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BRAZIL AND CHINA: A STRONG PARTNERSHIP

Abstract: At a time characterized by relative equity in their positions within the international system – as developing countries with similar gross domestic product – Brazil and China established a strategic partnership in 1993. Initially, no institutional mechanism was created to manage the partnership. Only in 2004, with the establishment of the Sino-Brazilian High-Level Coordination and Cooperation Commission (COSBAN), a formal apparatus was established. Since then, with some regularity, COSBAN has become an instrument to operationalize the partnership between the two countries. In this paper, our objective is to evaluate, between 1993 and 2023, the Brazil-China strategic partnership, the challenges for its operationalization, and its institutional mechanisms. We argue that the concept of what it means to be a “strategic partner” in Sino-Brazilian relations, as well as the institutional dimension itself, has evolved as a result of adaptations stemming from changes in the countries’ positions in the international system and their respective models of development. We conclude that the flexibility of the partnership’s institutional apparatus, as well as its adaptability to embrace new interests, is what has sustained the relevance of this partnership. The research was conducted through bibliographical review and data collection from official websites.

Keywords: BRAZIL, CHINA, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Introduction

Brazil was the first country in the world with which China established a strategic partnership, in 1993. This occurred at a time when both countries held relatively equal positions within the international system. By 2023, the partnership had reached its 30th anniversary, but within a vastly different context. The initial equity gave way to growing asymmetries between the nations. While in 1990 their GDPs were comparable¹, today, Brazil ranks as the ninth largest economy in the world, whereas China holds the second position. China underwent a vast process of industrialization and has positioned itself at the center of the global order, while Brazil faced competitive difficulties and remained with unreached potential.

Nevertheless, the strategic partnership, or at least the expectation of imbuing bilateral relations with strategic significance, has prevailed for the most part of the time in the last 30 years and was supported by the creation of institutional mechanisms that tracked the growth of Sino-Brazilian interactions. In 2004, the China-Brazil High-Level Coordination and Cooperation Commission (COSBAN) was established to operationalize the strategic partnership, coinciding with China's growing importance to Brazil both economically and politically.

In this study, our goal is to evaluate, between 1993 and 2023, the Brazil-China strategic partnership, the challenges for its operationalization, and its institutional mechanisms. We argue that the concept of what it means to be a "strategic partner" in Sino-Brazilian relations, as well as the institutional dimension itself, has evolved as a result of adaptations stemming from changes in the countries' positions in the international system and their respective models of development. We conclude that the flexibility of the partnership's institutional apparatus, as well as its adaptability to embrace new interests, is what has sustained the relevance of this partnership. The research was conducted through bibliographical review and data collection from official websites.

In addition to this introduction, the paper is divided into four more sections. The second section analyzes the establishment of the strategic partnership in the 1990s and its outcomes during that period. The third section focuses on the 2000s, while the fourth section examines the strategic partnership in the 2010s. The fifth and final section presents the conclusions.

1 In 1990, Brazil's GDP was US\$ 384,96 billion while China's GDP was 360,86 (World Bank, 2024).

The Brazil-China strategic partnership in the 1990s

Brazil and China became strategic partners in 1993. Contrary to what might be expected, this partnership did not result from extensive negotiations. The period leading up to this action was characterized by the exhaustion of the previous model of Sino-Brazilian bilateral relations (Sousa, 2016). Cooperation in science and technology for joint satellite production, which had been an important program ongoing since the 1980s, was in crisis due to a lack of resources on the Brazilian side. Bilateral trade, previously characterized by Brazilian manufactured exports and Chinese basic goods imports, was changing due to China's industrialization. In the early 1990s, Brazilian foreign policy, especially under Fernando Collor presidency (1990-1992), focused on relations with developed countries (Vigevani & Cepaluni, 2017). Thus, there were no clear indicators that a strategic partnership could be established between the two countries.

Behind-the-scenes information about the partnership's establishment, well analyzed by Biato (2010), suggests that the partnership was not planned. It emerged from rhetorical statements made by Brazilian and Chinese authorities during high-level visits by Chinese representatives to Brazil in 1993. Coincidentally, the countries began referring to each other as "strategic partners." For China, which was facing sanctions due to the Tiananmen Square incidents and a rejected visit by Jiang Zemin to the USA, this assertion emphasized that China had important partners in the Americas. For Brazil, there was an expectation of facilitating the entry of Brazilian products and investments into China. As two big, almost continental-sized countries with significant bilateral cooperation projects² (such as satellites, despite the crisis at that time), and similar international positions as developing nations, the partnership made sense.

Between 1993 and 1994, several high-level visits between the two countries contributed to creating a strategic aspect to the relationship. At that time, China was very interested in Brazil's development process, especially in hydroelectric production. In 1995, in the first year of his term presidency (1995-2002), President Fernando Henrique Cardoso visited China and proposed several bilateral cooperation initiatives in areas such as telecommunications, health, information technology, and banking automation. He also aimed to expand bilateral trade in sectors like mining and agriculture and promote the sale of airplanes and engineering services by Brazilian construction companies.

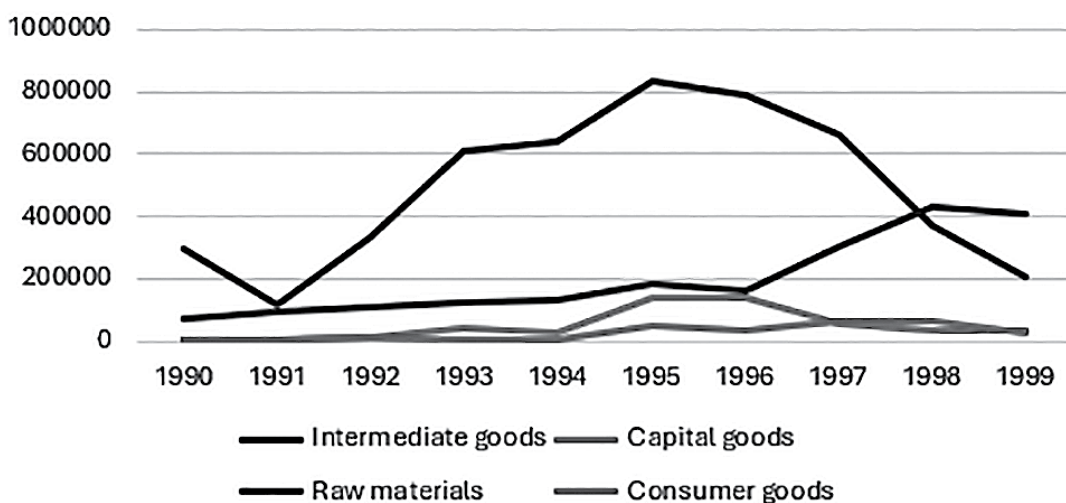
The strategic partnership generated expectations on the Brazilian side that Brazil could be treated preferentially compared to other countries, allowing it to benefit from China's economic modernization process and position its investments,

² On the Concordia portal (<https://concordia.itamaraty.gov.br/>) it is possible to find documents for all agreements and projects signed between Brazil and China.

especially in infrastructure projects like the Three Gorges Dam (Biato, 2010). However, Chinese interests remained focused on mineral and agricultural raw materials, while Brazil, partly due to its own weaknesses, failed to position itself in higher value-added sectors of the Chinese market or in infrastructure projects.

By the late 1990s, the pattern of bilateral trade between the countries had changed due to China's industrialization and Brazil's competitiveness issues. As graphic 1 (below) shows, basic goods, with lower added value, became the main component of Brazilian exports to China. Difficulties for Brazilian industry to penetrate the Chinese market and increased competition from Chinese products in the domestic market led to frustrations in bilateral relations, reducing expectations for the partnership (Biato, 2010). High-level visits between the countries decreased, and Brazil temporarily deactivated its Consulate General in Shanghai.

Brazilian exports to China (1990-1999) in thousand US\$ by stages of processing



Graphic 1: Brazilian exports to China (1990-1999) in thousand US\$ by stages of processing

Source: WITS (2024)

Another factor that undermined the partnership was that during part of Cardoso's administration, Brazilian foreign policy was focused on developed countries, especially in building good relations with the USA (Vigevani & Cepaluni, 2017). In 1996, Brazil voted in favor of a motion against China in the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Commission under USA pressure, causing complaints from China, which considered the action was incompatible with the partnership (Biato, 2010).

Thus, in the 1990s, the strategic partnership can be evaluated more as rhetoric than as stemming from strategic planning for relations between the countries. Although relations advanced, there were still doubts about whether the partnership could effectively guide bilateral interactions.

Consolidating the strategic partnership in the 2000s

In the early 2000s, adjustments allowed for the strengthening of the partnership between Brazil and China. During the second term of Cardoso administration, Brazil rebalanced its foreign policy, seeking to strengthen relations with major developing countries such as Russia, India, China, and South Africa (Vigevani & Cepaluni, 2017). Meanwhile, China emerged as one of the world's leading economic powers, transformed into the “factory of the world” with growing influence in the global economy.

This economic emergence created a triangular scheme: at one end of the triangle China became a major producer and buyer of manufactured and primary goods; in the other, developed countries became the largest consumers of Chinese products; and, finally, at the last tip, developing countries served as suppliers of basic inputs to China (Biato, 2010). This scheme expanded markets for primary goods from developing countries and increased international commodity prices, benefiting commodity producers.

Recognizing that Brazil had exportable surpluses of agricultural products and energy goods, bilateral trade relations intensified, with Brazil exporting primary goods and maintaining a trade surplus with China while importing manufactured goods. Brazil had to adjust to this new commercial relationship pattern, realizing it could profit from China's demand for basic products. The presidency of Lula da Silva (2003-2010) was crucial in strategically enhancing Sino-Brazilian relations both economically and politically.

Lula's foreign policy strategy sought to strengthen ties with Global South countries, including China, aiming to diversify partnerships for Brazil's international insertion and build a multipolar environment where Brazil had greater influence (Vigevani & Cepaluni, 2017). The year 2004 marked a turning point in bilateral relations, with state visits and efforts to strengthen the strategic partnership with China. For China, Lula brought numerous ministers, six governors, and around 420 businesspeople in the largest Brazilian delegation ever to visit a country (Sousa, 2016). Welcomed in China with honors, the 2004 visit received extensive local and international media coverage.

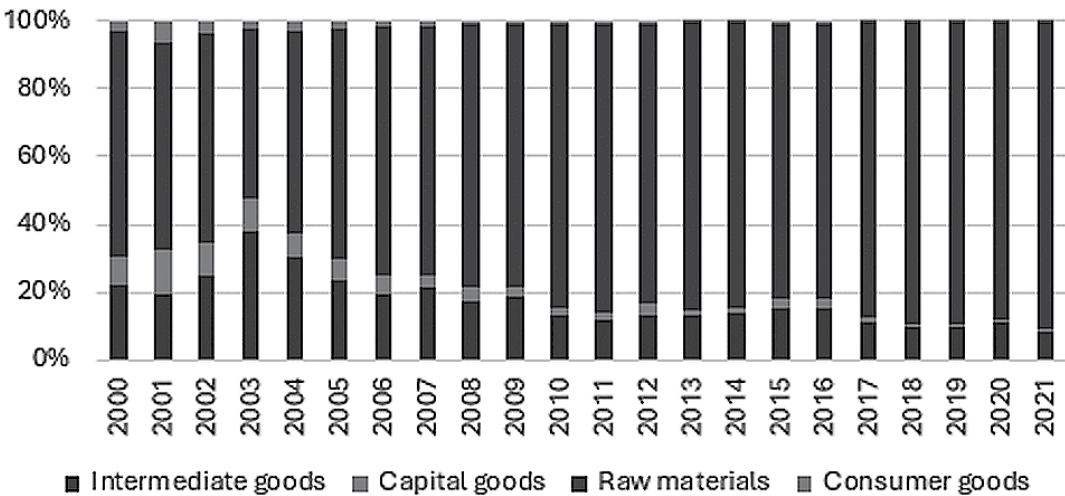
In Brazil, the visit raised high expectations. Mário Villalva, head of Department of Commercial Promotion of Itamaraty, stated that the goal was to make Brazilian businesses “understand that the new commercial frontier is Asia” (Valor Econômico,

2004). During the visit, several agreements, memorandums, and treaties were signed between the countries. One highlight was the Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the China-Brazil High-Level Coordination and Cooperation Commission (COSBAN), aimed at “guiding and coordinating the development of the relationship” between the countries, co-chaired by high-ranking officials (the vice president in Brazil and the vice premier in China) (Memorando, 2004).

Four principles were established to strengthen the strategic partnership through COSBAN activities: mutual political trust, increased economic and commercial exchange, promotion of international cooperation, and exchange between civil societies (Memorando, 2004). During Chinese President Hu Jintao’s visit to Brazil later that year (2004), he emphasized Brazil’s importance to China’s foreign policy, calling it the “gateway” to Latin America (Sousa, 2016). Lula highlighted the indispensable partnership with China (Silva, 2004), expecting it to assist Brazil in strategic sectors and recognized China’s market economy status after negotiations including trade concessions and investment facilitation. Despite concerns in specific industrial sectors, the expansion of bilateral trade was seen as beneficial in the medium term, justifying the recognition. Additionally, Brazil hoped China would support its bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council (UNSC) (Sousa, 2016).

However, there were mismatched expectations. Economically, Brazil struggled to diversify its export portfolio to China. Throughout the 2000s, trade patterns increasingly resembled a north-south dynamic, marked by rising imports of Chinese industrial goods and exports of Brazilian basic goods (concentrated in three products: soybeans, iron ore, and oil) (Sousa, 2021). Graph 2 (below) shows how Brazilian exports have been concentrated over the last 20 years in basic goods.

Brazilian exports to China (2000-2021) by stages of processing (by % proportion)



Graphic 2: Brazilian exports to China (2000-2021) by stages of processing (by % proportion) Source: WITS (2024)

This frustrated domestic industries, as they not only had difficulties exporting their products to China, but also felt they were losing market share to China inside Brazil, since Brazilian imports were concentrated in transformation industry products for which there were domestic producers. Politically, a significant disconnect arose: China opposed the G-4 (Brazil, Japan, Germany, and India) proposal for UNSC reform. Brazil expected Chinese support, and the opposition caused frustration. Despite this, the strategic partnership showed signs of progress, with COSBAN playing an important role.

Even amid frustration, the first COSBAN Plenary Session was held in Beijing in 2006. The session featured delegations led by Chinese Vice Premier Wu Yi and Brazilian Vice President José Alencar. COSBAN's operational structure was organized, with biennial meetings and a system based on six sub-commissions on specific topics. Despite emerging problems or mismatches, as we will see, COSBAN maintained a long-term commitment to developing the strategic partnership, periodically setting objectives and goals.

During the meeting, both countries reaffirmed their commitment to mutually beneficial development and joint projects in areas like energy, oil, and aviation. The operationalization of COSBAN, even during a period of Brazilian frustration with China, showed that bilateral relations were maturing enough to compartmentalize issues and needs. Table 1 (below) lists the COSBAN plenary sessions.

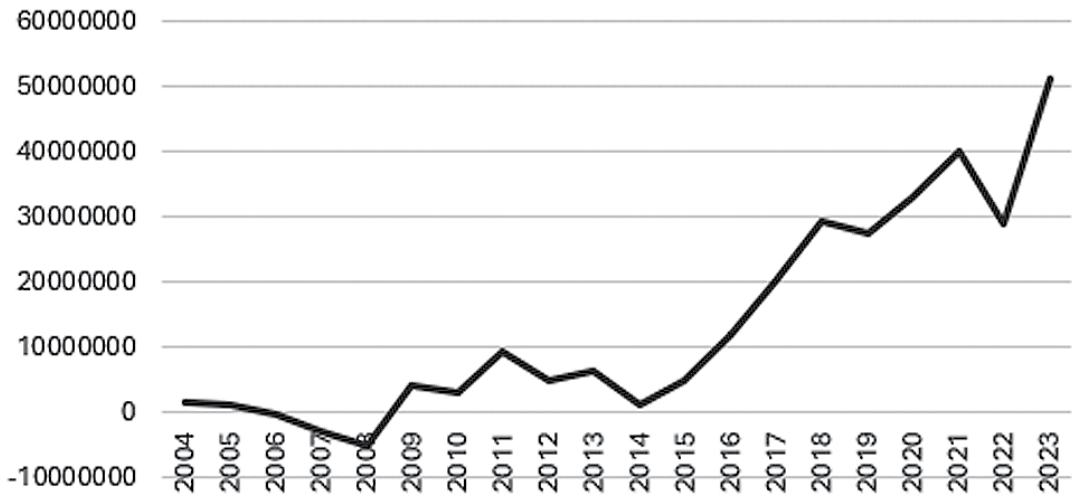
Year	Session
2006	First COSBAN Plenary Session
2012	Second COSBAN Plenary Session
2013	Third COSBAN Plenary Session
2015	Fourth COSBAN Plenary Session
2019	Fifth COSBAN Plenary Session
2022	Sixth COSBAN Plenary Session
2024	Seventh COSBAN Plenary Session

Table 1: COSBAN Plenaries Sessions
Source: Author's elaboration

In April 2007, a strategic dialogue between the foreign ministries of Brazil and China was launched, and in September, the “China Agenda” was released to improve bilateral trade. Among its objectives was to increase knowledge about Chinese tariff barriers in Brazil and identify higher value-added products for Brazilian to export for China. Also, one goal was to increase Chinese investments in Brazil, which were considered low given the level of trade between countries. These aspects show that the countries took their first steps to better structure a strategic partnership, now more planned, and that would be mutually beneficial.

The intensification of Brazil-China relations in 2008, within the context of the global financial crisis, was relevant to the objectives of Lula’s foreign policy, especially to reduce Brazil’s external vulnerability (Paulino, 2011). In 2009, amid the crisis in the USA and other traditional trade partners, China became Brazil’s largest trading partner and source of trade surplus. Graph 3 (below) shows the growth of Brazil’s trade surplus with China after 2008.

Trade Balance between Brazil and China
(2004-2023) in thousand US\$



Graphic 3: Trade balance between Brazil and China (2004-2023) in thousand US\$ Source: Trade Map (2024)

The 2008 crisis, the various articulation arenas between Brazil and China (notably the emergence of the BRIC group), and Chinese efforts for organizing the 2010 Shanghai Expo prevented the second COSBAN Plenary Session to happen in 2009. However, its sub-commissions continued to work, producing the 2010-2014 Joint Action Plan between Brazil and China, the first formal plan for Brazilian bilateral relations. Table 2 (below) lists all the formal plans developed for the Sino-Brazilian strategic partnership.

Year of release	Plan
2010	Brazil-China Joint Action Plan (2010-2014)
2012	Brazil-China Ten-Year Cooperation Plan (2012-2021)
2015	Brazil-China Joint Action Plan (2015-2021)
2022	Brazil-China Executive Plan (2022-2026)
2022	Brazil-China Strategic Plan (2022-2031)

Table 2: Formal plans for the Sino-Brazilian strategic partnership
Source: Author's elaboration

According to Leite (2012, p. 75), the Joint Action Plan's motivation was "to strengthen and organize the integration and cooperation model between Brazil and China, providing strategic and comprehensive guidelines for the development of the bilateral strategic partnership and cooperation in relevant areas given the interests of both nations". The plan had 15 chapters, covering areas such as political dialogue, economy and trade, energy, culture, agriculture, and technology (Plano, 2010). Overall, it aimed to strengthen comprehensive cooperation and support economic development.

By the end of the 2010s, relations between the countries had advanced significantly, with the strategic partnership evolving from rhetoric to more formal development, represented by COSBAN's functioning and the creation of specific plans for bilateral relations, such as the Joint Action Plan.

The ups and downs of the 2010s and early 2020s

In the early 2010s, China reached a new level of importance for Brazil compared to the early 2000s, mainly due to its role as Brazil's top trading partner and source of trade surplus. While Brazil wasn't entirely satisfied with the north-south trade pattern (its exports remained concentrated in soybeans, iron ore, and oil, while importing various manufactured goods from China)³, there was a clear understanding of the significance of bilateral trade and political relations with China, especially regarding broader actions in the international system, notably through BRICS.

During Dilma Rousseff's presidency (2011-2016), Brazil maintained a foreign policy that emphasized developing countries and coordination with major emerging nations (Sousa, 2016). In 2012, the second COSBAN Plenary Session took place, further strengthening bilateral cooperation. That same year, the two countries signed the Brazil-China Ten-Year Plan (2012-2021), setting guidelines and goals for cooperation in various areas such as trade, investment, science and technology, and culture.

This plan aimed not only to increase bilateral trade but also to promote investment in strategic sectors like infrastructure, energy, and mining (Plano, 2012). China was the first country President Rousseff visited outside Latin America in 2011, underscoring the importance the government placed on the partnership. The trip was followed by a large business delegation of around 300 entrepreneurs, aiming to establish business ties with China through missions organized by various institutions. However, the initial optimistic perspective of striking a "business deal" with China, which surrounded Lula's first visit to the country in 2004, had given way to more realistic views (Sousa, 2016).

3 According to data from Comex Vis, from 2013 to 2023, at least 98.6% of Brazilian imports from China were from the manufacturing sector. In the same period, at least 75% of Brazilian exports to China are concentrated in the extractive and agricultural sector, with the sum of exports of soybeans, iron ore and oil always occupying at least 70% of the exports to China. (Comex Vis, 2024).

Lula's government had sought closer ties with China as part of a policy to diversify partnerships and reduce Brazil's external vulnerability (Vigevani & Cepaluni, 2017). However, at the time of Dilma's presidency, China had become by far the main destination for Brazilian exports and the largest investor in Brazil in 2010. Meanwhile, Brazil was unable to perform similarly in the Chinese market. This showed emerging asymmetries between countries arising from the fact that during the course of the previous two decades while China had advanced to become one of the largest economies in the world, Brazil, despite having developed well during the Lula government, had lagged behind. In fact, in the post-2008 scenario, Brazil began to suffer from a process of deindustrialization to which many analysts considered that China contributed to (Sousa, 2016).

Thus, the narrative that underpinned the relationship could no longer be diversification; the Rousseff administration replaced it with the principle of reciprocity (Sousa, 2016). As Salek (2011a) illustrated during an interview with Xinhua, Dilma explained: "This is a relationship that, I believe, will be very well developed between the two countries because there are areas where China can be crucial for Brazil and others where Brazil can be crucial for China... based on a concept that I consider very important in a relationship between equals: reciprocity."

The government's perception was that relations with China had played and continued to play a crucial role in helping Brazil deal with the post-international crisis scenario, but the growing economic asymmetry needed to be addressed. Brazil wanted to sell higher value-added products to China and attract productive Chinese investments. The vision was that the growing of the trade and investment flow from China required greater coordination with the Chinese government so that it could serve national development objectives in Brazil: "More than commercial partners, we want to be partners in research, technology, innovation, and development of truly binational technology products," stated Rousseff (Salek, 2011b). For this, the resumption of COSBAN plenary meetings from 2012 was seen as essential.

The February 2012 meeting was chaired on the Brazilian side by Vice President Michel Temer and on the Chinese side by Vice Premier Wang Qishan. Various topics were discussed, from multilateral coordination between the countries to deepening cooperation in science, technology, and innovation. However, trade issues dominated the agenda. In an article published before the meeting, Vice President Temer (2012) set the tone for discussions, arguing that despite growing relations, the challenge remained "to provide means to go beyond complementarity [...] We need to diversify trade flows to increase the share of higher value-added products in Brazilian exports." He emphasized that Brazil had engaged "with Chinese partners to identify new areas for investment, bearing in mind the importance attributed to adding value to our production chains," recognizing that this effort had already yielded concrete results, as in 2011, "16 projects representing \$7.14 billion in Chinese direct investments in Brazil were announced" with "74% destined for manufacturing, semi-manufacturing, and research and development, in addition to Chinese investments in the food, agricultural chemicals, and energy sectors" (Temer, 2012).

However, Brazilian companies needed greater reciprocity when investing in China.

Later in 2012, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited Brazil, and several bilateral agreements were signed, notably the Brazil-China Ten-Year Cooperation Plan (2012-2021). The plan elevated the strategic partnership to a global level. It stated: “Since the international economic crisis of 2008, the two countries have held frequent consultations to mitigate its effects. To reflect this new stage in Sino-Brazilian relations, both countries decided to designate them as a global strategic partnership” (Plano, 2012). The plan’s elaboration and implementation aimed to “deepen the execution of the Joint Action Plan signed by the leaders of both countries, focusing on promoting cooperation in science and technology, economic, cultural, and people-to-people exchanges” (Plano, 2012).

The plan also established priorities and key projects in the following areas: science, technology, innovation and space cooperation; mining, energy, infrastructure and transportation; investment, industrial and financial cooperation; economic and commercial cooperation; cultural, educational cooperation and people-to-people exchanges (Plano, 2012). Many parts of the plan reaffirmed points already established in the Joint Action Plan (2010-2014). Notable among the projects and priorities was the goal of creating a “Brazil-China Biotechnology Center, focusing on joint research and development (R&D) in Medicine and Life Sciences, Biomedicine, Bioinformatics, and Nanotechnology, and their application in the aforementioned areas” and a Brazil-China Nanotechnology Center, which had been previously discussed (Plano, 2012) and was subsequently implemented.

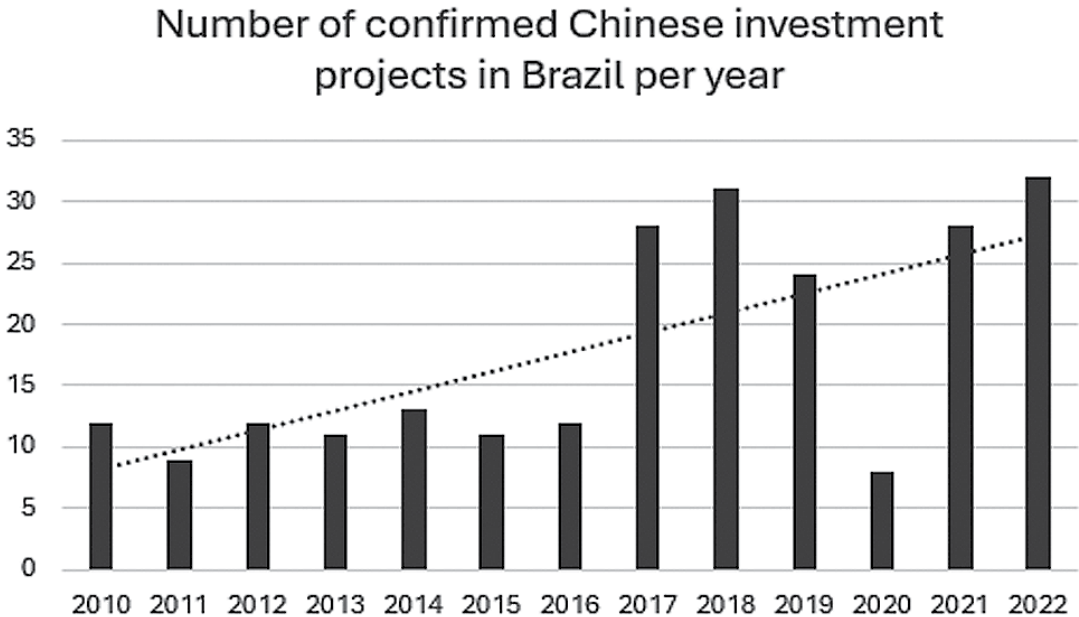
Additionally, the plan aimed to increase cooperation in mining, oil, and gas sectors, targeting the “establishment of coordinated systems for the production and processing of oil and gas with local content, both onshore and offshore, and for the transportation of natural gas, to supply domestic and international markets with added value” (Plano, 2012). The plan also established to increase “the participation of local content in the oil and gas production chain, as well as in the wind and solar energy industries, by promoting joint ventures between companies from both countries” (Plano, 2012). In subsequent years, as stated by Schutte (2020), Chinese investments in Brazil in the oil sector grew, including in association with the Brazilian state company in the sector, Petrobras. Fonseca et al (2024), in turn, they highlighted the increase in Chinese investment in sectors such as wind and solar.

Following the ten-year plan, the third COSBAN Plenary Session was held at the end of 2013, and the fourth session in mid-2015. Both were important for strengthening bilateral plans, especially facilitating the launch of a new Joint Action Plan for the period 2015-2021 in 2015.

Despite the tone of the documents from 2015 onwards still pointing to Brazil’s desire to diversify its exports to China by increasing added value, the focus was more on attracting Chinese investments to Brazil in energy, production, technology, and infrastructure sectors than trying to remedy the north-south trade pattern. As

shown in graph 2 (above), Brazilian exports had been concentrated in basic goods. Faced with the difficulty of changing the north-south trade pattern, attracting Chinese investments was seen as compensatory mechanism by Brazil.

Against the reality - given the countries' positions in the international division of labor (China reaching the top of the global chains, while Brazil faced difficulties in its industry) - it would be very difficult for the trade pattern to change between countries, it seemed more realistic trying to attract Chinese investments that could bring jobs, technologies and contribute to modernizing the Brazil's production structure. Thus, the plan focused on trying to articulate the increase in Chinese investments in Brazil, which produced results, as shown in graph 4 (below).



Graphic 4: Number of confirmed Chinese investment projects in Brazil per year

Source: Cariello (2023)

With Michel Temer's presidency (2016-2018), COSBAN meetings ceased as Brazil temporarily lacked a formal vice-president, who would be responsible for chairing the national session of the Commission. Despite this, Brazil-China relations continued to develop well during his government, benefiting from the already structured relationship framework. During Temer's tenure, Brazil received various Chinese investments previously negotiated and which emerged from new opportunities arose from his concession and privatization policies. As shown in graph 4 (above), from 2017 onwards there has been a significant increase in Chinese investment projects confirmed in Brazil.

However, changes in the dynamics of relations occurred with Jair Bolsonaro's presidency (2019-2022). Bolsonaro's administration was characterized by an alignment with USA foreign policy and open criticism of China. However, the solid structure of bilateral relations built in previous years worked in favor of the continued strategic partnership. After the last decades of growing trade and investment relations, powerful internal actors in Brazil (which have become interdependent with China) acted to constrain the hostile policy that Bolsonaro wanted to direct towards China. Sectors such as agribusiness, animal protein, minerals, telecommunications, among others, supported by pragmatic sectors that existed within the Bolsonaro government, worked to maintain stability for Brazil-China relations (Sousa et al, 2021).

Within Bolsonaro's government, specific Ministries such as of Agriculture and of Economy, and the Vice-Presidency of the Republic maintained a strategic approach towards China. Thus, COSBAN meetings resumed. In 2019, the fifth COSBAN Plenary Session occurred, and in 2022, the sixth session. The main outcome was the drafting of the 2022-2026 Executive Plan and the 2022-2031 Strategic Plan to guide bilateral relations and the strategic partnership. Following the trend from the 2015 plan, the focus was on guidelines related to Chinese investments in Brazil.

From 2023, with Lula da Silva's return for a third term in presidency (2023-2026), the strategic partnership was reinforced. Lula visited China in the first months of his government and was received with honors. In this new phase, efforts are being made to attract Chinese investment to Brazil aimed at industrial development (Sousa et al, 2023). One of the Lula government's goals is to promote a process of reindustrialization in the country, to this end, it wants to use relations with China to direct investments that can generate technology and industrial capacity. One of the sectors chosen has been electrification (which is mentioned in 2022-2026 Executive Plan and 2022-2031 Strategic Plan), for which Brazil has already managed to attract investments from Chinese companies such as Built Your Dreams and Great Wall Motors. In 2024, the countries held the seventh plenary session of COSBAN with Chinese investments in Brazilian industrialization as the main topic.

Conclusions

This study highlighted the development of the strategic partnership between Brazil and China over the past three decades, noting challenges and objectives in each period. Initially, Brazil's expectations were for preferential treatment from China, but later it became clear that even without such treatment, there were significant opportunities for gains, particularly through the expansion of bilateral trade. The second decade of the strategic partnership, the 2000s, was marked by the institutionalization of mechanisms for relationship planning – COSBAN and its subcommittees – and formalizing key orientations for bilateral relations starting a series of plans.

From the 2010s onwards, more emphasis was placed on attracting Chinese investments to Brazil, seen as compensatory mechanism for the established north-south trade pattern (with Brazilian exports concentrated in a few basic products). Over time, the countries' positions within the strategic partnership, and what each sought from the other, evolved according to their international standing and development paths. While China rose within the international division of labor and developed industrially, Brazil faced setbacks in its competitiveness and struggled to integrate into global value chains. Consequently, it viewed the strategic partnership as an opportunity to address these objectives. Since Rousseff's administration (2011-2016), the focus has been on attracting Chinese investment with more quality. With Lula's return to the presidency (2023-current), this momentum continues, the idea is to use these investments to modernize the national economy and reinsert the Brazilian productive sector internationally. There is no way to say whether this goal will be achieved or not. But there are certainly mechanisms in bilateral relations to address issues that arise.

Specifically, regarding COSBAN, it was interesting to perceive its importance as a promoter of formal plans for bilateral relations, while also being flexible with the periodicity of meetings and adaptable to the changing interests of the countries. Obviously, the plans made by the Commission result from the interests between the countries, and the interests of both cannot always be fully met. Brazil's quest to diversify its sales to China has, to this day, remained an unachieved objective, limited by Brazil's own weakness in competitiveness. On the other hand, when investing in Brazil, China had to adapt to the national market and could not reproduce there the same pattern of relationships that it has with countries in other areas of world. COSBAN has played an important role in promoting mutual knowledge between countries, smoothing out rough edges and stabilizing relations, updating over time the meaning of what a strategic relationship is and creating plans to operationalize it.



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БРАЗИЛ И КИНА: СНАЖНО ПАРТНЕРСТВО

Апстракт: У време које је карактерисала релативна једнакост у њиховим позицијама у међународном систему – као земље у развоју са сличним бруто домаћим производом – Бразил и Кина су успоставиле стратешко партнерство 1993. У почетку није створен институционални механизам за управљање партнерством. Тек 2004. године, успостављањем Кинеско-бразилске комисије за координацију и сарадњу на високом нивоу (ЦОСБАН), успостављен је формални апарат. Од тада, са одређеном регуларношћу, ЦОСБАН је постао инструмент за операционализацију партнерства између две земље. У овом раду, наш циљ је да проценимо, између 1993. и 2023. године, бразилско-кинеско стратешко партнерство, изазове за његову операционализацију и његове институционалне механизме. Тврдимо да су концепт о томе шта значи бити „стратешки партнер“ у кинеско-бразилским односима, као и сама институционална димензија, еволуирали као резултат прилагођавања проистеклих из промена у позицијама земаља у међународном систему и одговарајућег модела развоја. Закључујемо да је флексибилност институционалног партнерства, као и његова прилагодљивост да прихвати нове интересе, оно што је одржало релевантност овог партнерства. Истраживање је спроведено кроз библиографски преглед и прикупљање података са званичних сајтова.

Кључне речи: БРАЗИЛ, КИНА, СТРАТЕШКО ПАРТНЕРСТВО