

# Brazilian Foreign Policy from Lisbon to Bandung

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**Abstract:** Drawing from constructivist scholarship, this article dwells on the relations between Brazil and the Afro-Asian world based on the writings of diplomat Adolpho Justo Bezerra de Menezes, who advocated a larger commitment of the Brazilian foreign policy to the Global South. The author acted both as a *norm entrepreneur* who problematized Brazilian belonging to the West and a *practical-intuitive historian* who used the past to show that the ties uniting Brazil to Asia and Africa were tighter than those uniting it to Europe.

**Keywords:** Afro-Asian; Bezerra de Menezes; Brazilian foreign policy; constructivism; Independent Foreign Policy.

## Introduction

This article dwells on the relations between Brazil and the Afro-Asian world under the light of the writings of Brazilian diplomat Adolpho Justo Bezerra de Menezes (1910-2006), one of the first diplomats to advocate a larger engagement of Brazil in the Global South. Spanning from 1956 to 2000, his writings show an ongoing effort to improve relations between Brazil and the newly independent nations in Asia and Africa by refurbishing Brazilian national identity.

Two main arguments ought to be developed here. One is that by trying to replace the traditional Brazilian Western identity with a Global South identity, Menezes became a *norm entrepreneur* in Brazilian foreign policy. Furthermore, by trying to provide Brazil with a Global South identity, Bezerra de Menezes acted as a *practical-intuitive historian* who went from cherishing Brazilian ties with Portugal to overtly praising the Afro-Asian world. In other words: he went *from Lisbon to Bandung*.

Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1910, Menezes was a graduate of Law and Social Sciences. Throughout his diplomatic career, he served in the Brazilian embassy in places such as Indonesia in 1954, Pakistan in 1966, and Tunisia in 1974. His experience in Asian and African countries inspired him to write the books analysed here.

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Menezes' ideas are both intriguing and complex. He was an ardent anti-colonialist, despite showing sympathy for the Portuguese Empire and condemning certain nationalist movements in Asia and Africa. He believed Brazil should lead the Global South, despite fearing that other Global South countries could jeopardize Brazilian leadership. He criticized both the communist and the capitalist blocks, claiming that the Global South should forge a block of its own. Hence, Menezes was an advocate of Global South solidarity, if by 'Global South' we understand a group of countries 'whose interests conflicted with those of the industrialized powers, both capitalist and communist – cutting across Cold War divisions' (Dados and Connell 2012: 12).

After reading Menezes' works, we transcribed the excerpts in which the author proposed an approximation between Brazil and the Global South and analysed them under the light of constructivist scholarship of IR. Given the importance placed by constructivism on values, beliefs, and identities, our analysis was guided by the following questions: to which extent did these writings propose new identities to guide Brazilian foreign policy? What were the main arguments used by Menezes to justify a larger Brazilian role in the Afro-Asian world? How did he resort to History to legitimize his beliefs?

The article follows a chronological order, starting from his earlier texts in the mid-1950s and finishing with a book published in 2000. Such order provides us with a better understanding of how the author's ideas shifted from a pro-Portuguese to a pro-Third World stance.

Rather than using Menezes' writings as a source of empirical data that confirm constructivist theory, the purpose of constructivism here is to provide 'a somewhat stylized view of reality' that differs from the 'chunk of reality it is supposed to help you understand' (Trachtenberg 2006: 40-41). The importance of Menezes' writings goes beyond mere theory testing. As we analyse his books, we will notice 'that something more general is at work – that the sort of dynamic the theorists have discussed at a more abstract level is at work in this particular case' (Trachtenberg 2006: 138-139).

This article is divided into six sections besides this introduction. Section two dwells on constructivism and the role of norms and History for foreign policy decision-makers. Section three analyses the Bandung Conference. Sections four, five, and six dwell on the writings by Menezes<sup>1</sup> in three specific moments of Brazilian foreign policy: the 1950s-60s, 1980, and the 1990s-2000. Section seven summarises our main ideas.

## **Norm entrepreneurs and practical-intuitive historians**

Alexander Wendt (1999: 396-397) states that the most important principle of constructivism is the idea that actors perform towards other actors based on the meanings the latter possess for them: 'The daily life of international politics is an on-going process of states taking identities in relation to Others, casting them into corresponding counter-identities, and playing out the result'. Identities are hard to change, but they are not 'carved in stone'. Sometimes identities 'are the only variable actors can manipulate in a situation' (Wendt

1999: 21). The formation of such identities comprises ideas, shared understandings, and expectations that increase the similarity between actors (Wendt 1994: 389-390).

IR and political theory have been divorced for decades because ‘what “is” in the world and what “ought to be” are very different and must be kept separate’. However, ‘contemporary empirical research on norms is aimed precisely at showing how the “ought” becomes the “is”’ (Sikkink and Finnemore 1998: 916). The gap between the ‘ought’ and the ‘is’ is filled by ‘norm entrepreneurs’, of which Menezes was a great example.

Norms ‘embody a quality of “oughtness” and shared moral assessment’, thus prompting ‘justifications for action’ (Sikkink and Finnemore 1998: 892). New norms, however, do not emerge in a vacuum. They emerge ‘in a highly contested normative space where they must compete with other norms and perceptions of interest’ (Sikkink and Finnemore 1998: 897). Hence the importance of norm entrepreneurs in actively building those norms following ‘strong notions about appropriate or desirable behaviour in their Community’ (Sikkink and Finnemore 1998: 896).

New norms usually meet three stages: the emergence of the norm through norm entrepreneurs, the dissemination of these norms in cascade, and its internalization (Sikkink and Finnemore 1998: 898-899). Throughout this article, we will understand how the ideas proposed by Menezes went through these stages.

Besides being a norm entrepreneur, Menezes acted as a practical-intuitive historian. Foreign policy decision-makers often act as practical-intuitive historians who resort to the past in search of statements and artefacts that may be valuable to political engagements (Vertzberger 1986: 224). Furthermore, ‘intuitive historians, much like professional historians, rely on historical facts and have to resort to methods of transforming them by summarizing, evaluating, analysing, inferring, judging, and interpreting’ (Vertzberger 1986: 224). History empowers decision-makers with an arsenal of knowledge about the international environment and its actors. It also helps them recognize the adequate roles for the actors concerned, define the suitable policies to deal with problems, and persuade actors about which policies are relevant (Vertzberger 1986: 225).

Before we understand how Menezes acted as a norm entrepreneur and a practical-intuitive historian, let us first understand the Bandung Conference given its importance in shaping the author’s imaginary.

## **Bandung: norm enterprise and a battle of constructions**

In 1955, 29 Asian and African countries gathered in Indonesia for the Bandung Conference, sponsored by Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Ceylon, and Burma. Two principles guided the Conference: *non-alignment* and *Afro-Asian solidarity* (Mackie 2005). Non-alignment provided Asians and Africans with an opportunity to commit to neither side of the Cold War, though allowing an eventual commitment in the future. As Moscow and Washington strived for allies, peripheral countries ceased to be pawns and gained significant power over the hegemons.

Furthermore, Bandung extended the notion of universal sovereignty beyond Western nations and ensured a substantial Afro-Asian consensus on issues related to decolonisation and human rights, thus constituting a powerful act of normative agency by non-Western actors – if by agency we mean ‘an ability to interpret, localise, formulate and strengthen the rules of international order to advance freedom, peace and order’ (Acharya 2016: 354). One evidence of the success of these normative aspirations is the fact that they ‘remain integral to the contemporary global normative order supported by the majority of both developed and developing countries’ (Acharya 2016: 354).

Furthermore, ‘[a]longside a common resentment of colonialism, Bandung’s leaders also aimed to win greater foreign policy independence for newly independent states, and to fortify South–South economic and cultural cooperation’ (Phillips 2016: 329). Unlike prior anti-colonial summits, Bandung was the first conference held only by coloured people, in a developing country, in which poor nations discussed their own affairs without the interference of Western powers. Thus, ‘Bandung was pivotal in bringing the “Global South” into being as a self-conscious category of actors in world politics, and instrumental in laying the foundations for the Non-Aligned Movement’ (Phillips 2016: 329–30).

Bandung was an *order-challenging* event due to its anti-racist and anti-colonial stances, which played a vital role in deteriorating the legitimacy of colonialism. On the other hand, Bandung also had an *order-affirming* aspect by endorsing existing principles such as the sovereignty of the nation-state and human rights. Thus, ‘Bandung critically broadened the global support base for an international order grounded in originally Western models of political organisation’ (Phillips 2016: 335).

Bandung was also an *order-building* event that pushed for greater South-South cooperation and sought ‘to resuscitate an earlier Afro-Asian commercial “ecumene” and reverse the division imposed by years of imperialism’ (Phillips 2016: 335). However, some of Bandung’s claims for a *pluralist internationalism* sat uneasily with a *radical Global South internationalism*: ‘Certainly, the conference marked a long-term victory for “sovereignists” at the expense of solidarists. Efforts to fortify Afro-Asian states against external intervention typically prevailed over appeals to a cosmopolitan ethics’ (Phillips 2016: 336).

The conference faced several clashes which could be predicted by the differences between its sponsors. India’s Jawaharlal Nehru, Indonesia’s Ali Sastroamidjojo, and Burma’s U Nu represented an anti-imperialist wing. On the other hand, Ceylon’s Sir John Kotelawala and Pakistan’s Mohammed Ali Bogra tipped the balance in favour of a Western-friendly anti-communism. Pakistan had just joined the Southeast Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and the Baghdad Pact, both aimed at deterring communism in Asia, whereas Nehru was close to Moscow.

The first setbacks emerged before 1955. Ceylon and Burma wanted to invite Israel, whereas Pakistan and Indonesia opposed it. Burma refused to invite Taiwan, whereas Pakistan claimed that communist Chinese participation would discourage other SEATO members (Mackie, 2005: 63–65). After invitations were sent, Thailand and the Philippines turned to Washington’s advice. Initially disdaining the very idea of the conference, Washington later urged them to join and counter India and China (Mackie, 2005: 65–66).

Considering the Cold War was an intersubjective and discursive structure (Wendt 1994: 389), Bandung played a role in the *battle of constructions* of the Cold War by claiming that there was a more relevant cleavage dividing the world than the one between East and West: the 'North-South' or 'Centre-Periphery' cleavage. One of the voices that endorsed the importance of the North-South cleavage came from Brazil, a country that attended Bandung only as an observer. In fact, it was the voice of the very diplomat who acted as a Brazilian observer to Bandung: Bezerra de Menezes. Key principles that were dear to Bandung, such as anticolonialism, antiracism, South-South solidarity, and non-alignment were espoused by Bezerra de Menezes in his books.

## **Towards Brazilian leadership (1956-1963)**

The reaction of Brazilian public opinion to Bandung was mainly hostile. General Golbery do Couto e Silva believed that no middle-ground was possible beyond Washington and Moscow and that the Afro-Asian bloc forged in Bandung was just a tentative position in favour of communism (Gonçalves and Miyamoto 1993: 214). Oswaldo Trigueiro, ambassador to Indonesia, accused Nehru of a double-dealing attitude by playing with both sides of the Cold War (Souza 2011: 126-127) and regarded the conference as a threat to the West. After the conference, he was relieved to notice the disagreements among its sponsors and Nehru's failure to influence the debates (Souza 2011: 200-205).

Ildefonso Falcão, a diplomat in India, admired John Kotelawala for his alignment with the West and hoped SEATO could stop Bandung from assuming an anti-Western stance (Souza 2011: 130, 132). He also despised Indian ambitions to seize Goa (a Portuguese enclave in India) and praised the Portuguese colonial past (Souza 2011: 163, 165). To him, Nehru's performance in Bandung was disastrous due to his misunderstandings with Turkish, Iraqi, and SEATO delegates (Souza 2011: 203, 207).

C. M. de Figueiredo, ambassador to Egypt, praised the fact that Nehru was unable to attract Africans and Asians to neutralism. João Carlos Muniz, ambassador to Washington, emphasised the importance of North American tutelage over its allies in the Conference to protect them from communism and neutralism. Finally, Roberto Almeida Salgado, ambassador to Iran, depicted neutralism as a Soviet strategy to protect its communist allies (Souza 2011: 208, 213, 215).

Overall, those opposing Bandung constructed it as a communist trick, as well as a threat to the Western world to which Brazil was believed to belong.

There were, however, exceptions. Diplomat Sérgio Corrêa Lago called for diplomatic missions and further studies to ensure a relevant position for Brazil in Asia and Africa, and Brazilian ambassador to India José Cochrane Alencar urged Brazil to align with Afro-Asian anticolonial yearnings (Lessa and Penna Filho 2007: 63-64). Likewise, historian José Honório Rodrigues believed that a commitment to Asia and Africa had nothing to do with communism: it was rather a restoration of the autonomy with which Rodrigues believed the Brazilian monarchy (1822-1889) conducted its foreign policy. Rodrigues also believed the East-West cleavage was outdated vis-à-vis the North-South cleavage (Rodrigues 1966: 111, 196).

Despite such exceptions, the initial attitude of Brazilian governments towards anti-colonial struggles in Asia and Africa remained lukewarm and supportive of Portugal. In 1961, under President Jânio Quadros' Independent Foreign Policy (IFP), Brazil tried to become less attached to Washington and more committed to the Global South. The IFP was carried on by Jânio's successor João Goulart until 1964 when a military coup ousted him. The IFP comprised five main principles: the extension of Brazilian external markets to enhance its industrialisation; autonomy in the formulation of economic strategies; pacific coexistence and general disarmament; the right to self-determination and non-intervention in internal issues; and decolonisation (Vizentini 1995: 195-6).

Under the IFP, Brazil re-established relations with Moscow, resisted American pressures to isolate Cuba, condemned nuclear proliferation, and opened embassies across Asia and Africa. On the other hand, showing the challenges faced by the IFP, Brazil also voted against the recognition of communist China and abstained to vote for the independence of Angola and Algeria. Despite the auspices brought by the IFP, the Brazilian ties with Portugal were too strong to allow a more daring foreign policy. However, as a good norm entrepreneur, Menezes engaged in persuading society about the importance of the norms that emerged in Bandung.

Menezes' book *O Brasil e o Mundo Ásio-Africano (Brazil and the Asian-African World)*, published in 1956, was an attempt to swim against the stream of contempt towards Bandung in Brazilian public opinion. He praised the 1954 Colombo Conference held by the five sponsors of Bandung: 'For the first time, non-white States gathered on their own to discuss topics that concerned situations created by Western powers in their continents and to restate their willingness to wish neither the tutelage nor the advice of aliens in their own issues' (Menezes 2012: 240). SEATO, the organisation idealised by American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to stop communism in Asia, is depicted as the 'antithesis' of Colombo:

In the eyes of Asians, SEATO aimed to forge an atmosphere of war. Colombo was the rehearsal for Asia to solve its problems for itself; SEATO was the proof that the West thought it should keep outlining the fate of that continent (Menezes 2012: 240).

The Bogor Conference of 1954, called to prepare the Afro-Asian conference, is also praised for warning about the consequences of nuclear tests in the long run: 'India's Prime-Minister painted a truly grim and gloomy picture of mankind, attacked by skin and lung diseases, gradually suffocated' (Menezes 2012: 241).

However, his enthusiasm with the Global South did not prevent him from constructing Portuguese colonialism in a rather idyllic fashion. Unlike British, French, and American colonialism, Portuguese colonisation was depicted as having spiritual foundations and lacking racism. He defended that Goa, a Portuguese possession in India, should remain Portuguese because 'the alleged *Portuguese colonial rule* does not exist, considering Goa lacks all the vulgar and eerie characteristics that the Asian-African nationalism of the 20th century ascribes to the word *colonialism*' (Menezes 2012: 128).

Here we can see an expression of the Lisbon-Bandung dilemma that pervaded the writings of Menezes. He tried to conciliate his enthusiastic view of Bandung with his sympathy towards Portugal. The Lisbon-Bandung dilemma was so strong that it influenced the author's opinions on the Brazilian identity. At one point he stated: 'Though we are ethnically mixed, in spirit, culturally speaking, we are completely Westerners, Europeans in our education, and we are very happy for that' (Menezes 2012: 284). Elsewhere, on the other hand, he stated:

We must steadfastly and inexorably insist, no matter whom it may hurt, inside and outside our borders, that, despite being Westerners, [Brazilians and Europeans] are not 'brothers under the same skin' (...) We [Brazilians] have many ethnic and spiritual traces that bring us closer to Africa and Asia; only distance separates us (Menezes 2012: 292).

Brazil had the mission to lure 'African and Asian masses through our main political-diplomatic tool – the almost perfectly racial and social equality existent in Brazil' (Menezes 2012: 291-292). For him, the best evidence of Portuguese-inherited benevolence was the foreign policy of the Brazilian monarchy in the 19th century: 'We once had Uruguay in our hands and bowed to the will of its inhabitants; we won bloody and long-lasting wars and respected the integrity of Paraguay' (Menezes 2012: 292). As supportive of Afro-Asian decolonisation as the author might have been, he portrayed Brazil as heir to the Portuguese Empire. In fact, he believed it was through Portuguese heritage that Brazil should aim at strengthening its ties with Afro-Asian countries. Portuguese ties with the Kingdom of Siam (Thailand) in the 16-18th centuries justified a larger Brazilian role in Asia:

(...) an encouragement of the Portuguese 'presence' through conferences and history courses, exchange of cultural delegations, together with the 'presence' of Brazil from the moment our country established diplomatic relations with Siam, would rekindle some of these memories, this prestige of a country that knew so well how to conquer the long-lasting friendship of such an exotic, different, and distant people (Menezes 2012: 118).

In another attempt to mobilize History to guide foreign policy decision-making – and in another expression of his oscillation between Lisbon and Bandung – Menezes mourned over the fact that Brazil and Portugal had forgotten the Portuguese descendants from Melaka, in the Malay Peninsula. Melaka, 'this small corner of Asia (...) deserved a longer, more attentive, and more affectionate observation from Brazilian scholars, and, most important of all, the visit of the great master Gilberto Freyre, who unfortunately had no time or opportunity to go to Melaka during his trip overseas' (Menezes 2012: 115).

In a moment when the British were planning to hand over the Malay Peninsula to the Malay people, Menezes visited Melaka and heard from a local Portuguese descendant

that he feared the 'recrudescence of past religious clashes in case the Malays achieved an indisputable political supremacy within the recently-created federation' (Menezes 2012: 114). Therefore, Portugal and Brazil should devote more attention to these 'Rodrigues, Sousas, Albuquerque, Gomes, Silvas of yellow skin and slanted eyes, or smooth hair and dark skin, like Indians' (Menezes 2012: 115).

By portraying Brazilian Portuguese roots as the basis for an Afro-Asian-committed foreign policy, Menezes shows how the past can be a source 'of more specific policy directions for certain issue areas, or towards specific actors, such as friendliness, trust, alliance, or a very specific policy recommendation for a particular situation or circumstance' (Vertzberger 1986: 229).

But Portuguese colonialism was not only used to depict Brazil as heir of the Portuguese Empire. It was also mobilized to justify a Brazilian anti-imperialist identity. Brazilians are considered as anti-colonialists as all countries 'gathered in Bandung, because although Portuguese colonialism in Brazil was one of the mildest and patriarchal in its social aspects, politically and economically it was one of the harshest and most suffocating' (Menezes 2012: 292). Brazilian belonging to the Global South was the key for the establishment of ties with Africa and Asia, after all, the term 'Global South' denotes precisely 'an entire history of colonialism, neo-imperialism, and differential economic and social change' (Dados and Connell 2012: 13), – all of which were experienced by Brazil and the countries in Bandung:

We had a Tiradentes, we had convicts, we also had our martyrs, our victims, our patriots just like any other colony of Asia and Africa had and is having. Besides being a Portuguese colony, we were also victims of the greed of the French and Dutch who seized and ruled over large chunks of our territory. We are, by character, and we have already proven it, completely anti-imperialists (...). These facts of our History are completely unknown in these regions [Asia-Africa] and its promotion would have significant psychological value (Menezes 2012: 292).

It is fascinating to see how the author draws an analogy between the Brazilian alleged lack of imperial ambitions in the 19th century and the anti-imperialist struggle from Bandung. In fact, when the decisionmaker acts as a practical-intuitive historian, analogies are a common strategy to interpret the international environment. Whenever decision-makers analogize, 'a historical event [Brazilian anti-imperialist tradition], whose causes are perceived to be known, is located and then defined as equivalent to the present event [Bandung anti-imperialism], followed by an analogy between the causes of both events' (Vertzberger 1986: 226).

It is equally remarkable how Menezes alternates between praising and denouncing Portuguese colonialism to create affinities with the Global South. Despite his positive views on the Portuguese legacy, he also casts doubts on the Portuguese ability to preserve its position in India given the 'overpowering and mammoth wave of nationalism that

exists in Asia' (Menezes 2012: 134). Brazil should 'help its friend [Portugal] find a graceful way out of the harsh situation in which it is involved; however, as a great nation, it should never give its support to stir it even more against a windmill' (Menezes 2012: 136-137).

Menezes' efforts to make Brazilians care about Asia and Africa often faced the hard facts of Brazilian foreign policy's obliviousness. In 1954, when the Western territory of New Guinea was disputed by Indonesia and the Netherlands, Brazil voted against a UN resolution that would favour the Indonesians. Menezes feared the consequences of this gesture for its image in Asia: 'How much gratuitously generated animosity. How much mistrust this attitude triggered towards a country so unknown for the Asians, just like some Asian countries are unknown to us' (Menezes 2012: 297).

Given that '[i]dentification is a continuum from negative to positive – from conceiving the other as anathema to the self to conceiving it as an extension of the self' (Wendt 1994: 386), this book (*O Brasil e o Mundo Ásio-Africano*) was one of the first attempts to show that Brazil and Afro-Asian countries had much more in common than it was believed, thus debunking deep-rooted thoughts in Brazilian diplomacy that uncritically constructed Brazil as a Western country. In fact, a 1958 review of *O Brasil e o Mundo Ásio-Africano* stated that the book 'brings much information about current issues in international politics rarely tackled with independence and subject knowledge in Portuguese language' (C.L. 1958: 216). Moreover, it argues that the book analyses, with a 'pamphleteering conviction', European and USA actions in the East 'not always with sympathy, but with the constant concern of finding out on which side lies the Brazilian interest' (C.L. 1958: 217).

As much as one can disagree with the author, his 'knowledge about information and the access to sources hardly used by the few Brazilians interested in these subjects' (C. L. 1958: 217) are undeniable. The author closes his review by writing that '[f]or the first time a Brazilian career diplomat did a long-lasting study on the vast and complex problems of the coloured world that surrounds the "heart of the world", south and east of its traditional boundaries', highlighting the 'most important – and perhaps most disturbing – aspects of the not always pacific process of achieving independence by subjugated people' (C.L. 1958: 217).

In 1958, *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* (RBPI) published an article by Menezes entitled '*A África na era do petróleo*' ('Africa in the age of oil'). Africanism, i.e., African nationalism, is described as an 'irresistible movement' that Europeans should accept just like they did with Balkan and Asian nationalisms (Menezes 1958: 59). However, he despises some Africanisms like 'Afro-Islamism', which could never 'be an honest movement in favour of the black people, the real owner of the continent', given that 'Arab expansion down the Sahara was always characterised by interests and rapine', including slave trade (Menezes 1958: 64). He also despised 'Afro-Communism': 'Every time that, as a consequence of European recalcitrance and American indecision, Moscow gets an Arab ally in Africa, it will also be getting new, involuntary and excellent agents South of the Sahara', thus urging the need to 'help the development of a Western-friendly Africanism' (Menezes 1958: 68-9).

In 1960, Menezes published another article on RBPI entitled '*O colonialismo na conjuntura ázio-africana*' ('Colonialism in the Asian-African conjuncture'). 'The European', the article goes, 'regards himself as the creditor of a huge quota of gratitude on behalf of the underdeveloped people', but ignores that his contributions to Asia, Africa and Latin America were already paid 'by the benefits they gained in these regions.' Europeans omitted that this 'transmission of gifts' was motivated by a 'will of power rather than generosity; by selfishness, rather than charity; by the anxiety for immediate needs, rather than obedience to a *Weltanschauung* founded on purely ethical bases' (Menezes 1960: 54). Menezes praised neutralism, standing for 'the conception of a large, relatively weak in weapons world, but huge in territory and people, standing up not against one or both superpowers, but seeking to prevent them from colliding' (Menezes 1960: 60).

Breaking up with the Brazilian imaginary that considered the Afro-Asian bloc to be as threatening as the communists, the author regrets that '[t]o most of the western people the word neutralism still carries "pseudo-communist" grievances.' A sad example was the repercussion of the Sino-Indian tensions: 'in Brazil, in 1959, we just saw how eagerly most of our press wished India to retaliate Chinese aggressions by joining the American field and abandoning the leadership of the international neutralist movement' (Menezes 1960: 60).

Despite such misunderstandings, the diplomat believed that 'the leitmotiv of the 1960s will not be, like many believe, the Russian-American capitalist-communist symbiosis,' but neutralism, 'acting as a barrier against the economic and ideological ambitions of both giants and, at the same time, increasingly shortening their areas of friction and, hence, their possibility of colliding in a nuclear hecatomb' (Menezes 1960: 60).

Oscillating between Lisbon and Bandung, Menezes showed that, although he praised neutralism and Afro-Asian nationalisms, he wished to 'tame' the decolonisation process to keep it from acquiring an anti-Western shape. Not surprisingly, he placed Gamal Abdel Nasser's pan-Arabism in the same level of North American propaganda and Sino-Soviet expansionism, labelling them as 'ideological colonialisms.' The radio broadcasts from Cairo to Sub-Saharan Africa, many of them in local languages, were offered as proof of Egyptian imperialism in the region (Menezes 1960: 48).

Thus, in these first moments, we can see how, in the dichotomy proposed by Phillips (2016) between 'solidarists' and 'sovereignists' in Bandung – i.e., in the struggles between a cosmopolitan and a radical Global South internationalism –, the author was more supportive of the former. Alexander Wendt (1992) once wrote that 'anarchy is what states make of it.' With its diverse legacy and internal clashes, the Bandung Conference also allowed manifold interpretations.

In 1961, Menezes published *Ásia, África e a Política Independente do Brasil* (*Asia, Africa, and the Independent Policy of Brazil*). Unlike his 1956 book, in which he bashed the Brazilian lack of interest in Asia and Africa, in this book he acknowledged that Brazilian-African relations had become 'a mandatory topic in the news, interviews, diplomatic statements, and even in people's conversations' (Menezes 1961: 107). Sadly, however, Africa was still seen with fear as an economic competitor of Brazil, rather than a partner sharing

common beliefs. Hence, relations with Africa should not be only economic, but also political and cultural:

What do we know about the thriving modern African literature? (...) How many of us know that, despite writing and thinking in French, English, or Portuguese, black people are, fairly and proudly, forging literature and claiming the same right to give birth to a culture of their own? (Menezes 1961: 107).

Menezes' hesitations towards Portuguese colonialism in his 1956 book vanished as he mourned over the Portuguese resistance to accept African nationalism: 'Nowadays, even colonial powers which are more humane in the racial tracts, like Portugal and Spain, hang on to the most complete conservatism' (Menezes 1961: 40). In a moment when many Brazilian diplomats claimed that the country had shared interests with the West, this book constructs a world in which Brazil is placed closer to the Global South:

If there is a bloc to which we can [expect to] [...] belong is that of the underdeveloped [countries]; the one stretching across the Southern latitudes of the planet, in that unassisted, oppressed, and overpopulated stripe. West? What is this West to which these 'ultra-indigenous', masked as champions of democracy, want to give us the illusion to belong? Certainly that of the white, rich, technically advanced, and despisers of coloured people countries (Menezes 1961: 9).

To prove that Brazil had more in common with the exploited than with the exploiters, it was necessary to construct Brazilian struggle for sovereignty and Afro-Asian struggle for independence as similar enterprises: 'everything that is made for Africanism, everything achieved to rush the independence movements or to stop the march of economic colonialism, whether it comes from Europe, the USA, or Russia, will be of great interest to Latin American countries, [...] especially to Brazil' (Menezes 1961: 45).

Menezes strongly advocated it was Brazil's duty to lead the Global South: 'We were once a colony, we were never imperialists and, above all, who, better than us, who carry neither past nor present guilts, to unfurl the flag of a crusade of the weak?'. Brazil could not let 'much less prepared countries like India, Egypt, Mexico, Venezuela and now Cuba, steal this honourable task from us' (Menezes 1961: 70-71). He praised Jânio's diplomacy for 'leaving that decorative-contemplative stage in which it has long vegetated' but regretted that few Brazilians 'understand the reasons and advantages of trying an Afro-Asian leadership and why Brazil is suitable for that' (Menezes 1961: 70).

The effort to construct a world in which the 'North-South' antagonism was more relevant than the 'East-West' one is clear in the following excerpt: 'The cliché that an eventual struggle will be fought between those who defend a free world and the human rights against a materialistic, freedom-oppressor enemy, falls in deaf Eastern, black or Arab ears', since this construction comes from the same Westerners 'who oppressed them and who

wish to keep oppressing them, if not politically, at least economically' (Menezes 1961: 61). Brazilians who constructed the Cold War as an 'East-West' cleavage wrongly believed that Arab freedom would threaten the oil supply:

The day oil-producing countries like Iran, Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia get rid of the shackles of Anglo-French-American 'trusts,' [Brazil will] buy fuel without intermediaries, exchange them for our primary and manufactured products or fix mutually beneficial local agreements (Menezes 1961: 101-102).

As a norm entrepreneur, Menezes tried to convince Brazilians of the advantages of a Brazilian commitment to the Global South:

In this enterprise, we can already count on the almost unanimous support of students, intellectuals, journalists, and even the simple man in the street who, in his eternal and innate intuition, has already realised that the consolidation of Brazilian international position will be the quickest way to set it free, not only from the low living standards unleashed by capitalist imperialism but also from a pact signed with Soviet communism (Menezes 1961: 9).

The last pages of *Ásia, África e a Política Independente do Brasil* are dedicated to defending a controversial position at that time: the recognition of communist China. Despite not sympathizing with the Chinese communist regime (or perhaps because of that), Menezes believed that communist China should be admitted to the UN because excluding Beijing would martyrize the Chinese Communist Party, enhance its local support, and – worst of all – isolate Chinese Christians. The author believed that Brazil, as the largest Catholic country, should perpetuate the legacy of St. Francis Xavier, a Spanish Catholic missionary who helped spread Catholicism in Asia (Menezes 1961: 131-2). Once again History is mobilized to justify his plans for Brazilian foreign policy.

Menezes was aware that many Brazilians at that time saw an Afro-Asian oriented foreign policy as counterproductive since they believed these countries had nothing to offer to Brazil in terms of economic gains. Thus, by empowering Brazil with the mission of carrying out the legacy of the Portuguese Empire and St. Francis Xavier; by emphasizing the colonial past shared by Brazil and Afro-Asian countries; and by pointing out the economic gains that an Afro-Asian foreign policy could yield, Menezes showed how History may provide two sources of legitimacy for decisionmakers: a normative and a cognitive one. Normative legitimacy proves that a certain policy is consistent with key national or international values – which, according to Menezes, were anticolonialism and Global South solidarity. Cognitive legitimacy, on the other hand, proves the feasibility of a certain policy – which, according to Menezes, was proved by free access to Arab oil and an improvement in living standards (Vertzberger 1986: 229-30).

In 1963, Menezes published *Subdesenvolvimento e Política Internacional* (*Underdevelopment and International Politics*), in which he stated that the so-called

‘national security’ ushered to extreme violence on both sides of the Cold War, from ‘tortures in the dungeons of the NKVD [the Soviet Union’s People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs] or blood orgies in the streets of Budapest’ to a ‘highly mischievous devil who [...] crushes the spirit, galvanizes courage, and destroys reputation’ in the West (Menezes 1963: 16). Far from being a threat, the Global South is constructed as a source of peace: ‘the larger the number of truly non-committed countries [...], the smaller the frictions between Russia and the USA would be.’ If one day the Soviets and North Americans tried to divide the world into two clear zones of influence, ‘the bigger and more cohesive the neutralist bloc is, the larger would be the possibilities of defence for the rest of the non-Russian and non-American mankind’ (Menezes 1963: 31).

Given Latin American discrete participation in the non-aligned movement, the author constructed an identification between the region and Afro-Asian countries and, once again, called for the Brazilian leadership of the developing nations. Latin America is increasingly ‘attuned to the ideas of an independent foreign policy and of support to other African and Asian underdeveloped countries’ and ‘[n]othing will stop the effective, natural, and fair leadership of Brazil in this matter’ (Menezes 1963: 45).

Menezes constructed a world where peripheral countries were united. However, unlike simplistic views state, constructivism is not simply about constructing reality according to one’s whims because such construction is ‘continuously influenced by feedback from reality’ (Elsenhans 2019: 36). Hence, the author was aware of the tensions that could affect his project. Many goods produced in Latin America were then being supplied to Europe by Africa at competitive prices: ‘Competition is high and will become stronger and unfair, unless Africans and Latin Americans unite, make a “pool” of their goods and impose prices upon Europe and the USA’ (Menezes 1963: 127).

He also expressed concerns with Asian countries which, ‘due to the financial interests of their governments, or of their own rulers, remain connected to US’s anticolonial policy’ (Menezes 1963: 128). Such were the cases of Turkey, Thailand, and Iran, who voted against the emancipation of Algeria in 1959: ‘This immoral performance, contrary to countries who were brothers in race and continent, will certainly give way to future retaliations’ (Menezes 1963: 129).

Menezes’ defence of neutralism raised questions among his readers. A review on *Subdesenvolvimento e Política Internacional* criticised him for condemning ‘capitalism as unable to solve the anguishing problems of mankind in the 20th century’, but at the same time not seeing, ‘in the socialist solutions, any way out for the impasse’ and just pointing out ‘some concessions to be made to each of the two systems, which does not go to the crux of the matter at all’ (Mathias 1963: 541-2). Despite this critique, the reviewer states the author ‘deserves acknowledgement for the contribution he has been giving to the study of a field with so few specialists among us and whose bibliography is so scarce, in contrast with the importance and the actuality of the subject’ (Mathias 1963: 542).

Within the Lisbon-Bandung axis we propose, the writings of the author in this first moment (1956-1963) started shifting from Lisbon to Bandung. In his earlier writings, his support for Afro-Asian decolonisation coexisted with some contempt towards certain

nationalist expressions, an admiration for the Portuguese Empire, and the advocacy of a Brazilian leadership in the Global South. These oscillations between *Lisbon and Bandung* were the expression of an author writing from a peripheral country that still had strong ties with its former colonisers.

## Heyday and downfall (1980)

When History was not enough, Menezes resorted to fiction. In 1980, he published *A Grande Jogada (The Great Move)*. Written during the oil crisis triggered by the Iranian Revolution (1979) and after Menezes had served as Brazilian ambassador to Tunisia, *A Grande Jogada* is a romance and a manifesto against the greed of the First World, but also an autobiography in the third person. The protagonist is Euclides Soveral, a diplomat with the same characteristics as the author.

Like Menezes, Soveral wrote a book calling for a Brazilian leadership of non-aligned countries 'due to its continental dimensions and its ethnic aspects of non-racist country' (Menezes 1980: 9). After the 1964 coup, Soveral was one of the first diplomats to answer an enquiry in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) about his opinions on Cuba and Portuguese colonialism<sup>2</sup>. Despite his acquittal, he ended up 'in a sluggish General Consulate of Brazil in Liverpool' (Menezes 1980: 14-5).

In 1966, when all his colleagues had reached the highest position in their careers, Soveral became the chief of the embassy in Karachi, Pakistan, 'a meaningless position for the Brazilian foreign policy at the time.' In Karachi, he emphasised the importance of strengthening bonds with the Persian Gulf states due to the importance they would have in the future (Menezes 1980: 15). In 1968, Soveral organised a group of industrialists, traders, and ministers to visit the Persian Gulf. However, 'when competition over prestige arose among the ministries involved, and perhaps a hostility by external or internal economic forces to the realisation of the idea, the newspapers started mocking Soveral' (Menezes 1980: 17). All these were episodes of Menezes' life.

In 1979, Soveral sent a letter to the new Brazilian government, proposing a plan to establish direct commercial relations with Arab countries in the extraction, refining, and transport of oil. Although it was initially ignored, the letter ended up in the hands of Sá de Almeida, a well-connected person in MEGAOIL, a Brazilian oil conglomerate. Almeida brought the plan to the presidency and contacted Soveral, who was honoured to assist the government.

The plan comprised a bold joint venture with general Guedaffi's<sup>3</sup> Libya to ensure oil supply to Brazil without intermediaries. While visiting Guedaffi in his tent, Soveral explained the advantages of the oil cooperation in a moment when 'American spending on fuel to keep its economy ready for conventional wars and to develop a program of nuclear weapons increased astonishingly' (Menezes 1980: 72). Soveral also emphasised geopolitical advantages. Together, Libya and Brazil could reduce American, European, and Russian-Cuban influences in sub-Saharan Africa: 'Just like one cannot deny that you have a relevant role to play in Central-Equatorial Africa, you cannot overlook the

fact that Brazil may have significant influence over West African countries and Maputo (Mozambique)’ (Menezes 1980: 74).

At a certain point, Sovoral expressed an ongoing concern of Menezes in his books: racial tolerance as a diplomatic tool. When Guedaffi asked how an approximation between such different countries as Brazil and Libya could be possible, Sovoral proudly answered: ‘we have a tool that is much more powerful than the nuclear bomb – our people are antiracist...’ (Menezes 1980: 75). Guedaffi then agreed with a secret rendezvous with the Brazilian president in the Galeão airbase.

On the scheduled date, a few moments before Guedaffi’s arrival, the Brazilian president stated that the main Brazilian asset in the negotiations would be not to rely on the Hormuz Strait for the supply of oil, since the Soviets and North Americans were planning on sharing the control of the strait:

Gentlemen, it would be a tough day if the USSR imposed terms and conditions to buy oil from the Gulf [...] However, even tougher, and more hurtful would be the day in which this same USSR, with the approval of our historical American allies, imposed such control on us. And, my friends, this day may be nearer than we expected, and this is the most useful reason for the immediate realisation of an oil joint venture with Guedaffi (Menezes 1980: 101-102).

Unfortunately, the Libyan-Brazilian joint venture was frustrated by an espionage strategy carried out by statesmen and employees of big European and North American conglomerates, together with pro-American Brazilian industrialists who persuaded the military to abandon the idea. Taking advantage of the Brazilian withdrawal, France made a similar agreement with Libya, thus reaping all the dividends Brazil was seeking (Menezes 1980: 111).

While celebrating the agreement with France, a reticent Guedaffi mulled over: ‘There he was, in the same tent, next to a gas stove, lying on the cushions with a hesitant smile on his lips. He would have preferred Brazil; it was a Third World country much like his own. But *In-sh-Allah*, France turned out to be a better choice.’ Brazil asked no favour whatsoever, whereas France demanded Libya to recognise the Israeli right to have a state (Menezes 1980: 114-115). Deep inside, Guedaffi knew he made a mistake by relinquishing Brazil.

*A Grande Jogada* ends melancholically. A disappointed Sovoral was back to his humble apartment in Ipanema while Rio de Janeiro was preparing, without much enthusiasm, for the first carnival of the decade. Due to high fuel prices, ‘[t]he fares of interstate trains and buses [...] would make many people think twice before deciding to come to Rio’ (Menezes 1980: 116). Guedaffi almost saved the *carioca* carnival.

*A Grande Jogada* represents the heyday of the author’s leaning towards Bandung, but at the same time predicts the difficult years ahead. It also predicted a real Libyan-Brazilian diplomatic incident in 1983, when four Libyan cargo planes landed in Manaus due to technical problems. They carried weapons headed to Nicaraguan *Sandinistas*. Caught between American pressures to retain the planes and Libyan pressures to release them, Brazil did

not allow the take-off to Nicaragua but allowed their return to Libya. The episode had a negative impact on the flourishing trade of weapons between both countries.

A *Grande Jogada* is a trophy the author bestowed himself after seeing that many of his ideas were being carried out by the Brazilian government since Jânio Quadros' IFP in 1961. Even after the military rose to power in 1964, Brazil played a significant role in the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD), emerging 'both as a regional leadership and as a leadership of the whole intellectual heritage of Third World countries' (Kocher 2015: 12). In fact, the 'Bandung spirit' was not only about geopolitical interests related to non-alignment and challenging a racialised world order. It was also about overcoming development issues: 'the political objectives associated with the Non-Aligned Movement were always and prominently tied up with the question of development' (Weber and Winanti 2016: 392).

Hence, when it comes to the legacy of Bandung, Brazil was more attracted by the economic development agenda than by the political agenda. Despite having no role in the non-aligned movement, thanks to many ideas of the IFP consolidated in the MFA, Brazil was deeply engaged in the search for economic development and joined forces with other developing countries in multilateral forums. In 1964, these countries created the Group of 77 which, under Brazilian leadership, demanded fairer conditions for poor countries in world trade (Viana and Alves 2014: 699-701).

Under Azeredo da Silveira, chancellor of President Ernesto Geisel (1974-1979), Brazil developed good relations with the Arab world, recognising Palestine, standing up against Zionism, and ensuring the supply of oil amidst the 1973 oil crisis. Known as the second moment of the IFP, Geisel's foreign policy led Brazil to recognise communist China and the independence of Portuguese colonies in Africa. In the late 1970s and early 80s, Brazil established a significant trade of weapons with the Arabs, having Libya's Gaddafi and Iraq's Saddam Hussein as some of its clients.

Therefore, not even the military coup that ousted President João Goulart in 1964 challenged the Brazilian approximation with the developing world. As Kathryn Sikkink and Martha Finnemore (1998: 895) state, successful new norms face three stages: emergence, dissemination ('norm cascade'), and internalization. When Menezes wrote his first book in 1956, the norms claiming for a Brazilian commitment with the Global South were still emerging. Throughout the 1960s and 70s, with the IFP of Jânio Quadros, João Goulart, and Ernesto Geisel, and the Brazilian participation in the Group of 77, these norms went through a cascade process through which they were spread and universally accepted.

Hence, the Brazilian recognition of communist China and Palestine, as well as its active role in the multilateral forums that gathered developing countries (all of which under the military regime) show that the Brazilian military had taken for granted a foreign policy more concerned with the Global South. Not even the tight relations between the IFP and the figure of João Goulart seemed to bother the military anymore. The principles that guided the IFP before 1964 were so deeply ingrained in Brazilian institutions (especially the MFA and the military) that they survived the political animosities between those who started the IFP and the military regime, who preserved and carried out its principles

after 1964. Such principles were: the supremacy of the North-South conflict over the East-West one, the necessity to overcome economic inequality, the importance of broadening Brazilian markets, and the urge to support Afro-Asian decolonisation (Viana and Alves 2014: 688-689).

Therefore, when *A Grande Jogada* was published in 1980, these norms had already reached the third and final stage proposed by Kathryn Sikkink and Martha Finnemore (1998): the stage of internalization and institutionalization. At the end of the norm cascade, 'norms acquire a taken-for-granted quality and are no longer a matter of broad public debate' (Sikkink and Finnemore 1998: 895).

Emanuel Adler (2008: 103) states that whenever an international actor *describes* reality, he is also *constructing* reality. When Menezes described a world in which the Global South would have ever-growing importance and Brazil would play an important role, he contributed to the emergence of this very world. Hence, by writing about Menezes, we are not writing about an individual, but rather about an agent. Individuals only write within a context of intersubjective understandings, and it is only when they provide their contexts with their personal understandings that they become *agents* (Adler 2008: 110). We are not suggesting that Bezerra de Menezes was the sole responsible for these shifts in Brazilian foreign policy. However, by writing books that advocated a larger Brazilian presence in the Global South even before the IFP was adopted, Menezes was one of the many voices that contributed to creating an ideological environment favourable to the adoption of an Afro-Asian oriented foreign policy.

*A Grande Jogada* was published almost at the same time as the Portuguese translation of *The Fifth Horseman*, a best-seller by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre about a fictitious terrorist attack on New York planned by Gaddafi. *Jornal do Brasil* (1980: 10) compared both books by stating that the best-seller depicted Gaddafi as a threat, whereas Menezes depicted him 'as a hope for half-a-dozen main characters in the novel', a hope that vanishes, 'as a mirage in the desert,' though not for Gaddafi's fault.

## Post-Cold War

The two last books by Menezes came out in 1997 and 2000. The 1997 book is divided into two parts. The first part, entitled *Um Diplomata no Oriente (A Diplomat in the East)* depicts his experience as *chargé d'affaires* in Indonesia from 1954 to 1956. One of the persons he admired the most in Indonesia was Brazilian ambassador Oswaldo Trigueiro who, as seen above, despised everything Menezes believed: he was a firm anti-neutralist and accused the Bandung Conference of being a threat to the West. Nevertheless, Menezes held him in high esteem. Trigueiro was so respected in Indonesia that before he left 'the Jakarta government honoured him with a big farewell dinner, the first-ever offered to the delegate of a Western country [...] a breaking of the nationalist, Afro-Asian rules of Indonesia' (Menezes 1997: 36).

Another person he admired was the editor of *Times of Indonesia*, a black-skinned, 'vigorously anti-Western' Ceylonese whose editorials 'were feared by the Portuguese

diplomatic staff in Jakarta.’ During the Goa issue in 1954 and 1955, whenever the Portuguese minister in Jakarta opened the newspaper, he ‘was suddenly frightened to think what the “black guy” of the “Times of Indonesia” would say on that day against the little remains of the Portuguese Empire.’ His editorials spared neither the USA, the USSR, England, nor China (Menezes 1997: 43).

From Trigueiro to the anti-imperialist Ceylonese journalist: once again the Lisbon-Bandung axis pervades the author’s work and life.

Menezes praised Indonesia as a land of ‘idealist and patriotic, civic-minded men, despite all the political and economic disadvantages they had to put up with.’ Breaking with his customary stance of advocating a Brazilian prominence in the Global South, he recognised the Asian superiority in their struggle against imperialism. Javanese public men, although ‘mostly short, skinny, rickety’, are ‘way more virile in their attitudes of citizens than our Latin American people, always engaged in bragging their “muy macho” attributes, but who show so little courage in the defence of the real interests of their nations’ (Menezes 1997: 56).

The second part of the book, entitled *Brazil, Subida ou Descida para o Século XXI?* (*Brazil, Up or Down to the 21st Century?*), gathers several articles published by the author in the press during the 1990s, when many of the principles of the IFP were being abandoned, much to the diplomat’s chagrin. The enthusiastic Menezes who vigorously advocated a Brazilian leadership of the peripheral countries in the 1950s and 60s, now called for Brazil to learn from them instead. In 1993, he praised the Indian courage to develop an atmospheric air-propelled rocket despite American disapproval and criticised the lack of stories about it in the Brazilian press: ‘I don’t understand how and why our newspapers and magazines still haven’t dealt with this topic with all due consideration, that our scientific and military community still haven’t had access to this story and inferred nothing from it’ (Menezes 1997: 83).

Menezes berated President Fernando Henrique Cardoso’s subservience to market-oriented policies and the USA. This new environment made him run out of his initial hopes of a Brazilian leadership of the Afro-Asian world, given President Cardoso believed ‘in subservient neoliberalism, which does not want to see beyond the corner of History and to conclude that the dollar is no longer a trustworthy currency (Menezes 1997: 101). His 1960s claims to end nuclear proliferation also vanished, as he advocated military cooperation with China and India to counter the USA, and looked upon Asian countries as a source of protection: ‘In order to start being treated with respect we don’t even need an atomic defence. It is enough that the self-proclaimed “sheriff of the world” bear in mind that one or two atomic nations are willing to support us in case they wish to carry out any threat [...] to us’ (Menezes 1997: 102).

Six years before passing away, Menezes published *Da Europa aos Himalaias no Volante* (*From Europe to the Himalayas on the Steering Wheel*), which narrates the author’s adventure driving a Mercedes from Stuttgart to Islamabad in 1967, when he was ambassador to Pakistan. Driving through Afghanistan, he noticed that the quality of Afghan roads was proof of the success of neutralism: ‘when the Cold War had to consider the whims of a

acific coexistence, aligned and non-aligned countries in strategic areas became the stage for a fierce competition (...) between the two superpowers' (Menezes 2000: 110). In his interpretation, the good Afghan roads were a product of the technical and scientific rivalry between Moscow and Washington. However, 'after the Soviet invasion, the retaliation of Afghan tribes and Pakistanis armed by the CIA, and after the current (1999) Anglo-American air raids coming from the Persian Gulf aiming at Osama bin-Laden, 'the beautiful roads turned into a bunch of craters and holes and, above all, into privileged places for hiding cruel land mines' (Menezes 2000: 111).

The author praised the Afghan ability to overcome its divisions and remain united against foreign threats: 'there lives a people who value its sovereignty and, above all, hates external interventions, either through guns, separatist attempts, or bribes.' Soviets ignored it and had a humiliating defeat. The USA apparently '[c]onfused the patriotism of Afghan *mujahedeen* (guerrilla fighters) in expelling the Russians with an acquiescent subservience to the American strategies of expansion via CIA and certain Pakistani and Saudi governments' (Menezes 2000: 116).

Just like in 1997, the author contrasted a prostrated Brazil with the boldness of Asian countries, this time using the Pakistani nuclear program as an example. Instead of spending money on corruption, interest payments to the IMF, or saving bankrupt banks, Pakistan invested in nuclear research

not only because it protected the country from Indian ambitions (...), but also because it made the country respected and free from the Anglo-American obsession of atomic castrations through the hypocritical 'Non-Proliferation Treaty', to which Brazil was so abjectly submitted by the current government (Menezes 2000: 129-130).

Thus, in 1998, while Brazil signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Pakistan inaugurated its nuclear program. The author adds that Pakistanis had a military president 'who, with the maximal diplomatic tact, knew how to write an autobiography whose title, *Friends, not Masters*, indicated the patriotic conviction of a people who, despite some track errors, already knew where it was heading to' (Menezes 2000: 130). The military president was general Mohammed Ayub Khan, who ruled Pakistan from 1958 to 1969. Despite his alignment with the USA, Ayub Khan criticised US intromission in Pakistani foreign policy. As the title of the book suggests – *Friends, not Masters* –, he believed that an alliance with the USA should not be confused with subservience.

The emphasis constructivists place on ideational structures cannot blind us to the fact that constructivism is not 'ideas all the way down.' The Cold War was a discursive structure, but intersubjective constructions often place agents face to face with persistent social facts (Wendt 1994: 389). Thus, 'even if in the fullness of time all material constraints are negotiable, in the meantime they are not. Whether we like it or not, the distribution and composition of material capabilities at any given moment help define the possibilities of our action' (Wendt 1999: 113). Ideas are based and regulated by physical, independent reality, and constructivism is aware of that (Wendt 1999: 110).

Therefore, as the Cold War faded, neutralism lost one of its strategic advantages: the superpowers' rivalry. A relevant insight we can grasp from the diplomat's two last writings is how he shifted from praising the 'solidarist' legacy of Bandung in his first books to praising the 'sovereignist' legacy of Bandung. In other words: he stopped claiming for a friendlier approximation between the West and the Global South and favoured a more assertive behaviour of the latter towards the former.

Moreover, Brazil, whose governments in the 1990s were adjusted to the neoliberal order, was no longer the potential leader of the Global South. This new ideational structure of the international system and the new reality of Brazilian internal politics drove Menezes to look upon Asia no longer as a disciple, but as an inspiration. Brave and skinny Javanese, Indians with their rockets, Chinese and Pakistanis with their nuclear powers, and patriotic Afghan *mujahedeen* contrasted with a subservient, neoliberal, and nuclear-castrated Brazil.

## Closing remarks

Understanding how agents and structures are mutually constituted and how ideas change international relations: these are two important issues for constructivist scholarship. The rise of Afro-Asian solidarity changed the structure of the international system by adding new actors to the scenario. The ideational structure according to which the Cold War was a clash between Washington and Moscow was soon confronted by a new narrative that claimed the Global South was another bloc.

This new configuration influenced a Brazilian diplomat who, by conveying ideas that enhanced similarities between Brazil and the Global South, tried to provide Brazil with a new identity that detached it from the West. Debunking traditional narratives that uncritically constructed Brazil as a Western country, he unveiled a whole different country whose colonial past and anti-imperialist aspirations brought it closer to Asia and Africa. In that sense, Menezes acted as a *norm entrepreneur* as he tried to persuade Brazilians of the importance of the Afro-Asian world.

Besides being a norm entrepreneur, the diplomat was also a *practical-intuitive historian* who mobilized the past to legitimize a stronger Brazilian commitment with the Afro-Asian world. Although Brazil's position as a peripheral country brought it closer to Africa and Asia, culturally speaking Brazil was much closer to Europe due to its Portuguese heritage. Reflecting such structural constraints, Menezes' first writings claimed that Brazil should lead the Global South as heir of the Portuguese Empire. However, his next books berated Portuguese unwillingness to grant independence to its colonies. The neoliberal supremacy after the Cold War and Brazilian conformation to it also influenced his writings, and its initial position as leader of the Global South gave way to one of a disciple who had much to learn from Asian boldness.

In acting as a norm entrepreneur and a practical-intuitive historian, Menezes spanned from *Lisbon* – a defence of decolonisation allied with sympathy towards Portugal and with ambitions of a Brazilian leadership – to *Bandung* – support to Afro-Asian assertiveness against the West.

## Notes

- 1 All citations of Menezes' works have been translated from Portuguese by the author.
- 2 A March 1964 report of the National Security Council cast doubt on Menezes' ideological position (Carmo 2018: 65-6).
- 3 A reference to Muammar El Gaddafi, Libyan ruler from 1969 to 2011.

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## A Política Externa Brasileira de Lisboa a Bandung

**Resumo:** Deprendendo de uma abordagem construtivista, este artigo se baseia nas relações entre o Brasil e o mundo afro-asiático a partir dos escritos do diplomata Bezerra de Menezes, que defendeu um maior compromisso da política externa brasileira com o Sul Global. O autor agiu tanto como um empreendedor de normas (*norm entrepreneur*) que problematizava o pertencimento brasileiro ao Ocidente, quanto como um historiador prático-intuitivo (*practical-intuitive historian*) que usava o passado para mostrar que os laços que uniam o Brasil à Ásia e à África eram mais estreitos do que aqueles que o uniam à Europa.

**Palavras-chave:** Afro-Asiático; Bezerra de Menezes; política externa brasileira; construtivismo; política externa independente.

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