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Brazil's policy toward Israel and Palestine in Dilma Rousseff and Michel Temer's administrations: have there been any shifts?

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Abstract

This paper analyzes Brazil's relationship with Israel and Palestine during the Rousseff (2011–2016) and Temer (2016–2018) administrations. We consider the political and economic crises in Brazil since 2014, and their consequences in foreign policy. Our question is whether there was room for changes, and we attempt to understand if there were conditions for a shift in Brazilian foreign policy for the Middle East. Therefore, our hypothesis is that in this specific period, besides public declarations, there were no deep changes. We conclude that foreign policy was conditioned by structural objectives, such as economic interests, the relationship with Arab and Jewish communities, and Brazilian international projection.

Keywords: Brazil-Middle East relationship; Brazilian Foreign Policy; Foreign Policy Theory; Rousseff and Temer administrations.

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Introduction

Conceptual discussion on foreign policy decision-making is an important issue in International Relations' studies. Foreign policy formulation can be understood as the arrangement of the state's internal and external forces. One of the main works on the subject is that of Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow (1999) process in foreign policy are described: individual, institutional and bureaucratic. In this research we will consider the last two levels, such as the importance of internal elements, with emphasis on formal institutions and groups of influence. At the same time, we cannot ignore external elements, such as the influence of central countries in the international system. However, these topics are not our focus in this paper. This kind of foreign

policy analysis is discussed by different authors. According to Brighi and Hill (2012, 147), in a perspective closer to realism,

The phase of implementation is that in which actors confront their environment and in which, in turn, the environment confronts them. In essence, this phase implies an interactive strategic process which is very often important when it comes to translating foreign policy objectives into practice, and decisive when it comes to turning practice into desired outcomes.

This paper's main goal is to understand how foreign policy implementation must consider both domestic and international environments. At the same time, we analyze the possibility of change in Brazilian foreign policy towards the Middle East from 2011 to 2018, considering the change in both Brazil's domestic environment, and in the international environment regarding the main actors in Middle East. Carlsnaes (2012, 113) states that "foreign policy of a given state is the product of a number of actors and structures both domestic and international."

Our purpose is to discuss, as stated in the title, whether there have been any shifts in Brazil's policy toward Israel and Palestine during the Dilma Rousseff and Michel Temer administrations. Therefore, the focus is to understand possible changes between two different administrations, with very different political and social bases of support domestically, as well as a very changed international environment towards to the Middle East.

In the field of foreign policy-making theory, Hermann's formulation is perfectly appropriate to our goal. This is true because we will discuss the possibilities of change in a specific field of Brazilian foreign policy, regarding a particular geographic area – the Middle East - more specifically Israel and Palestine, and will suggest what are the possibilities and difficulties for change. To this end, we will focus on the four levels of Hermann (1990), and based on them, understand Brazil's relations towards the region. For the author:

[...] foreign policy can be viewed as subject to at least four graduated levels of change: (1) Adjustment changes. Changes occur in the level of effort and/or in the scope of recipients; (2) Program changes. Changes are made in the methods or means by which the goal or problem is addressed; (3) Problem/goal changes. The initial problem or goal that the policy addresses is replaced or simply forfeited; (4) International orientation changes. The most extreme form of foreign policy change involves the redirection of the actor's entire orientation toward world affairs (Hermann 1990).

As will be seen later, these four graduated levels of change are appropriate to the goal we propose: to have a theoretical parameter to discuss the possibilities or impossibility of changes in Brazilian foreign policy. The four levels help explain the considerably limited changes we will find. Our analysis does not disregard the idea that bigger political crises, domestically or abroad, may have repercussions for the country's foreign policy. In the future, the shift of power in January 2019 could, though not surely, bring forth Hermann's levels 3 (Problem/Goal Changes) or 4 (International Orientation Changes).

Researches and leading papers regarding Brazil's relations with other countries or regions have not been fully developed. This is the case with the studies on Brazil-Middle East relations. There are important researches, theses, articles, publications in Brazil (Rosa 2000; Breda 2000). Books and articles published abroad (Amar 2014; Grossman 2017) help expand the knowledge about these relationships. Brazilian relations with the Middle East, Arab countries and Israel were analyzed in the context of the debate on foreign policy in general (Cervo and Bueno 2002) or more specifically in the analysis of its relations with the United States (Spektor 2009). As in other fields of Brazil's foreign policy, relations with the United States are an interpretive key to understand Brazil-Middle-East relations, though not exclusively. As written by Uziel (2010), the subject of peace and war in the Middle East was the most important for the Security Council from 1946 to present day. Brazil occupied a non-permanent seat in different periods, leading the country to an active participation in the negotiations, always trying to reach a consensus.

This article aims to understand the tension between Brazilian interests – as far as policies announced by administrations are concerned – and the structural limitations that lead to permanent tension between stated interests and pragmatic realities.

Brief history of Brazil-Israel and Brazil-Palestine relations

Israel has always had an interest in maintaining relations with Latin America for the following, non exhaustive, list of reasons: a) political and diplomatic, given the numerical weight of the region in international bodies, particularly the UN; b) economic, more importantly as of 1990, not so much on account of trade, but above all because of the potential for technology transfer, including security technology, a key issue for Brazil; c) demographic, given the possibility of attracting members of the Jewish community, particularly in the case of difficulties in countries of origin (security, dictatorships, economic crisis) (Ben Rafael et al. 2014). When analyzing these relations during the period up until 1973, Kaufman et al. (1979, 228) show that Israel's interest was mostly because "Erosion of support for Israel in Latin America has been comparatively milder than in any other region." In the period analyzed in this paper, beyond the aforementioned reasons, it is important to consider the new wave of Israel's interest towards some Latin American countries, in search of support for its policies regarding the occupied territories, regional security, and last but not least, the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital (Marchao 2018).

During the first years of Israel's existence, the countries of Latin America were particularly important. As is often recalled, in 1947 the vote at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) that divided Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state, had thirty-three votes in favor, thirteen against, and ten abstentions – twenty of the thirty-three votes in favor came from Latin American countries. The General Assembly session of November 27th was chaired by Brazilian ambassador Oswaldo Aranha. Resolution 273, of May 11th 1949, which admits Israel as a member of the United Nations, was approved with thirty-seven votes in favor, one against, and nine abstentions.

Eighteen Latin American states supported the resolution, none voted against it, and only two abstained (Bailey et al. 2017).

The United States was a key agent in the creation of the State of Israel. Its role was also important given the influence that country had in Latin America. That is why, from the very beginning, the factor that tipped the balance in favor of UN approval of the Partition of Palestine was the significant numerical support it received from Latin America. At the time, Latin American countries made up approximately one third of the United Nations General Assembly, or twenty out of the fifty-seven votes in favor of Resolution 181, making them pivotal in approving the resolution and in blocking the approval of resolutions considered contrary to the creation of two states. This trend, according to the analysis by Kaufman et al. (1979), slowly began to change after the war of 1967.

During the 1950s, Latin America upheld its support for Resolution 181, and thus to recognition of Israel, without giving up its recognition of Arab rights over part of the territory of former Palestine. Good relationship policies toward Israel prospered based on the importance of the United States, or driven by a concern to keep quality relations with the Arab and Jewish communities in these countries. Considering Bailey et al. (2017), the relationship policies were also fostered by propaganda efforts, carried out by Israel to project an image of itself as a third-world country with development problems akin to those of Latin American countries. Without deepening the issue of Israel-Latin America relations in the 1950s, already addressed in Vigevani and Kleinas (2000), it is important to recall similar movements in countries with problems differing significantly from those of Brazil; Argentina, for instance, as described by Klich (2016). As will be shown later, trends in the international relations' structure changed, yet in Latin America the position before the United States, for various reasons, continued to be an intervening factor in the choices made by states. In order to understand Brazil's relations with the Middle East and the conflict between Arab countries and Israel at the time, Santos' (2001) paper underlying Brazil's role in the First UN Emergency Force in 1956 makes a significant contribution.

By the late 1960s, fundamental changes had occurred in the International System. At the UN, a change in the balance of power began with the admission of several recently independent African and Asian countries, which diminished the twenty Latin American states' relevance to less than 16% of total votes in 1968. The United States, increasingly more entangled in a war in Southeast Asia, was losing part of its influence in Latin America. Latin American countries began to align themselves based on their own political or economic interests, even though at first this was not reflected in their policies with respect to the Middle East. Israel's relationship with Latin America led to scientific exchange, joint development projects, and technical assistance agreements (Sharif 1977).

In 1972, Israel was granted Permanent Observer status to the OAS, an unusual position for a country not belonging to the Western Hemisphere, yet one that had also been granted to Spain. Trade relations with Latin America gained greater relative importance, at least with reference to Third World countries. A less obvious reason in the eyes of the public at large for Israel's interest in Latin America demographic, since the local Jewish communities are a source of immigration, as noted by Sharif (1977) and Rein (2010), deemed important both for their high cultural level and labor skills.

Since Latin America's attitude change toward Israel was discussed in other essays (Casarões and Vigevani 2014; Baeza 2012), this paper focuses on the reasons behind Brazil's changing attitude. One of them, in the 1970s, was the need to ensure a stable supply of energy, which prompted the Brazilian government to reach out to oil-exporting countries such as Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, an international trend that sought to further recognition of Palestine's right to self-determination was gaining momentum, and the growing importance of the non-aligned countries in the international system favored that trend. There is more than one issue related to this particular situation. The first one is the strengthened position of non-aligned or third world countries, which considered the United States and the capitalist world responsible for the economic gap between developed and underdeveloped countries. Israel was considered a close partner of the United States (Feldberg 2008). The second issue, a corollary of the first, is the strengthened position of Arab countries and oil producers. The OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries), founded in 1960, gained a new color after 1973. One of the consequences was Arab, Muslim and the non-aligned interest in the Palestinian Question (Pimentel 2001).

Without abandoning the principles that recognized Israel's right to self-determination and to safe borders, Brazil placed more emphasis on the rights of the Arabs. In a context of increasing polarization between Arabs and Israelis, strengthening ties with the former would apparently yield political and economic results. A slow and gradual process of increased recognition started, including political and diplomatic recognition of the Palestinians. In October 1974, Brazil voted in favor of Resolution 3210, which invited the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to take part in the deliberations of the General Assembly, in the plenary meetings, on the question of Palestine (United Nations 1975). Afterwards, Brazil voted in favor of Resolution 3237 (Observer Status for the Palestine Liberation Organization), inviting "the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer."

The vote in favor of the declaration that Zionism represented a form of racism and racial discrimination was widely discussed, as per UNGA Resolution 3379 of 1975 (Pimentel 2001; Rosa 2000; Dávila and Lesser 2012; Caraciki 2013; Santos and Uziel 2015; Grossman 2017). Today, in light of the research, we can consider it a decision that did not result from a fully bureaucratic process, but rather finds its rationale, in the case of Brazilian policy, strongly influenced by its relations with the United States, as analyzed by Santos and Uziel. Then Brazilian Foreign Minister Azeredo Silveira's position seemed less decisive compared to the President's:

What is known is enough to deepen the understanding of Brazilian foreign policy decision-making process during the Geisel administration, of responsible pragmatism, and of the position of Brazil toward the US and the Middle East. The vote on resolution 3379 was taken mostly by the President himself with an unclear degree of influence by Silveira. The main factor in the first vote was most likely simply time – or lack thereof – added to the centralizing style of the President. In the Plenary, the underlying reason to vote affirmatively could not easily be clarified given its nature of response to the US (Santos and Uziel 2015, 93).

With the support of and sponsored by Brazil, Resolution 3379 was revoked in 1991. Even the more critical research underscoring potential conceptual and ideological reasons for the Brazilian government's decision of 1975, e.g., Dávila and Lesser (2012), it is now acknowledged, as in Grossman (2017, 272) that “Nevertheless, there is no indication that anti-Jewish perceptions had anything to do with Brazil's decision to support Resolution 3379.”

It is worth recalling that Brazil's position, even in those circumstances, upheld the formal principle of equidistance, the country's adherence to the resolution on the Partition, and to Resolution 242 of November 1967. We acknowledge that there were political changes, especially after the first oil shock, however, we use the concept of equidistance based on the Brazilian position regarding the two-state solution, considering the Arab Palestinian and Jewish rights. Resolution 242 stated that Israel had to withdraw from the territories occupied during the Six Day War, returning to the Green Line, the 1949's armistice line (Golan Heights, West Bank, Gaza Strip, Sinai and Eastern Jerusalem) (Uziel 2011). The same could be said for Resolution 339, from October 1973, that decided on the cease-fire during the Yom Kippur war, supported by the Brazilian military government. Foreign Minister Gibson Barboza's trip to Egypt and Israel in January and February 1973 should be seen in the same light (Lessa 2000). These principles remained in effect after the 1985 redemocratization process, and throughout the administrations elected from 1990 to 2018.

According to Sharif (1977), during the 1970s the evolution of Brazil's pro-Arab position had economic motivations. It is widely accepted by scholars that the first oil shock led to economic crisis after the so-called Brazilian economic miracle. At the same time, it is important to highlight that the oil shock was the scare of the crisis, according to the consulted literature (Pereira 1978; Amar 2014; Santana 2014). However partial this view might be, as political components were also present, the fact is that Brazil succeeded in building economic ties with the Arab world, in particular with Iraq (Amar 2014; Santana 2014). In 1975 Corrêa da Costa, ambassador to the UN, put forth this position as follows: “The Brazilian government recognizes the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and sovereignty” (United Nations 1975).

While interpreting Brazil's long-term foreign policy, Lessa (1998, 6) stated that “In the five-year term [Geisel administration], Brazil consolidates cooperation lines with Western Europe, reaffirms already dynamic ties with Japan, and steers away from ‘excluding relationships,’ notably Israel and South Africa, which hindered improved relations with the Middle East and Black Africa.”

During the military governments, Brazil's tradition of recognizing Israel's right to exist within safe and internationally recognized borders was not changed. President Figueiredo, in his speech at the United Nations in 1982, stated the “right of all countries of the region, including Israel, to live in peace, within recognized borders” (Figueiredo 1995, 406). The Collor administration upheld the recognition of Palestinian rights, including, according to Rezek (1991), the right to self-determination and the creation of a state.

In August 1995, Fernando Henrique Cardoso's Minister of Foreign Affairs Luiz Felipe Lampreia made a trip to Israel with a view to strengthening peace, according to the Brazilian government itself (Lampreia 2010). On the same trip, he also visited the Gaza Strip, where he met with Yasser

Arafat and sowed the seeds of what, fifteen years later, in December 2010, during Lula da Silva's administration, would lead to the recognition of the Palestinian State in accordance with the 1967 borders. Lula da Silva visited Israel and Palestine in March 2010. In December 2010, in what may be considered Lula da Silva's last diplomatic act, the Brazilian government recognized the sovereignty of the Palestinian State in accordance with the 1967 borders.

The goal of this brief history of the relationship between Brazil, Israel, and Palestine up to 2010 is to demonstrate that these relations were implemented by governments of quite different orientations. There were a few sudden changes, which have been accounted for. Overall, however, one may say there were lines of continuity. As we will see, should this interpretation be correct, it will help understand why, over the more recent period, including the Rousseff, and even the Temer administrations, which is this paper's main focus, these guidelines showed signs of continuity.

Economic relations between Brazil, the Middle East and Israel from 2011 to 2017

Economic relations between Brazil and Middle Eastern countries were stable over the 2000s. Regional conflicts, including the Israel-Palestine conflict, did not interfere in these relations, as shown by the data below. During the years of Dilma Rousseff's government, trade with Middle Eastern countries continued. The fluctuations that occurred, some of which significant, were determined by factors derived from the international economy and national crises, including that of Brazil, and were not directly affected by political constraints. The same can be said of investment and technology transfer. The relationship is not new, both as regards Arab countries and Israel: it showed continuity. It went on during the Workers' Party administrations, thus in Rousseff's government too. For example, security technology cooperation between Israel and Brazil during the FIFA World Cup in 2014 and the Olympics in 2016 was important (Ministério das Comunicações 2011; Missão Econômica de Israel no Brasil 2014; Teixeira Júnior et al. 2017).

According to Tables 1 and 2, Brazil's share of exports to the Middle East, according to the latest data released by Brazil's Ministry of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services (Ministério da Indústria, Comércio Exterior e Serviços, MDIC), was 2.4% in 2000, 4.8% in 2011, and 5.36% in 2017. It is worth noting that, as of 2009, in the wake of the world financial and economic crisis, total exports plunged, a trend similar to that of the Middle East. As we have been examining, in the 2000s, exports to the Middle East rose from a 2-percent level, on average, to 5%. In the 2000s, Brazilian imports of oil from the Middle East were no longer significant, considering the growth of ethanol production and the change of Brazilian policy, emphasizing Latin American imports (Bessa 2013; "PróAlcool: programa brasileiro de álcool." 2006; Fares 2007). Following a brief rebound in 2010 and 2011, exports exhibit a downward trend at least until 2017. As shown in Table 1, a reasonably parallel movement occurs in the Middle East.

Table 1 - Brazil Exports (2000-2017)

Year	Exports		
	US\$ FOB (A)	Var. %	Part. %
2000	55,118,919,865.00	0.00	100.0
2001	58,286,593,021.00	5.75	100.0
2002	60,438,653,035.00	3.69	100.0
2003	73,203,222,075.00	21.12	100.0
2004	96,677,498,766.00	32.07	100.0
2005	118,529,184,899.00	22.60	100.0
2006	13,780,749,531.00	16.26	100.0
2007	160,649,072,830.00	16.58	100.0
2008	197,942,442,909.00	23.21	100.0
2009	152,994,742,805.00	-22.71	100.0
2010	201,915,285,335.00	31.98	100.0
2011	256,039,574,768.00	26.81	100.0
2012	242,578,013,546.00	-5.26	100.0
2013	242,033,574,720.00	-0.22	100.0
2014	225,100,884,831.00	-7.00	100.0
2015	191,134,324,584.00	-15.09	100.0
2016	185,235,400,805.00	-3.09	100.0
2017	217,739,177,077.00	17.55	100.0

Source: Ministério da Indústria, Comércio Exterior e Serviços 2018.

Table 2 - Brazilian imports by economic bloc/Middle East- (2000-2017)

Year	Total		
	US\$ FOB (A)	Var. %	Part. %
2000	1,332,874,062.00	0.00	100.00
2001	2,030,018,456.00	52.30	100.00
2002	2,331,325,268.00	14.84	100.00
2003	2,806,788,319.00	20.39	100.00
2004	3,688,723,165.00	31.42	100.00
2005	4,288,485,185.00	16.26	100.00
2006	5,749,227,602.00	34.06	100.00
2007	6,399,444,251.00	11.31	100.00
2008	8,054,875,812.00	25.87	100.00
2009	7,522,058,404.00	-6.24	100.00
2010	10,525,090,352.00	39.37	100.00
2011	12,276,227,003.00	16.64	100.00
2012	11,527,799,212.00	-6.10	100.00
2013	10,953,966,932.00	-4.98	100.00
2014	10,419,241,225.00	-4.88	100.00
2015	9,957,388,310.00	-4.43	100.00
2016	10,146,219,035.00	1.90	100.00
2017	11,617,277,366.00	15.03	100.00

Source: Ministério da Indústria, Comércio Exterior e Serviços 2018.

With regard to trade with Israel, regional conflicts – including the conflict between Israel and Palestine – did not interfere negatively, which is evidence that economic relations between Brazil and Middle Eastern countries were stable in the 2000s. In fact, they followed the same overall pattern of Brazil's foreign trade. Table 3 shows the evolution of Brazil's exports to Israel in the 2000s. Over the period considered, from 2000 to 2017, albeit of lower economic significance, exports grew from US\$ 71 million to US\$ 466 million.

In short, considering that this analysis only aims to provide an overview of the data, it should be noted that, taking into account only the initial and final years of the period considered, 2000 and 2017, Brazilian exports to Israel and the Middle East rose significantly more than Brazilian exports as a whole. Overall growth reached 295%, while exports to the Middle East grew by 775%, and to Israel by 555%. Certainly this analysis calls for a more thorough examination, given the fluctuations, but the goal here is to underscore that these fluctuations were not prompted by political factors, only by economic ones. It must not be forgotten that the pattern of Brazilian exports to the Middle East is similar to the general exports pattern: commodities. To the Middle East, the main exports are chicken, sugar and meat. To Israel, the trade pattern is similar: meat, sugar and corn, in that order (Ministério da Indústria, Comércio Exterior e Serviços 2019a).

Table 3 - Brazilian imports by country/Israel (2000-2017)

Year	Total		
	US\$ FOB (A)	Var. %	Part. %
2000	71,115,909.00	0.00	100.00
2001	137,978,778.00	94.02	100.00
2002	109,748,079.00	-20.46	100.00
2003	187,494,926.00	70.84	100.00
2004	213,848,268.00	14.06	100.00
2005	262,963,575.00	22.97	100.00
2006	272,531,387.00	3.64	100.00
2007	355,751,168.00	30.54	100.00
2008	398,566,381.00	12.04	100.00
2009	270,502,995.00	-32.13	100.00
2010	339,539,054.00	25.52	100.00
2011	498,524,655.00	46.82	100.00
2012	376,063,459.00	-24.56	100.00
2013	454,750,209.00	20.92	100.00
2014	409,868,900.00	-9.87	100.00
2015	380,751,042.00	-7.10	100.00
2016	424,969,873.00	11.61	100.00
2017	466,008,895.00	9.66	100.00

Source: Ministério da Indústria, Comércio Exterior e Serviços 2018.

Moving from the analysis of Brazilian exports to that of Brazilian imports, although the figures change, the trend is maintained. Examining more closely the data, i.e., Brazil's overall exports (Table 4), Brazil's exports to the Middle East (Table 5), and to Israel (Table 6), we see that the evolution from 2000 to 2017 concerning imports is as follows: overall imports grew by 169%; imports from the Middle East by 153%; and from Israel by 150%. More dramatic fluctuations over the period were not taken into account. The share of Brazilian imports from Israel exhibited generally similar numbers, with no sudden changes. The share related to the Middle East were 22.6% in 2000; 15.0% in 2011; and 22.3% in 2017.

In conclusion, we can see that the share of Brazilian trade with the Middle East increased, mostly propelled by export growth. In fact, the share of exports to the Middle East in relation to Brazil's total exports grew from 2.4% in 2000, to 4.8% in 2011, and to 5.36% in 2017. Over the same period, imports went down from 2.8% in 2000, to 2.7% in 2011, and to 2.6% in 2017. As seen in Tables 2 and 5, 3 and 6, the trade surplus *vis-à-vis* Arab countries began in 2001, and was maintained to present day; in the same period, trade with Israel showed constant deficit. Disregarding wider fluctuations during the period, exports grew significantly, while imports remained stable. Trade with the Middle East increased its share in relation to Brazil's overall trade, which is evidence of some success in the country's effort to increase market share. However, we must recognize that the region as a whole, while having significantly increased its share in Brazil's total foreign trade, especially regarding Brazil's exports, maintained a relatively low share in relation to total trade. Trade with the Middle East in relation to total trade rose from 2.6% in 2000 to 3.8% in 2011; to 4.2% in 2016; and to 5.4% in 2017.

Table 4 - Brazilian Imports (2000-2017)

Year	Imports		
	US\$ FOB (B)	Var. %	Part. %
2000	55,850,663,138.00	0.00	100.00
2001	55,601,758,416.00	-0.45	100.00
2002	47,242,654,199.00	-15.03	100.00
2003	48,325,566,630.00	2.29	100.00
2004	62,835,615,629.00	30.03	100.00
2005	73,600,375,672.00	17.13	100.00
2006	91,350,840,805.00	24.12	100.00
2007	120,617,446,250.00	32.04	100.00
2008	172,984,767,614.00	43.43	100.00
2009	127,722,342,988.00	-26.17	100.00
2010	181,768,427,438.00	42.32	100.00
2011	226,246,755,801.00	24.47	100.00
2012	223,183,476,643.00	-1.35	100.00
2013	239,747,515,987.00	7.42	100.00
2014	229,154,462,583.00	-4.42	100.00
2015	171,449,050,909.00	-25.18	100.00
2016	137,552,002,856.00	-19.77	100.00
2017	150,749,452,949.00	9.59	100.00

Source: Ministério da Indústria, Comércio Exterior e Serviços 2018.

Table 5 - Brazilian imports by economic bloc/Middle East– (2000-2017)(2000-2017)

Year	Total		
	US\$ FOB (B)	Var. %	Part. %
2000	1,560,817,910.00	0.00	100.00
2001	1,471,192,138.00	-5.74	100.00
2002	1,430,464,835.00	-2.77	100.00
2003	1,625,577,816.00	13.64	100.00
2004	2,314,974,469.00	42.41	100.00
2005	2,509,617,837.00	8.41	100.00
2006	3,165,031,095.00	26.12	100.00
2007	3,205,421,922.00	1.28	100.00
2008	6,230,649,560.00	94.38	100.00
2009	3,142,417,855.00	-49.57	100.00
2010	4,680,393,911.00	48.94	100.00
2011	5,142,458,111.00	31.24	100.00
2012	7,368,545,608.00	20.44	100.00
2013	7,999,674,707.00	-0.39	100.00
2014	5,313,448,749.00	8.57	100.00
2015	3,568,829,498.00	-33.58	100.00
2016	3,568,829,498.00	-32.83	100.00
2017	3,964,034,629.00	11.07	100.00

Source: Ministério da Indústria, Comércio Exterior e Serviços 2018.

Table 6 - Brazilian imports by country/Israel (2000-2017)

Year	Total		
	US\$ FOB (B)	Var. %	Part. %
2000	353,491,319.00	0.00	100.00
2001	414,458,262.00	17.25	100.00
2002	334,822,679.00	-19.21	100.00
2003	318,432,285.00	-4.90	100.00
2004	501,784,424.00	57.58	100.00
2005	468,502,644.00	-6.63	100.00
2006	473,742,016.00	1.12	100.00
2007	676,636,578.00	42.83	100.00
2008	1,221,318,874.00	80.50	100.00
2009	651,555,019.00	-46.65	100.00
2010	1,012,547,403.00	55.40	100.00
2011	904,459,570.00	-10.67	100.00
2012	1,143,548,175.00	26.44	100.00
2013	1,113,507,391.00	-2.63	100.00
2014	954,316,506.00	-14.30	100.00
2015	895,842,238.00	-6.13	100.00
2016	695,630,310.00	-22.35	100.00
2017	885,291,485.00	27.26	100.00

Source: Ministério da Indústria, Comércio Exterior e Serviços 2018.

The products Brazil imports the most from the Middle East are: oil, urea, fertilizer, etc. The pattern is similar for Israel (Ministério da Indústria, Comércio Exterior e Serviços 2019a). In this case, Brazil's imports pattern from the Middle East is different from the general imports pattern, which is focused on manufactures and technological products.

Returning to the idea initially developed in the beginning of this subsection, we can conclude, in accordance with the data presented, that economic relations between Brazil and Middle Eastern countries remained stable over the 2000s. From the point of view of technology transfer, the interest of Israeli companies in Brazil increased. There were, for instance, Israeli companies among the participants at Hospitalar, a major health industry business fair held in São Paulo. Eighteen companies in the technology security field, coordinated by SIBAT (International Defense Cooperation Directorate of the Israel Ministry of Defense) participated in the LAAD Defense & Security fair, held in Rio de Janeiro. LAAD is the most important defense and security industrial fair in Latin America. Exhibitors include Brazilian and foreign companies specializing in the supply of equipment and services to armed forces, police, special forces, and security services. In 2011, 2013, and 2015, all major Israeli armament companies were invited as exhibitors. To Israeli companies, LAAD is a privileged space for contracts and joint ventures in Brazil. Another example is the agreement between Israel Aerospace Industries and Brazil's Synergy Group for the production of drones for law enforcement to combat drug-trafficking along the country's borders ("Brazil banned from selling Israeli-technology UAV to Venezuela." 2011).

In February 2018, the Brazilian Senate website posted information regarding an interactive public hearing held by the Science, Technology, Communication, and IT Commission on scientific cooperation between the two countries, in this particular case, for water consumption and irrigation projects. Attending the meeting were Gilberto Kassab, Brazil's Minister of Science and Technology, and Ofir Akunis, Israel's Minister of Science, Technology and Space (Senado Brasileiro 2018).

A few days later, in early March 2018, the same Israeli minister, when signing the Science, Technology, and Innovation Bilateral Agreement, stated that "the goal is to further joint endeavors in areas like clean technology, water, space, and satellites" (Senado Brasileiro 2018). At the same time, he signaled interest in stepping up defense technology transfer, as announced to the Brazilian magazine *Valor Econômico* ("Israel e Brasil buscam acordo na área de segurança." 2018). During Akunis's visit, the two ministers, along with the director of the Israel Space Agency, Leo Vinovezky, visited the National Center for Monitoring and Alerting Natural Disasters (CEMADEN), the National Institute for Space Research (INPE), and the aircraft manufacturer Embraer.

Political relations during the Dilma Rousseff administration (2011-2016)

With regard to the political arena, the Rousseff administration upheld a position that, as pointed out earlier, is rooted in Brazilian foreign diplomacy: support to the self-determination of the peoples, and a peaceful and agreed upon solution for the Israel-Palestine conflict, with

the aim to achieve the two-state solution, in line with UN Resolution 242, and ensuring safe boundaries for Israel and the feasibility of the Palestinian State. Unlike the more pro-active Lula da Silva administrations, the Rousseff administrations, albeit upholding previous stances, were less participative, an attitude that was an overall hallmark of her government as far as foreign policy is concerned.

Historically, at least in public speeches, Brazilian government officials have always stressed the importance of the creation of a Palestinian State for the resolution of the conflict. During the Rousseff administration, the theme was cited in every annual speech by Brazil at the opening session of the UN General Assembly. In her speech to the General Assembly in 2011, Dilma Rousseff mentioned the Israel-Palestine conflict, more specifically the recognition of Palestine as a State (Rousseff 2011).

This was repeated in 2012, when the president recalled the importance of creating a Palestinian State for the establishment of peace with Israel, still highlighting the country's support for the existence of two states. In 2013, Rousseff reiterated for the third consecutive year the importance of recognition (Rousseff 2012; Passarinho 2013).

During the conflicts in July and August of 2014 between Israel and the Hamas-led Palestinians in Gaza, the Brazilian government took a strong stand against Israeli military action. In this case, upholding consolidated positions, the use of the humanitarian argument by the Brazilian government led to deepened criticism of Israel. This critical position was underlined in that year's speech before the General Assembly,

[...] Let me reiterate that we cannot remain indifferent to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, particularly after the tragic events in Gaza. We condemn the disproportionate use of force that strongly impacts the civilian population, especially women and children. Effective negotiations between the parties must lead to a two-State solution, with Palestine and Israel living side by side, in security and within internationally recognized borders. [...] (Rousseff 2014)

In the first year of her second presidential term in office, in 2015, when the Brazilian political crisis was worsening, once again Dilma Rousseff cited the Israel-Palestine conflict and the settlements in her annual speech at the United Nations (Rousseff 2015).

The Mercosur, with active Brazilian support, signed an agreement in 2005 creating a Free Trade Area with Israel (Ministério da Indústria, Comércio Exterior e Serviços 2005). In 2011 the same kind of agreement was established with Palestine (Ministério das Relações Exteriores 2011), the significance of which was more political than economic. "The agreement was forwarded to the Brazilian Congress in May 2016, and it is still waiting for internal acceptance by the other members of Mercosur" (Ministério da Indústria, Comércio Exterior e Serviços 2019b).

We saw that Brazil's position towards the conflict between Hamas and Israel on the Gaza Strip, in 2014, prompted a more active stance against Israel's strikes. Brasília recalled its ambassador in

Tel Aviv, Henrique Sardinha, for consultations, highlighting the existence of serious divergences, and released a note (Ministério das Relações Exteriores 2014a). In reply, Yigal Palmor (Kresch 2014), the spokesperson for the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated, “This is an unfortunate demonstration of why Brazil, an economic and cultural giant, remains a diplomatic dwarf.” Then Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Luiz Alberto Figueiredo (Albuquerque and Bocchini 2014), replied that, “If there is a diplomatic dwarf, Brazil is definitely not one of them. We strongly oppose Hamas’s launching rockets against Israel. Our opposition still holds true. We have never opposed Israel’s right to defend itself. What we oppose is the disproportionateness.” The decision to recall the Brazilian ambassador to Israel was considered excessive by groups in favor of Israel.

The analysis of the government’s positions from 2014 to May 2016, when the president was removed from office, is open to different interpretations – which in fact happened in some groups that were in political ascension and strongly opposed the Worker’s Party’s foreign policy. The government’s criticism of Israel’s policies toward Palestinians, advocacy regarding the subject of human rights, and the retreat from the occupied territories, increased the evangelicals’ opposition. The government’s stances interpreted in a Brazilian setting of rising radicalization and on the basis of particular biases, displeased portions of both the right and the left. The right and the conservative sectors, represented by a significant portion of the evangelical representation in Congress, increased their emphatic criticism of Rousseff’s statements in international fora, something that had been going on since 2011. For example, after Dilma Rousseff’s speech at the UN General Assembly in 2012, evangelical pastor Silas Malafaia commented the content of her speech, “As for the other subject that there will only be peace in the Middle East when there is a full and sovereign Palestinian State, I make the following remarks: Israel is the only free and sovereign State in the Middle East” (Santiago 2012).

Regarding the recall of the Brazilian ambassador to Israel in 2014, then federal representative of the Christian Social Party (*Partido Social Cristão*, PSC) Jair Bolsonaro rejected the action and released a note to the press stating that, “the majority of refined Brazilians, who have dignity and good judgement, stand with the people of Israel and against terrorism, in favor of democracy, freedom, and respect for true human rights” (“Bolsonaro pede desculpas a Israel por nota ‘hipócrita’ do Brasil.” 2014).

On the other hand, in the opposite political spectrum, part of the left was also critical, demanding that the Brazilian government cease relations with Israel, at the peak of the confrontations in Gaza. Protests were held by leftist parties, such as the Communist Party of Brazil (*Partido Comunista do Brasil*, PC do B). However, the House of Representatives’ speaker Eduardo Cunha, stated in 2015, “I don’t think any kind of boycott is a solution for anything.” (Cunha 2015).

A diplomatic reason that contributed to the heavy atmosphere in Brazil-Israel relations during the Rousseff administration was resistance to the appointment of Dani Dayan as ambassador to Brasília. The reluctance was related to the fact that Dayan was a member of the Yesha Council, which represents the Jewish settlements in West Jerusalem and the West Bank.

The position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was backed by a petition signed by 40 Brazilian senior ambassadors and supported by widespread consensus in society. The ambassadors had ties with parties that were both in Rousseff's government coalition and in the opposition, part of them linked to the *Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira* (PSDB, Brazilian Social Democratic Party). Some of these ambassadors later occupied important positions during the Michel Temer administration. One of the reasons for the petition was that the appointment violated the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, as it was made public on Twitter and ignored the need for an agrément (Peduzzi 2016).

At the same time, according to Kresch (2015), the Brazilian government's decision was criticized by some members of the military. "Brasília's decision to wait to give the agrément to the new ambassador Dani Dayan is considered a mistake by the military." In an interview, former Foreign Policy and Defense Minister Celso Amorim said that the military's position was linked to Brazilian dependence on Israeli technology (Mello 2015).

As we can see, the positions of the Brazilian State towards the Middle East did not undergo significant changes during the PT governments, neither in Lula's, nor in Rousseff's administration. The bilateral environment between Brazil and Israel was not good. From Brasília's perspective, these disagreements are rooted in Israeli policies considered in breach of resolutions by international organizations. The Brazilian government considered that Israel's actions towards Palestinians were upheld by the excessive use of force, the refusal to withdraw from the territories occupied in 1967, and the continuity and expansion of Israeli settlements on the West Bank, all of which are actions against international efforts. From the Israeli government's point of view, these disagreements are rooted in the consideration that the Brazilian government was pro-Arab, including the Palestinians. Some of the consequences were already discussed in this paper. Others resulted from stances in international organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), UNESCO, the UN Human Rights Council, and the support for the recognition of the State of Palestine by other Latin American countries.

Political relations during the Michel Temer administration (2016-2018)

After Rousseff's impeachment process was initiated in May 2016, then Vice-President Temer was inaugurated, which was seen by the Israeli press ("Son of Lebanese immigrants, Brazil's new president is friend to Jewish community." 2016; "Israeli-born Economist Named Chief of Brazilian Central Bank." 2016; "Brazil Regrets Its Vote Negating Israel's Tie To Western Wall, Temple Mount." 2016) as a hope of a friendlier relationship between Brazil and Israel. Temer announced Senator José Serra as his Minister of Foreign Affairs. The new minister's fierce opposition of the PT government's foreign policy, including matters related to the Middle East, and the stances taken by the PSDB, of which he is a leader, suggested changes from what was considered a third-world orientation of Lula da Silva's and Rousseff's

governments. This included a friendlier relationship and less critical policies toward Israel. This relationship's perception can be summarized by Jayme Blay's (2018), president of the Brazil-Israel Chamber of Commerce and Industry, quote "This new government changed its position. The position became friendlier," although, according to him, business deals had been little affected by diplomatic disagreements.

Opposition to PT policies since 2011 became stronger after Rousseff's narrow victory in 2014. This increased the critical tone against Brazil's foreign policy, elevating the subject to a new political level, and turning it into the core of the Brazilian policy arena. In this sense, a core element of criticism was the opposition to PT's so-called Third-Worldism. Some believed that the inclination to search for better relations with the United States would lead, at least indirectly, to less critical stands toward Israel. There were some signs of that from the Temer administration. When Brazil's foreign minister travelled to Israel for the funeral of Shimon Peres, former Israeli president, a note (Note 367) released by the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on September 30, 2016, stated

The idea is to strengthen economic relations, with emphasis to Israeli high-tech, security and defense products. [...] Prime Minister Netanyahu and Minister Serra also agreed to intensify political contacts. Brazil's interest is to contribute to the resumption of negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians" (Ministério das Relações Exteriores 2016a).

Minister José Serra suggested the possibility of changing Brazil's vote of April 15, 2016 regarding the "Decision of the Executive Board of UNESCO on Cultural Heritage in the Occupied Territories." Note 211, released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on June 9, 2016, clarifies that, "The Brazilian Government will review its vote if the deficiencies pointed out in the decision are not corrected in future assessment of the subject by UNESCO" (Ministério das Relações Exteriores 2016b).

The interpretation given to the note by the media was that Brazil's government would change its stance. This possibility was viewed with concern by UNESCO staff, which was justified considering the new foreign minister's statements, also suggestive of a policy change in relation to the Middle East, specifically towards Israel (Netto 2016).

In addition, using the theory of foreign policy change conceptualized by Hermann (1990), our question is to what extent changes are possible. We rely on the UNESCO vote as a paradigmatic example of whether there is room for change. The argument we seek to demonstrate is that, despite Brazil's crisis and serious institutional instability, starting with the 2014 electoral results, a crisis that became worse and remained unsolved in 2016, 2017, and 2018, changes in Brazilian foreign policy orientation are very complex and not easily attainable. The reasons for that are: a) structural and global political interests; b) long-term economic interests; c) balance between communities; d) persisting instability, which is unlikely to be solved in the short term; and e)

Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs' tradition toward the region, including political, cultural, and economic aspects.

Thus, deep changes are unlikely to occur. Our conclusion is that in spite of the different orientations between Rousseff's and Temer's administrations, when it comes to the Middle East there is in general a relative continuity of diplomatic action. Taking as reference the "four graduated levels of change" defined by Hermann (1990, 5), Brazil's change, as regards to policy for the Middle East, has remained during 2011-2018 period at level two: "program changes."

This means that methods and certain actions change, but strategic purposes, as we have been pointing out throughout this paper, seem not to change (for example, support of UN resolutions, support of the two-state solution, human rights, etc.). On the other hand, given the different stances taken by these administrations, there should be specific actions, as signaled by Lima (2018), including important changes. According to this author, Brazil lost the opportunity to expand its international influence when it stopped providing humanitarian relief to Palestinian refugees.

In accordance to our hypothesis, the post-impeachment Brazilian government, despite declaring support for major foreign policy changes, continued to follow the long-term structural aspects in foreign affairs regarding the Middle East. However, in case of even deeper disruptions in Brazilian political and institutional order, it is possible to reach the fourth level of change defined by Hermann (1990, 5), i.e., international orientation changes, regarding the Middle East. "The most extreme form of foreign policy change involv[ing] the redirection of the actor's entire orientation toward world affairs." This possibility cannot be ruled out.

One factor that helps explain why change was unlikely to happen was the growing international perception of instability in Temer's administration. Instability remained as institutional legitimacy continued to be questioned. Regarding Brazil's position towards the Middle East, the words of Aloysio Nunes Ferreira, when he replaced Serra as foreign minister in March 2017, confirm the difficulty. "Strong and well-known are our historical, human, economic, and trade relations with Middle Eastern countries, which deserve continuous efforts in these and in other fields" (Ministério das Relações Exteriores 2017b). Long-term guidelines seem hard to be reoriented.

Given the controversies regarding Brazil's votes at UNESCO during the first semester of 2016, and even though Minister José Serra stated that Brazil would change its voting pattern, in another vote at the organization in May 2017, regarding the same issue, "Cultural Heritage in the Occupied Territories," Brazil voted in favor of the resolution proposed by Arab League countries, thus repeating the vote of Rousseff's government, which had been the target of critical statements by Serra in June 2016 ("Unesco's anti-Israel resolution gets least votes eve." 2017).

According to our aim of examining whether there is enough room for change in Brazilian policy regarding the Middle East, Temer's first speech as President of Brazil at the United Nations General Assembly in 2016 demonstrates that no changes could be identified compared to his predecessors' guidelines. He stated the importance of a peace treaty between Israel and Palestine, and the establishment of two States (Temer 2016).

At the opening ceremony of the 72nd session of the General Assembly in September 2017, the same stance was upheld: “Brazil continues to support the solution of two States living side by side in peace and security [...]” (Temer 2017).

In Temer’s administration, despite some statements about changes in Brazilian foreign policy regarding Israel, and even the Question of Palestine, criticism against the construction of settlements on the West Bank continued. Brazil’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs released Note 42, in February 2017, condemning the construction of new Jewish settlements in Palestine, stating that the construction of settlements “represents an obstacle to peace and does not contribute to the solution of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Brazil supports a two-State solution for the conflict” (Ministério das Relações Exteriores 2017a).

Brazil’s historically consolidated pattern in relation to the Israel-Palestine conflict continued during Temer’s administration, which prompted many opposing groups to speak up. The Jewish Confederation of Brazil (CONIB) regretted Brazil’s votes at UNESCO, as did some evangelical groups. Moreover, at the international meetings, such as the 8th BRICS Summit in 2017, Brazil continued signing resolutions based on this relevant UNSC resolution (Ministério das Relações Exteriores 2017b).

In 2018, Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs Aloysio Nunes made an official visit to different Middle Eastern countries. In Israel, he met with Israel’s President Reuven Rivlin and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (Ministério das Relações Exteriores 2018a). The Israeli President told Aloysio Nunes that he was concerned with Brazil’s relations with Iran, a statement that had already been directed at Lula da Silva during his trip to Israel in 2010 (Rossi 2018). On the same trip, repeating previous itineraries, the minister went to Palestine, where he met with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and other officials (Ministério das Relações Exteriores 2018b).

Regarding the United States government’s decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem, concluded in May 2018, Brazil sustained its historical position in Temer’s term. In Note 427, the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated that “[...] the status of the city of Jerusalem should be defined in negotiations that ensure the establishment of two States coexisting in peace and security within internationally recognized borders” (Ministério das Relações Exteriores 2018c). However, echoing the rising level of foreign policy partisanship focusing on Middle-Eastern issues, the leaderships of the Brazilian evangelical representation in Congress, belonging to different political parties, demanded that Brazil follow the decision adopted by the United States (Fellet 2014).

The Consul General of Israel in São Paulo, Dori Goren, in an interview to the authors of this paper on May 15th, 2017, expressed his concern over the realities of Brazilian policy in relation to the Middle East. He recognizes that long-term, global interests and Brazil’s interest in maintaining good relations with Muslim countries, specifically Arabs, as well as with multilateral organizations is clear. Paradoxically, the ambassador of Palestine to Brazil, Ibrahim Alzeben, spoke in similar terms in a June 23rd, 2017 interview. To him, whatever the domestic political

developments may be, Brazil's greatest interest will be to maintain its adherence to what he calls "international law." Still according to the ambassador, this is a traditional characteristic preserved by Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Brazilian government. Also of great importance is the fact that there are 57 Muslim countries worldwide. Furthermore, he believes that the reliability of Brazilian institutions will ultimately sustain the continuity of the country's foreign policy principles.

Conclusion

As argued in this paper, Brazil's economic relations with both Arab countries and Israel were strengthened during the 2000s, despite suffering from the impact of two economic crises: the world crisis of 2008 and Brazil's own crisis. Strengthened economic relations explain why diplomats, politicians, social and economic actors involved with the Middle East insist that better relations do not require agreement on all issues, but are in fact supported by reciprocal interests in trade and in different economic issues, such as technology and investments. Most of Brazil's commodities exports are agricultural products, specifically food (beef, soy beans, chicken, sugar), which suggests Brazilian agribusiness' interest to develop and strengthen relations with Arab countries. We argued that, although during Temer's administration the rhetoric supporting better relations with Israel increased, there were no concrete consequences to it. In general, Brazilian diplomatic participation in international organizations - the UN, UNESCO, Human Rights Council - remained focused on international law, Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions, as was the country's tradition, with little change since 1947. We argued that the shifts were generally the result of a change in tactics, not strategic goal or deep orientation changes.

In this paper, we pointed out that, beyond commodities trade, there are issues whose importance are growing when it comes to bilateral relations between Brazil and Israel, i.e., technology and security issues. To the Palestinians, what matters is to ensure that Brazil's stance in international organizations is steady and will continue to follow international resolutions and international law.

Considering the whole set of data regarding Brazil's Middle-Eastern foreign policymaking, we concluded that there were no significant changes in Rousseff's and Temer's administrations; the same could be said about the former administrations, Collor de Mello, Itamar Franco, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Lula da Silva. We discussed the reasons, which relate to economic interests, political and cultural issues grounded in Brazilian foreign policy history, and the interest in good relations with all cultural, ethnical, religious and national groups that live in Middle East.

With regard to our goal, foreign policymaking theories explain whether there have been orientation changes in Brazil's policy towards Israel and Palestine in Rousseff's and Temer's administrations, and why. As was said, the framework formulated by Hermann (1990) seems useful. Our research dealt with the possibilities of change in a field of Brazilian foreign

policy, regarding a specific geographic area, the Middle East, especially Israel and Palestine, suggesting which are those possibilities and the difficulties therein. The Brazilian presidential inauguration in January 2019 could in the future introduce to the analyses Hermann's levels 3 (Problem/Goal Changes) or 4 (International Orientation Changes), although this remains uncertain. Therefore, bigger political crises, domestically or abroad, may have repercussions in the country's foreign policy. We showed that, in spite of the expectations, Brazil remained at level 2 with regard to its policy towards the Middle East - "program changes" - not achieving structural changes.

Thus, we have confirmed that the outlined structural conditions (international participation and global interests; diversified economic interests; internal political, social, cultural balances; foreign policy memory and tradition) explained how Brazil's foreign policy towards the Middle East, especially Israel and Palestine, was driven, but this is not a general law. Research is necessary; it helps us understand the theory of changes in foreign policy analysis.

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