionalism such as Argentina, have reached levels of historical tension. Additionally, the increase of authoritarianism in Venezuela has been a factor of disagreement and divergence in the measures to be taken and broke the consensus on the commitment to democracy.

Therefore, the main integration initiative is the Pacific Alliance, made up of Peru, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico. Its sole aim is to increase economic relations between the American and Asian countries of the Pacific, which functions as a network without formal institutions, which coincide with several of the initiatives of their Asian counterparts. These more limited objectives also depend on the political agenda consensus among its member countries, which on this occasion, on their orientation towards the free market.

Thus, in Latin America reflections on autonomy and regionalism are long-standing. However, less systematic has been the analysis of the importance for autonomy and regionalism of the concerting between the main regional powers, Brazil and Mexico.

For Latin America to achieve its autonomy and a greater agency capacity in the Global Order, it needs to develop common actions and effective mechanisms to apply them. In this, the co-ordination of the main powers of the region, Brazil and Mexico, is of significant importance.

As Acharya (2014) highlights, a fundamental element for regionalism is the ability to offer public goods to its members. And the costs of these public goods are borne for the most part by their leaders. For this reason, the regional powers, or the middle powers, are fundamental. Additionally, the global projections of these actors depend on their leadership capacity within their region.

Brazil and Mexico are the Latin American countries with the largest economies according to GDP, the largest territories, and the most populated. Geographically, they are located in a strategic position, with Brazil being able to lead the South American subregion and Mexico the Central American one. The two countries can be considered emerging powers, due to their global projection, and as medium powers, since both are called upon by other extra-regional powers to form alliances or clubs. Although Mexico generally does so as a follower and rule-taker, Brazil assumes larger leadership and reformist traits. Due to its neighbourly relations and its geographical priorities, only Brazil can be considered a regional power.

Emerging powers are considered to be those countries where power grows and are capable of disputing the hierarchy of the prevailing international system and can alter the results of the policies or actions that other States promote (McFarlane, 2006: 18). An emerging power must be considered as such due to its economic and territorial conditions, among others. But, fundamentally, attention must be paid to the results of its actions, in terms of influence through diplomacy, formation of alliances, weight, or ability to build coalitions in multilateral organizations, and the ability to provide global goods (Beckley, 2018; Noltle, 2010).

For their part, the middle powers are characterized by seeking membership in clubs or organizations that model governance to increase prestige and influence in their regional areas. They also seek to reform international institutions or orders, before their rupture because they can have greater benefits from reformist actions. (Jordan, 2003: 168).

Regional power can contribute to the provision of public goods and can participate in the hierarchy and distribution of power at non-global levels. Those can generate stability in the region, mediate regional or interregional conflicts, and form coalitions with other countries. of the region or other powers to alter the Global Order. (Stradi, 2010: 905; Lemke, 2004: 39-40). A regional power in addition to its traditional elements such as financial capacity or military force; must have the ability to influence and provide public goods for its neighbouring countries. (Zwatjes and Papanagnou, 2016: 24-25).

Empirically, the large expressions of autonomy in the contemporaneity of the region occurred when the regional organization promoted by the main power in the region, achieved the greatest support. For example, Unasur, led by Brazil, assumed a leading role in the internal crises in Bolivia 200, and Ecuador 2010.

For this reason, to advance in regionalism it is necessary that the foreign policies of Latin American countries, especially those with material capacity and political leadership such as Brazil and Mexico, have a State policy above presidential alternations. Regionalism deserves a constant effort, so the foreign policies of its member countries must be credible in the regional order.

Regionalism needs at least a minimum consensus on what the priorities and basic principles are, based on the regional interest. Foreign policy cannot be a political and ideological instrument of the government in power. Finally, an agreement among the countries, especially between the main powers of the region such as Brazil and Mexico, would strengthen the region's impact on global governance and would allow states, organizations, and other agents to observe the region like an actor.

DIFFERENCES IN THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF BRAZIL AND MEXICO

Brazil and Mexico have participated separately in the contemporary Global Order, and their geographic, and thematic priorities in their foreign policies have been divergent. Those have limited regionalism and autonomy in Latin America.

Historically, relations between Brazil and Mexico have been peaceful, and co-operative but of low intensity. For example, only in 1960, after 140 years of independence from both countries, for the first time in history, a Mexican president, Adolfo López Mateos, visited Brazil. These countries have prioritized their relations with other international actors, and have not adequately attended to their bilateral relationship. But in the early 2000s, economic relations increased, and political dialogues became more frequent, including the creation in 2017 of the Brazil-Mexico National Commission (Domínguez, 2009). However, this political impulse has not materialized in higher levels of agreement, and divergences have been more frequent than convergences.

In terms of trade and investment, during the 2000s the dynamism of exchanges increased significantly, but no major progress has been made due to tariff issues, and competitiveness in sensitive sectors such as the automotive industry. However, companies from both countries have

made investments. For example, Mexican food companies have invested in Brazil, just as Brazilian manufacturing companies have invested in Mexico. Especially interesting has been the collaboration between the two oil companies, the Brazilian Petrobras, and the Mexican Pemex, which dates back to the 1960s, and has been given in technical assistance and joint business exploration, having a special dynamism during the governments of Dilma Rousseff and Peña. Grandson (Fernandes and Cunha, 2018; Arriola, 2009).

Thus, bilateral relations between Brazil and Mexico, are far from reaching their potential. Its core relationships are commercial, and this has been driven more by the market than by a sustained diplomatic effort. This lack of interdependence and co-ordination has been reflected in its global projections, including the hemispheric space.

US foreign policy towards Latin America since the presidency of Jimmy Carter has been divided between two sub regions. At first, it seeks to guarantee its primacy and includes Mexico, Central America, the islands, and the countries that border the Caribbean Sea. In the second, its actions have been more sporadic and circumstantial and include South America (Domínguez, 2020). This factor influenced the reflection of foreign policies where South America, especially the Southern Cone, reflected more on autonomy. And the founders of this school were Juan Carlos Puig from Argentina, and Helio Jaguaribe from Brazil. Meanwhile, in Mexico, they were more concerned with the legal counterpart of autonomy, and sovereignty (Russell and Toklatian, 2002).

The countries geographically closest to the USA, such as those of Central America and Mexico, which is part of the economic block of the Treaty between Mexico, the United States, and Canada (former NAFTA), are more dependent on economic, commercial, and demographic matters. Mexico has a relationship of asymmetric interdependence with the USA. It is a dependent partner. Mexico depends on the USA for 80% of its foreign trade and international investments. For their part, Latinos, mostly Mexicans, have made this community the largest minority in the USA. While Brazil, geographically more distant and being a regional power with aspirations of global projection; has carried out a more autonomous policy against the USA (Covarrubias and Domínguez, 2015; Russell and Tokatlian, 2009).

The asymmetric interdependence between the USA and Mexico has deepened since the mid-1980s. The debt crisis led the Mexican economy with an economic model based on trade liberalization and exports to the USA market (Haber et al, 2008). This had as foreign policy counterpart, the prioritization of the USA in its foreign policy, which managed the asymmetry to impose its priorities on the bilateral agenda, the fight against drug trafficking and migration cartels (Covarrubias, 2011).

Thus, the traditional foreign policy of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) was changing its geographical weighting, paying more attention to its northern neighbour, and less to its Central American neighbours. Additionally, with the presidential alternation and the coming to power of the National Action Party (PAN), the tradition of non-intervention in the affairs of other

states was nuanced. And, a bigger commitment to issues of human rights and democracy was maintained, at least rhetorically.

However, Mexico in this period, did not always follow the policies of the USA. For example, in 2003 Mexico was a member of the UN Security Council and did not support the authorization of the USA to lead a coalition to invade Iraq.

Mexico has tried to become hinge on several issues between the USA, and Latin American countries. After the 1990s, when it signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), it tried to incorporate its southern neighbours into the FTAA proposal but encountered insurmountable resistance. Finally, with the return of the PRI to the presidency, this proposal has been shelved.

The PRI arrival in 2012 under the Peña Nieto administration, brought changes towards the reaffirmation of Mexico's role as an emerging power. Within the framework of the initiative of the Mesoamerican project (former Plan Puebla-Panama), he promoted projects focused on the construction of roads, aid, financing for agriculture, health, and education programs. Towards Central America were implemented security policies, attention to migrants, and social assistance. Towards the Caribbean highlights disaster prevention and contingency plans for climate change. With South America, they tried to rebuild relations and began rapprochements with Uruguay, since the free trade agreement between the two countries was updated in 2017. With Paraguay, an economic complementarity agreement was signed in 2016. The rapprochement with Chile was maintained. Peru and Colombia strengthen the Pacific Alliance. With Argentina and Brazil, they sought to approach each other through economic and investment issues. Confrontations with the ALBA countries, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela were also avoided (de Alba, 2018). However, these initiatives did not represent greater levels of deepening in intra-regional relations nor did they build better conditions for joint insertion in the Global Order (Covarrubias, 2016).

In general, Mexicans actions towards Latin America could not build regional coalitions that can defend common interests. Mexican foreign policy at the global and regional levels has focused on economic and trade issues.

For example, at the beginning of the 21st century, Mexico was one of the economies in the world that had the freest trade agreements, and economic associations. Almost all Latin America and the Caribbean have signed this type of agreement. It was the only country in the region, to become a permanent member of the European Bank for Economic Reconstruction and Development in 1991. It became a member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum in 1993. It was the first country in Latin America to become in Member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1994. It was the first country in Latin America to sign the Economic Association, Political Co-ordination, and Co-operation Agreement with the EU in 1997, and since its foundation, it has been a member of the Pacific Alliance, with Colombia, Peru, and Chile (Rodríguez, 2016).

Additionally, Mexico has also promoted its cultural expressions as an instrument of international recognition. For example, support for creative industries such as music, television, and films, is an important element of its foreign policy. Mexican food is a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Lozano, 2019). It also highlights the 50 consulates present in the USA, which serve 35 million Mexicans, and whose objective is to promote the values of their culture, art, gastronomy, and history, as well as the artistic and cultural expressions of generations born in the USA (Medina, 2019).

In Mexico, the arrival of Andrés Manuel López Obrador has meant a return to the Estrada doctrine, which consists of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. As the president has reduced his participation in summits, his foreign secretary is the one who has attended the G-20 summit or the UN Assembly. And in regional matters, he has approached the ALBA governments, with actions such as political asylum for former president Evo Morales and the abandonment of the Lima Group.

On the other hand, since its democratization process, Brazil has had a pragmatic foreign policy, pointed at acting in various scenarios. Committed to multilateralism, with one of the most professional foreign ministries in the region (Milani and Pinheiro, 2013; Souza, 2009; Pinheiro, 2009). It has also stood out in its solidary participation in peacekeeping, health care, and education assistance missions, such as numerous co-operation agreements (Valença and Carvalho, 2014). Especially since the presidency of Lula Da Silva, his foreign policy had the co-operation process as a priority, adopting a behaviour of organizer of a regional agenda, promoting an ordering of South America under his leadership (Gomes, 2020). Brazilian foreign policy can be defined as Universalist, due to the breadth and diversity of countries with which it has established relations, without political or other conditions (Erthal, 2015).

The foreign policy of Fernando Henrique Cardoso was based on the instrument of economic liberalization for insertion in the global order, with the countries of the North as a priority, and a Latin American integration driven by trade, investment, and infrastructure. With the arrival of Luis Da Silva, foreign policy experienced more formal than substantial changes. During this period, two major foreign policy fronts are identified: the first, the globalists, focused on the search for a multipolar order that privileged South-South Co-operation (SSC) and horizontal alliances with emerging powers; and the second, the regionalists, who gave priority to regional dynamics, assuming that Brazil could not strengthen its position at the global level without first consolidating itself as a regional leader (Souza, 2009; Vadell and Giaccaglia, 2020).

Since the 2000s, Brazilian activism in multilateral organizations has become a key position in its foreign policy, and its new approach towards its regional neighbours. This activism has been based on the idea of Brazilian identity as a continental country, with special emphasis on regional integration as a new form of international insertion, and on the target of transforming the country into a global trader in the medium term and turning it into a long-term global player. This

autonomy strategy through integration was proposed during the administration of Fernando Collor de Mello and deepened by Luis Da Silva (Deciancio, 2016).

At the regional level, Brazil has traditionally been seen as a country that has served as a mediator in the dynamics with other countries of the region (Gratius, 2011). Brazil has promoted large projects such as the so-called Integration Initiative for South American Regional Infrastructure (IIRSA) during the presidency of Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Brazil has become a partner of all regional and sub-regional banks and financial institutions, participating as a member country in the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) and the Development Bank del Caribe (BDC). And to individual investments through the National Development Bank (BNDES), and the country that allocates the most resources to financing productive projects and infrastructure in the region (Arriola, 2009).

Brazilian foreign policy has focused on strengthening South American regional institutions such as Mercosur and Unasur. Unasur was its main instrument of foreign policy. Although it did not achieve completely unify the preferences of the member countries in international politics, mainly due to the divergences of its foreign policy with that of Chile, it did achieve significant cohesion, which was important for South American international insertion Gomes (2020).

In economic matters, Brazil uses its BNDES to finance infrastructure projects in Latin America and Africa. It has sought for its companies to have a presence in Latin America, and Africa, especially in infrastructure and construction area. It has created co-operation mechanisms with its neighbours in the hemisphere and with the Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa, especially with Angola, Cape Verde, and Mozambique (Chenoy et al, 2016). During the administrations of Luis Da Silva, 21 presidential visits were made and 238 agreements were signed with African countries, increasing diplomatic ties, technical co-operation, and promoting interlocutors to promote reforms in multilateral institutions and global governance mechanisms (Mendon'a and Pepper, 2015). Additionally, its presence in various forums seeks to secure market shares to consolidate itself as one of the largest producers of food and biofuels globally (Soares, 2009).

Mexico has sought to boost its promotion from the economic and commercial. It created the Country Brand to offer the country as an attractive destination for investment, business relations, and tourism, positioning itself as the most valuable country brand in Latin America and the fourteenth globally. Co-ordination efforts were made with business chambers and associations, and SMEs were supported in their commercial development and insertion in global value chains (Lozano, 2019). Mexico has also sought to expand its relations with Africa, increasing the number of embassies and representations and reaching out through multilateral bodies (Treviño and Negrete, 2019).

Thus, the international economic policies of Brazil are more ambitious, while those of Mexico do not distance themselves from market incentives. Mexico's economic policies are more private sector supporter, while those of Brazil seek to create opportunities. Additionally, as the

initiatives towards Africa show, the geographic and thematic diversity of international economic policies are significantly broader in the Brazilian case.

The main actions of Brazil's foreign policy have been to promote its development, promote South-South co-operation, attract investment, and promote its exports. In these activities, the dynamism in sectors such as education, scientific exchange, and business promotion stands out. Additionally, it participates in demands for the reform of international institutions.

However, with the arrival of Jair Bolsonaro at the presidency, Brazilian foreign policy has been reduced to an alignment with the foreign policy of Donald Trump, thus abandoning leadership efforts in the region and the Global South. Special deterioration means what Gomes (2020) warns about the distance from the traditional orientations of his diplomacy and the loss of relevance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the formulation and application of foreign policy.

At a global level, with the administration of Lula Da Silva, South America, with the leadership of Brazil, positioned itself as a relevant global political actor, and one of the leaders of the Global South. But under the administration of Dilma Rousseff, characterized by economic and political crisis, Brazil reduced its resources to lead the sub region. Finally, in the Bolsonaro administration, the differences with the Argentina president Alberto Fernández have hindered the processes of South American integration, MERCOSUR, and UNASUR, as well as the most recent PROSUR.

Brazil, compared to Mexico, has a much more extended diplomatic presence and a greater presence in intergovernmental organizations (Schavion and Figueroa, 2019). The promotion of South-South co-operation has allowed it to gain allies to form coalitions in the demands for reform in international institutions (Pinheiro and Gaio, 2016).

Brazil also has a significant relationship with China, with which it coincides in the BRICS, and they co-operate to reform international institutions and propose alternative development models (Hoyos and Miranda, 2019). In commercial matters, this bilateral relationship has been growing but has focused on the mineral and agricultural products exported by Brazil, and Chinese exports of electronic products and capital goods (Castro, 2013).

Thus, the internal and external, historical and contemporary elements have meant that, despite the common challenges, the divergences in geographic and thematic priorities are bigger than the convergences. Those have also been noted in global governance spaces.

For example, in the contemporary Global Order governance by clubs has proliferated, and the Group of 20 (G-20) is one of the most influential. The issues co-ordinated have been very broad, from the search for financial, macroeconomic, and trade stability, to security, climate change, and corruption. In the G-20, powers of different levels concur, including from Latin America to Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. However, in this space, the problems of lack of regional agreement to influence the global agenda are evident too. Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico have

diverged on different matters, such as the issue of economic liberalization, have not assumed positions of regional representation, and have not shown larger commitment to issues of interest to Latin America or the Global South. Even when Mexico chaired the G-20 in 2012, being the first Latin American country to do so, it did not show any priority that could be considered of special interest to the region.

Therefore, the substance of autonomy is not the increase in the number of participants in global governance groups but that they can generate significant changes in the international agenda.

Brazil and Mexico, also attend different global clubs. Brazil is part of the BRICS (with Russia, China, India, and South Africa) and the IBSA (with India and South Africa). Meanwhile, Mexico is part of the MIKTA (with Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey, and Australia).

In the World Trade Organization (WTO), they have also diverged. Mexico, in response to the little progress made in the Doha Round, has continued with Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). Meanwhile, Brazil has sought to restart negotiations in this organization.

In the Un Organization (UN), Brazil tried to increase the number of permanent members of the Security Council and be included in this expansion. One of its main arguments was its status as a regional power, but Mexico did not support this proposal.

At the regional level, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) has been one of the most ambitious integration projects in the region today. But, it did not achieve a consensus on fundamental issues. CELAC was attended by 33 countries from Latin America and the Caribbean and broad aims were set, such as being a forum for dialogue with extra-regional actors and promoting a better positioning of its members in the Global Order. However, during the pro-tempore presidency of Mexico, on January 16, 2020, Brazil announced its decision to suspend its participation, arguing the role given to totalitarian regimes in the region.

The Organization of American States (OAS), one of the most resilient and complex regional institutions, which includes practically all the countries of the American Hemisphere, has also been the scene of disagreement between the two powers of the region. For example, in the last elections of the General Secretary, in 2005 Mexico presented the candidacy of Luis Ernesto Derbez but Brazil supported José Miguel Insulza, and in 2020, with secret ballots, Brazil showed sympathy for the re-election of Luis Almagro while Mexico rejected her and publicly criticized her polarizing position, especially regarding the Venezuelan crisis.

Economic development models have also been divergent, with Brazil close to a neo-structuralist model, and Mexico closer to following market incentives, which has also generated divergences on the international scene. For example, in the government of Luis Da Silva, the National Development Bank had a revival promoting industrial, technological, and foreign trade policy, promoting industrialization and export. Mexico, for its part, during the presidency of

Vicente Fox, promoted the FTAA in different regional forums, a proposal that diverged from those of MERCOSUR.

Divergences in foreign policies between Brazil and Mexico have been recurrent. These divergences in foreign policies do not coincide with the long-term needs of these countries. For this reason, the institutionalisation of the State's foreign policies and the political will to establish them are essential for the capacity for agreement and co-ordination that the countries of the region have, especially Brazil and Mexico as the main powers of the region.

CONCLUSION

The impossibility of agreement between the foreign policies of Brazil and Mexico has limited Latin American regionalism, which has prevented reaching significant degrees of autonomy.

Latin America as a regional unit or international actor still does not exist. There is no common understanding of how countries should insert themselves into the Global Order, nor is there agreement on the principles that guide their external actions. Latin America does not have an articulated voice in international forums, and there is no convergence in thematic and geographical priorities. National individualism has impaired the ability to act together. Additionally, individually, with the current administrations in Brazil and Mexico, these countries have abandoned their goals of autonomy and of having a greater projection in the Global Order.

Regionalism is one of the most distinctive phenomena of the contemporary Global Order. In general, regionalism is considered as a fundamental instrument to achieve autonomy, and in the case of Latin America, as a prerequisite yet to be achieved. However, the polarization of the political system with high levels of presidentialism, has not only affected the internal dynamics of the countries but their international insertion too.

Brazil and Mexico are two emerging powers, taken into account by major global powers to form alliances in intergovernmental organizations, forums, or clubs. They are also considered for some countries in the region to consult and try to solve problems in the regional order. However, they do this individually; there is no co-ordination effort looking for agreement on their foreign policies.

The autonomy of Latin America depends on regionalism. And, regionalism depends on the foreign policies agreement of the countries of the region, especially between Brazil and Mexico as the region's main powers. For this, the institutionalization of the State's foreign policies is necessary.

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