

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY AND BRAZILIAN NAVAL STRATEGIC THINKING IN STRATEGIC STUDIES: REVISITING CONCEPTS IN MARINE SPATIALITY

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ABSTRACT

Can political geography guide Brazilian social, political, and strategic thinking in order to overcome strategic vulnerabilities for sustainable national development? This research question pertains to the knowledge applied to marine spatiality. The central objective goes through the discussion of relevant concepts of Political Geography and Brazilian Naval Strategic Thinking, such as space-time compression, rationalities, versus rationality, globalization and unequal development, from classical authors such as Milton Santos and Almirante Vidigal. Their intellectual constructions, in correlation with the strategic studies, aim to establish an autonomous strategic thinking, in order to overcome internal and external political obstructions made by national politics and hegemonic power blocs to sovereignties and development of peripheral coastal States. The methodology involved the bibliographic qualitative analysis of the theme, serving as a basis for interrelations and analyses that provided a new focus or approach to solve the question proposed, reaching innovative conclusions.

Keywords: Strategic Studies; Brazilian Naval Strategic Thinking; Political Geography; Marine Spaces; Milton Santos; Vidigal.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the concept of planning — which involves considering the present as well as designing the future — and focuses on the ocean, a geopolitically divided space. The oceans and seas represent integration, connecting societies, cultures, and economies, but also imply antagonistic uses dictated by national interests and objectives. Indeed, occupying them is not enough; it is also necessary to defend them. The direction of marine spatial planning must consider the division of civil and military dimensions, as they are dialectically intertwined.

The State's strategic thinking involves protecting population, national territory, and resources, in addition to fostering a sense of maritimicity. It must therefore work in tandem with defense to provide means for deterring threats that violate national conveniences and the complexities of sovereignty. Defense requires a broad strategic scope, planning both material and immaterial components within territories and borders. By understanding the complexities of defense, States can better protect their citizens and ensure the smooth flow of trade and resources.

The reorganization of marine spaces in the Blue Amazon³ involves social, political, economic, geographical, biological, legal, and strategic dimensions, the latter having the complex of national defense and international security as a primary focus. All these dimensions involve a direct relationship with the development of science, technology, and innovation (STI) (Figueiredo, 2015a).

The intertwining of the issues of protection and conservation, defense, and sovereignty with STI becomes increasingly necessary when one considers, in their research, the centrality of the construction and use of sustainable development strategies, in which defense and development are inseparable.

Figueiredo and Monteiro (2016) point out that the dangers to maritime security manifestly present in Blue Amazon are, for the time being, considered of low intensity and linked to the so-called “new threats”⁴. There is no reason to believe that they will continue like so, not only because of the amount of living and non-living resources that are

3 The Blue Amazon represents the territorial sea, the exclusive economic zone, the inland waters and the waters overlapping the continental shelf.

4 They can be understood as activities identified as terrorism, illegal trafficking of arms, drugs, and persons, illegal fishing, smuggling, and other transnational illicit activities.

found in this oceanic space but also because of the reserves existing in the pre-salt⁵ layer which cross these jurisdictional limits. Also, the future of the planet is inseparable from an issue that is imposed: the scarcity of natural resources that are necessarily finite and associated with the protection of this rich marine ecosystem.

The research question focuses on the importance of political geography in achieving social, political, and strategic thinking that overcomes strategic vulnerabilities in the sustainable development of national marine spaces. It considers the fundamental variables of sea securitization, space, and resources from State and transnational actors, which can relativize sovereignty in an economically and technologically driven globalization, especially in peripheral States such as Brazil.

The work is concerned with the application of knowledge to marine spatiality. The central objective goes through the discussion of relevant concepts of Political Geography and Brazilian Naval Strategic Thinking, such as space-time compression, rationalities versus counter rationalities, globalization and unequal development, from classical authors such as Milton Santos and Admiral Vidigal.

The research is justified by the few studies linking political geography to Brazilian Naval Strategic Thinking, particularly in Brazil, where researchers often view overcoming strategic vulnerabilities as a State-based issue when, in reality, it must contemplate the participation and interests of society as a whole.

The methodology involved a bibliographic review of concepts, paradigms, and theories related to the theme, which seek to explain strategic vulnerabilities subjected to a unique hegemonic thought, both political and economic, inserted into a power logic which dictates that special development spaces are increasingly coveted and used to maintain the systemic status quo rather than to contribute to development of coastal States.

The final considerations suggest that is possible, in a Brazilian reality, to adopt new approaches to overcome internal and external strategic vulnerabilities by inspiring and applying the thinking of important political geographers and Naval Strategists, such as Milton Santos and Admiral Vidigal, for example.

5 In the pre-salt, about 80% of its reserves are located up to 200 nautical miles away. The others are at an even greater distance from the coast, beyond the limits of the 350 nautical miles of continental shelf.

Strategic Studies: The Importance of Security and Defense in Marine Spatiality

It is not evident for a country that has had little treatment in wars to be convinced of the need to defend itself in order to build itself. Even if they are fruitful and even indispensable, arguments that invoke the use of defense technologies and knowledge for the development of the country are not enough. The resources demanded by defense require a transformation of consciences so that a defense strategy for Brazil can be constituted (Brasil, National Defense Strategy, END, in Portuguese, 2016a, p. 43).

Based on this quote, expressed in the END, one shall begin this theoretical debate by understanding the South Atlantic as an important maritime, economic, and strategic area for defense and sustainable development, so as to demand the maintenance of a sovereign space.

Military defense is important for the planning of marine spaces and comes to be studied by the diversity and interdisciplinarity of the Human Sciences in the great field of Political Science, including, in a stricter sense, Strategic Studies. The content of the various public policies related to the sea and involving multiple sectors demonstrates a lack of a more in-depth discussion on the protection, conservation, defense, and security of natural resources.

The interaction between public policies and their respective national strategies resulted in joint projects, and a great development of National Maritime Policies has taken place worldwide. These actions, led by the European Union, Canada, and Australia representing the developed North, and by emerging powers such as the BRICS bloc (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), have resulted in advances in domestic legislation that seek to legitimize the territorial gains obtained by UNCLOS in its strategic and development planning (Vivero et al., 2009; Vivero and Mateos, 2010).

Since the broad international discussions that gave rise to UNCLOS, Brazil has been institutionally developing the basis for deepening the notions that interrelate marine problems and the integrated need for

planning the oceans and their resources for sustainable development, in line with the principles of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Thus, the newly created Maritime Defense Strategy represents a high-level strategic orientation of the Brazilian Navy (BN) in order to integrate efforts to provide the necessary capabilities to Naval Power identify and neutralize threats and activities that could potentially harm national interests and international commitments. Its main areas of action are thus in the Blue Amazon and adjacent marine spaces. (Brasil, Maritime Defense Strategy, 2023).

This strategy outlines several key objectives, including the “Promotion of Maritime Power Development” through cooperative and persuasive efforts between BN, political power, and society for the protection, conservation, defense, and development of the Blue Amazon. Additionally, the strategy aims to “Preserve Maritime Communications Lines” by adopting a coercive stance to counter state threats to national interests in maritime and environmental areas, particularly from countries with superior military capabilities compared to Brazil. Focusing on the strategic objective of “Advancement of the Strategic Nuclear Defense Sector” (Ibidem) helps achieve this.

The Brazilian State needs to change its perspective on cooperation and multisectoral integration to implement the multidisciplinary development model proposed by Naval Defense Strategy and Maritime Defense Strategy. New researches in marine spaces should increase the number of actors involved in government interventions. Strategic plans and projects will emerge, interconnecting complex programs and projects. Examples include the rebuilding of the Brazilian Naval Force, which is an outcome of the development of the Conventionally Armed Submarine with Nuclear Propulsion (SCPN-BR) that will enhance deterrence in the Blue Amazon, and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), which aims to organize sovereign spaces that encompass a complex ecosystem: the ocean and its onshore-offshore interactions. This stimulus necessarily comes from the connection between power, politics, and national independence, “just as it can be said that true development does not occur without credible defense systems. Development and defense are concepts that cannot be thought of dissociatively” (Figueiredo, 2015b, p. 62, our translation).

Strategic Studies explains the interrelations between defense and security in Brazil, focusing on the application of force by political

communities for national political objectives. This understanding helps identify correlated and integrative policies important to maritime sovereignty.

Brazil's security and defense issues involve various political, military, and scientific community actors in their marine and maritime areas⁶, addressing the diversity and resources arising from the use of these environments. Maritime planning is necessary for managing a political process that distributes human activities for ecological, economic, social, and strategic objectives. This trinomial consists of policy, planning, and sustainable management of resources (Marroni et al., 2019).

Despite the increasing focus on ocean exploration and governance, Brazil and its coastal neighbors continue to face significant challenges in effectively monitoring their respective fields of responsibility. This is further compounded by the existence of international maritime legislation that exhibits notable deficiencies in defending the rights of the sea. Additionally, the emergence of new dimensions in naval strategy, such as the space and cyber environments, presents threats to maritime security and the vast majority of global trade, which relies on maritime routes (Reis, 2011). This phenomenon is also derived from the notion of sovereignty, which has encountered a state of uncertainty over its importance, practical applicability, and political feasibility due to the evolving understanding of security within the world community since the end of the Cold War without a large-scale conventional conflict. The rise of liberal/constructivist institutional literature has led to new ways of thinking about international security, emphasizing the importance of political, economic, social, and environmental interests as primary threats (Moreira, 2010).

The expanded security concept aims to address state vulnerabilities that threaten or weaken political institutions and regimes. Low-political fields now play a significant role in state and international security, with discourse defined by the designation of existing threats as dependent on emergency actions or special measures by powerful States.

The understanding that States should be subordinate to supranational communities, such as international courts of justice, economic communities, military alliances, and collective security

6 Both adjectives refer to the sea, but maintain a basic difference between them: Marine is that which is born in the sea, which is natural from the sea, and which belongs to the ecosystem of the sea; maritime is what is by the sea, what has been put into the sea by man, and what man accomplishes at sea (Marroni, 2016).

arrangements, has been strengthened. New security approaches place the individual at the center of the debate, securitizing themes related to individual and global security. However, these universal concepts are not applicable to all those in the hierarchy of power within the “world system”⁷.

In the case of peripheral countries, former colonial powers inherited the narrow boundaries of their marine domains. Young countries were not completely aware of the importance, and particularly the economic relevance, of the coastal zone. The freedom of action for their Naval Forces, trade ships, fishing fleets, and scientific and intelligence missions has been generally preserved by industrialized countries (Vivero et al., 2020).

This process of widening the concept of security aims to legitimize the use of force and the acceptance of exceptions to contain a claimed threat, eventually becoming a significant concept in security and defense policy theories, and hence in geopolitics. As a result, it is important to discuss how much the sea can be securitized⁸, which highlights notions of what are good and what are harmful sovereignty practices, particularly the newly established borders and the national maritime regions of peripheral or semiperipheral countries⁹. This involves climate change, food security, humanitarian concerns, environmental concerns, and so on (Marroni, Castro, and Violante, 2018).

Energy resources are becoming increasingly important to the development of countries in these fields, bringing forth the ambitions of other nations with greater relative power in the world system. Coal, oil, and natural gas now account for 93% of global energy consumption. More than half of all coal, oil, and natural gas consumed by the world’s population is estimated to have been consumed in the last 65 years, primarily in the most industrialized countries (Chossudovsky, 1999). Nonetheless, these consumption rates are rising year after year. Energy consumption is also closely related to a population’s standard of living. Data from the UN’s

7 The “world system”, according to Immanuel Wallerstein, Giovanni Arrighi, and Beverly Silver, defends the world division into systemic cycles linked to the rise and fall of hegemonic States, which organize an unequal and polarized world economy into centers, semiperipheries, and peripheries (Martins, 2011).

8 Intersubjective practices, in which an agent identifies the existence of threats to the survival of an object (Buzan et al., 1998).

9 Semiperipheral States have dependent underdevelopment. As examples: Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, India, Egypt, and South Africa in the late 1970s.

Human Development Index (HDI) show that the development indices assigned to countries with energy surpluses are consistent with the living standards of their populations. Therefore, the nation which effectively controls energy resources tends to be dominant over others (Marroni, 2013).

NATO's strategic concept has evolved since 2010, focusing on the use of robust military forces and increasing dependence on external energy supplies. The 2020 document "Assured Security: Dynamic Engagement" emphasized the need to combat transnational threats through cooperation and mobilization of resources. The 2022 Strategic Concept aims to update the 2010 concept by emphasizing Russia and other State actors such as China, North Korea, Iran, and Syria, which would be able to threaten its member States. This more interstate approach does not mean forgetting the new threats that are present in the Brazilian strategic environment and that may represent instabilities in the Euro-Atlantic region in terms of energy security.

UNCLOS itself is an example of a regulation that, although accepted, has not been signed by important States in the system, such as the US, Turkey, and Israel. Indeed, it is imperative to shed light on the issue at hand in order to prevent any further erosion of national sovereignty and the securitization that may arise from perpetuation of the existing globalist paradigm. This observation highlights the tendency of hegemons to refrain from territorializing aspects that are advantageous to their interests. The concept of "mare liberum"¹⁰ refers to the exercise of authority over extensive marine territories by peripheral nations. These actions of deterritorialization align with the universal norms of liberalism, which prioritize international security as a common goal. This ideology is often associated with hegemonic power structures. The observation made here concerns the interconnectedness of the liberal global agenda and offensive realism¹¹ in external acts, particularly when their objectives are opposed in any region of the world.

10 "Mare Liberum" is a concept established by Hugo Grotius (1618), favorable to the freedom of the seas and of interest to the great maritime powers, in contrast to the concepts of John Selden's "Mare Clausum" (1653), which presented the question of territoriality for maritime sovereignty, and Bynkershoek's "Domino Maris" (1703), which advocated state sovereignty at sea at the limit of the range of cannons placed on land.

11 Offensive realism aims at the acquisition of the greatest possible power in order to increase the international position of the hegemonic state in the established system. Thus, it is avoided that the emerging powers reach the position of hegemons in their regions of influence, without which war can be a necessary means (Mearsheimer, 2007).

The National Defense Policy (Brasil, PND, 2016b) and its draft (2020) establish four national objectives linked to international relations: to guarantee sovereignty, national heritage, and territorial integrity; to ensure the defense capacity for the fulfillment of the constitutional missions of the Armed Forces; to contribute to regional stability, peace, and international security; and to contribute to Brazil's increased projection in the concert of nations and its insertion in international decision-making processes.

To achieve these objectives, defense and STI are presented as inseparable and prioritized fields. Therefore, the National Policy of Science, Technology, and Innovations (PNCTI, in Portuguese) complements the actions for development and defense included in the National Defense Policy (PND, in Portuguese). Such actions, effective and coordinated, encompass the national effort for the development of indigenous technology. The National Policy for Marine Resources is not separate from these issues, contributing, with its sectoral policies, to the legitimation of UNCLOS at the various levels of maritime sovereignty, and the very economic and political-strategic existence of the Brazilian State.

Nevertheless, Brazil's strategic vulnerabilities can be attributed to a decline of material capabilities in science, technology, and innovation (STI) resulting from a prolonged lack of political power towards national maritime affirmation policies over the course of several decades. The resolution of this challenge requires collaborative and integrative processes among many government departments. These processes should involve conversations that go beyond the confines of certain sectors and include a broader range of stakeholders which can better represent their respective interests.

Brazil's marine policies vary significantly, affecting national sovereignty issues. However, cooperation between policy instruments is not always evident. A multisectoral cooperation of the Brazilian State in sea affairs, organized and integrated, could lead to comprehensive security models in waters under its jurisdiction, as well as with neighboring States in the subcontinent and on the West African coast.

From a multidisciplinary perspective, Strategic Studies and their marine spaces are analyzed to understand sovereignty, hegemony, and securitization. This approach involves formulating plausible theories and propositions that reflect the conflicting political dynamics of societies. It interacts with other areas of knowledge, such as geopolitics and political

geography, and is well explained by the logic of power, as it will be seen below.

POWER AND CAPITAL: CONVERGENT LOGICS IN GEOGRAPHICAL SPACES

It is initially up to us to distinguish between Political Geography and Geopolitics. Political Geography is defined as the set of systematic studies most affected by geography and limited to the relationships between space and the State, while geopolitics would fulfill the formulation of theories and plans of action in power relations between States and general strategies for national and foreign territories. Thus, the relationship between politics and geography emphasizes the significance of considering space and its existing partition as a result of politics (Messias da Costa, 1992).

The geographers of the Critical School share a scientific discourse that presents answers to questions from society and the traditional parameters of validation of scientific theories through theoretical-methodological proposals that go beyond the mere physical transcription of these phenomena. (De Campos, 2001; Diniz Filho, 2003).

As one of the field's experts, geographer Milton Santos sees geography as a science which already possesses a critical awareness of history. In this view, critical geography, or simply political geography, studies nature as a scarce resource, and politics as a dynamic aggregation of reality in space.

The purpose of political geography concepts is to produce autonomous thinking that will guide the construction of a successful strategy to overcome the barriers to sustainable development in maritime spatiality.

Milton Santos's critical and nationalist thinking incorporated multidisciplinary approaches and different theories to investigate spatial dynamics, such as space-time compression, unequal development, rationalities, and globalization. These ideas add to many phenomenological approaches to studying development and finding solutions to its problems. For example, they help us understand how the central powers and other transnational actors limit Brazil's use of sensitive technologies in the struggles for space and power that it submits as a semi-periphery of the international capitalist system.

In this analysis, we want to elucidate the rationale behind the actions of hegemonic countries and transnational players who exploit the concept of international security to pose threats to political, economic, and military maritime domains that fall within their authority. The prevailing paradigm of globalization, frequently justified under the guise of international security, engenders disparities in development by confining technical progress to the periphery of the world system, resulting in uneven development tendencies across States.

Milton Santos' concept of space-time compression explains the dynamics of globalization, overcoming distances, and the acceleration of technological transformations that accelerate events, economic production, and political integration. Technological innovations protect the privilege of space, stimulating local, regional, and global competition. The less important the spatial barriers, the greater the sensitivity of capital to the choice of places differentiated by forms of attraction and incentives, whether political, strategic, or fiscal (Santos, 1994, 1996).

The sea, as well as space, has been a source of development, survival, and power for peoples and nations. As technological evolution expands the possibilities of using ocean resources, it corresponds to time. Marroni (2013) highlights the geopolitical agenda, economic significance, and politics of natural resources, as well as the strategic direction of power, as factors influencing national and international relations. A living or non-living resource becomes strategic when it is scarce and potentially vital for development. The conflicting component of geopolitics occurs due to the natural asymmetry of its endowment, with some territories experiencing abundance and others experiencing deprivation, despite national economic needs.

Milton Santos' concept of space highlights the sustained struggle for geographical spaces, driven by conflicts over natural resources. Hegemonic actors control the technique through political use, leading to capital flight and deindustrialization and exacerbating inequalities. This exclusion of peripheral and emerging actors from international politics is exacerbated by the lowering of spatial barriers, so as to reinforce hierarchical realignments and maintain the status quo of power blocs established in the post-Cold War era (Santos, 1994).

Transnational elites and hegemonic actors such as national defense are disproportionately affected by globalization. The dominant neoliberal model promotes the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of

a few, intensifying capital dynamics and highlighting socioeconomic disparities (Santos, 2000). This unequal development hinders decision-making autonomy in favor of national political and strategic objectives. The concept of space-time compression intensifies capital dynamics, exacerbates marginalization, and prevents systemic contestation and revision (Rosendo and Pedone, 2016).

Commonplaces, such as global cities, where the flow of information would occur instantaneously, were developed as a result of this new view of time, which shortens spaces. However, this technological process is not yet available to everyone. According to Santos (1996), what circulates most quickly in networks is pragmatic knowledge among a few actors and a small number of States. Even in the richest countries, only a select few fully benefit from the new means of circulation.

Santos (2008) emphasizes the challenges faced by peripheral countries in accessing advanced techniques and knowledge, leading to underdevelopment. These constraints impede indigenous development, resulting in power and resource asymmetries. This results in disparities in STI and Research and Development (R&D), thus reducing innovation capacity, economic competitiveness, and quality of life. This cycle persists even in nations with high potential, such as Brazil.

In peripheral countries, the limited use of emancipatory technologies hinders knowledge expansion and underdevelopment (Santos, 1996, 2000). The constant struggle for space and power, not only in physical territories but mainly in marine spaces (filled with living and non-living resources), may violate national States' sovereignty and interstate systems. Techniques are increasingly improved to utilize these resources, giving prominence to the correlation between terrestrial and marine spaces. According to Marroni et al. (2019), the strategic sense that ocean resources represent for each State, such as protection and sovereignty, as well as their use, is dependent on the dominant technique in some States, and is still absent in most States.

The contemporary understanding of interregional dynamics, previously referred to as regional dependence, now encompasses the conceptual framework of rational actions and manufactured objects, which are not evenly distributed across all regions. The spaces generated using technical-scientific methods can be characterized as spaces of authority and dominant knowledge, while other spaces are associated with activities and obedience, typically found in peripheral nations. The

concept of global space can be understood as a result of the many objects and flows, as well as the unequal networks operating on multiple scales and levels. This phenomenon, as explained by Santos (1994), contributes to the heightened levels of inequality observed.

As Milton Santos addressed it more than 25 years ago, today we are experiencing the apex of an intense articulation between science and technique, especially in information technology. This hegemonic approach is characterized by heterogeneity and exclusion. Some areas are considered rational specialties, while others are driven by globalization.

Modern infrastructure is strategically located to meet the interests and economies of hegemonic societies. This rationalization is no longer the result of the market's "invisible hand," but the decision of a planning minority, including national and international elites, financial and hegemonic companies, and transnational companies¹² (Santos, 1996). These actions often allow for underdeveloped regions to be reached by the rationality applied by the great powers.

However, what measures can be implemented to address and mitigate these disparities within the existing framework of globalization? In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the unique characteristics of the geographical space in underdeveloped countries, it is not imperative to sever ties with the theoretical models of development employed by more advanced nations. These models would undergo continuous evaluation in order to comprehend the local and regional periphery of the world. Furthermore, it is worth noting that peripheral countries often have spatial arrangements that are derived from those of developed countries. However, these structures tend to be incomplete, lacking integration and exhibiting discontinuous characteristics (Santos, 2009).

The mastery of a technique is not absolute, as it can be developed by revisionist and non-revisionist States, and even new hegemons. Government interventions can develop sensitive techniques that are not provided by State actors or transnational companies. In Brazil, there are spaces worked according to various rationalities, with industrial areas having a harsh, precise, and dense rationality, while other regions have a tenuous and tolerant rationality. The industrial concentration in southeastern Brazil, where economic power centers are located, constitutes

12 They differ from the "old" multinationals, which had close connections with their headquarters and metropolises, mainly due to the volatility and deterritorialization of their capital.

a strategic vulnerability for Brazil's uniform development and a space prone to external attacks in case of conflict.

Space is not homogeneous and evolves unevenly, causing differences in the diffusion of modern objects and actions. Some peripheral subspaces, such as Brazil in South America, act like hegemonic subsystems by virtue of their real and potential power, hosting actions of interest to great powers. However, this space-time compression causes information to be disseminated only to infrastructures necessary for fluidity in places that consider the world production system to be strategically and economically valid. (Santos, 1994; 1996).

The myth of a globalization that purportedly benefits all yet disproportionately enriches a select few has been facilitated by the rapidity of communication, while the dissemination of sensitive information lags behind. The present state of globalization is predominantly driven by capital and the near monopoly of knowledge, leading to heightened levels of consumption and scarcity as well as the perpetuation of poverty among individuals marginalized by this system. The limited capacity of nation-States to effectively regulate global activities gives rise to the term "globalitarianism"¹³, used to describe the prevailing state of globalization. This phenomenon is characterized by a universal colonization process that exacerbates the disparities between the affluent and the impoverished, metropolises and colonies, as well as the center and the periphery (Santos, 2000).

Hence, the projected integration of continental and marine voids, which was expected to be facilitated by globalization, has proved to be unsuccessful. The inability to address vulnerabilities, particularly in infrastructure, economic and social development, and military-naval capabilities, which are essential for ensuring the protection, defense, and sustainable utilization of natural resources, has resulted in a delay in Brazil's progress as a power aligned with this particular development model (Vidigal, 2001; 2004).

The technological gap between central and peripheral countries,

13 Santos (1999, p. 3, our translation) adds: "I call globalization globalitarianism because we are living in a new phase of totalitarianism. The political system uses contemporary technical systems to produce the current globalization, leading us to forms of ruthless economic relations that do not accept discussion and demand immediate obedience, without which the actors are expelled from the scene or remain dependent, as if they were slaves to a logic without which the economic system does not function. Which again, for that very reason, ends up being a political system."

particularly Brazil, has led to a deterioration in trade terms due to the development associated with capitalism. The peripheral countries' dependence on central countries has resulted in a trade balance that is often unfavorable, as they continue to supply low-value commodities while seeking high-value products. This gap has been exacerbated by the fact that peripheral countries are not dominant sources of technological innovation. (Santos, 2000; Martins, 2011). Thus, globalization becomes asymmetrical, perverse, and practically irreversible under the current model of insertion.

The disparity in technical advancement has experienced a substantial increase. The process of deindustrialization that Brazil has been experiencing exacerbates this existing gap. The figures presented in Figure 1 provide evidence of a notable decline in industrial production over the past three decades, which serves to strengthen the rationale behind the ongoing process of globalization.

Figure 1: Percentage of the Industrial Manufacturing Sector in GDP from 1947 to 2019.



Source: Data from IBGE and Morceiro and Guilhotto (2019).

According to Cooke and Wells (1992), the action of large companies in the States leads us to think that markets are triumphing over government policies, as long as market control is being appropriated by companies that have the latest technologies.

The official discourse of beneficial globalization in Latin America has led to the subordination of public power to financial capital, resulting

in a dispute between peripheral nations. This subordinate economic model, subsidized by tax exemptions and benefits, has led to the flight of capital for the sake of productive and financial capital. Santos (2000) warned of crises of governability arising from this subordinate economic model in Latin America, particularly in Brazil, since the 1990s.

The State plays a crucial role in peripheral countries seeking to establish control in the global order, implementing interventions in various fields of National Power¹⁴ to legitimize effective national projects. However, these new objects are expensive and prioritize a few actors internally, often leading to domination and exploitation by hegemonic countries. For instance, this restricts Brazil's access to nuclear energy, hinders scientific and technological development, and perpetuates its dependence on advanced nations. Such asymmetries between States can lead to a revision of globalization pacts. Countries such as China, Russia, and India, representing over a third of the world's population, show signs of rejection to the passive role of market nations in economically hegemonic blocs.

Brazil needs an effective political system for the protection and sustainable use of these resources, one that takes care of the social and economic fields, which also involves the defense of these geographical spaces on land, in the sky, and at sea. The very establishment of the cooperation system already supports a methodology based on dialogue and the sharing of related values (Marroni, 2013, p. 31).

The sea and its resources can be strategically managed by each State, with their use and strategic significance varying. The coastal-oceanic ecosystem's value and use are influenced by technological progress, which is already dominant in some States, and the disinformation of States with low technological capabilities. The following part of this paper seeks to elucidate Vidigal's Brazilian Naval Strategic Thinking, highlighting the significance of integrating environment and technique as a pivotal catalyst for defense and development.

NAVAL STRATEGIC THINKING, REVISITED ACCORDING TO VIDIGAL

In his intellectual trajectory, Armando Amorim Ferreira Vidigal

14 National Power encompasses political, economic, social, military, and psychosocial power.

(1928–2006) sought to analyze the external and internal conjunctures of politics in order to identify the fundamental elements and their possible reflections for the evolution of a Brazilian Naval Strategic Thinking, inserted in Political Science, Strategic Studies, International Relations, and Political Geography.

The author, a conservative and not a revisionist, inserted in the capitalist system, did not preach a revolution in the production system, but a transformation that might put Brazil in its true place, equal to the major players and participants in the important decisions of international affairs.

In the political-strategic criticisms of the technical limitations of hegemonic powers and globalization, we may trace influences from Mahan, Corbett, Richmond, Sprout, and Till, but also from geographers and Brazilian Social Thinking, such as the thought of Milton Santos.

In this analysis, we will examine the third phase of Brazilian Naval Strategic Thinking, spanning from 1977 to the present. This period began with the termination of Brazil's military cooperation agreement with the United States of America by the Geisel administration (1974–1979). According to Vidigal (2002), this marked the conclusion of a period characterized by complete subordination to the US, resulting in the decline of Brazilian Naval Power and the erosion of maritime awareness. This decline can be traced back to the conclusion of World War II. The Basic Policies and Guidelines of the Navy, which were publicly disclosed in February of 1977, indicated a distinct realignment of the Navy's strategic objectives, with a heightened emphasis on safeguarding strategic interests regardless of their geographical location.

Brazil's political decision to refuse adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) has demonstrated Brazil's strategic stance in the domain of nuclear technology. Nevertheless, there was a significant response to this policy of increased autonomy, which was not clearly aligned with the collective security concerns of the Cold War era. The Brazil-Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) Nuclear Agreement faced significant opposition from the US and the former Soviet Union, leading to notable shifts in the worldwide geopolitical scenario (Vidigal, 1985).

In fact, nuclear power had a fundamental impact on strategy. The consequences of its development have not yet been exhausted, either by

its continued development or by the greater understanding of strategic analysts regarding employment possibilities. According to Vidigal (1980; 2004), the nuclear age has caused countries' strategic thinking to evolve, with or without considering its deployment. Other technological breakthroughs, such as the evolution of conventional missiles, platforms for the launch of long-range torpedoes, and the employment of nuclear propulsion on submarines, have also influenced modern concepts.

The nuclear age has not diminished the need for central governments to prepare conventional forces. A conventional, sophisticated, and diversified Naval Power enables flexibility and a more adaptive, rapid, and effective response capacity for emerging countries (Vidigal, 1980; 2001; 2004).

Non-nuclear-armed States require conventional deterrence. Nuclear deterrence has always worked, or at least has worked, from its inception to the present day, perhaps due to the "failure of absolute nuclear retaliation". Having a conventional deterrent does not prevent Brazil from developing in the nuclear field, which has a strong dual use in several fields such as energy production, propulsion engines, medicine, agriculture, radiology, and so on.

For developing countries such as Brazil, upgrades in military power are also subject to the country's social, economic, and technological development, which includes budgetary issues and investment priorities. The technique makes weapon systems harder and raises the costs of developing, acquiring, and maintaining assets, also requiring personnel to operate them. The cost is even higher in peripheral countries that invest little in R&D, due to the central powers' dependence and geopolitical interests.

The effectiveness of naval forces as a political weapon is dependent on their credibility as an instrument of power. Permanence, flexibility, autonomy, and mobility are critical to the establishment of a credible Naval Power. Deterrence must be capable of preventing the adventures of powers with greater relative power than Brazil or the various transnational actors already present in the South Atlantic.

No show of force will achieve its goals if it cannot be employed without hesitation. A continental State with extensive maritime sovereignty must be able to: a) conduct mine warfare along its coast; b) establish surface-to-surface missile launch pads; c) maintain a force of small submarines for operation in shallow waters and larger submarines for attack on

maritime traffic in deep waters; d) have embarked and land-based air forces with in-flight refueling capability to attack maritime traffic and enemy naval forces, in addition to supporting landing operations; e) have conventional nuclear-powered submarines armed with strategic missiles; f) have airships carrying attack and interception aviation; and g) provide logistical support while maintaining the aspect of permanence and, at the same time, fulfilling typical actions in times of peace in subsidiary activities, in order to serve Brazilian society (Vidigal, 1980; 2001).

For bringing Vidigal's ideas up to date, naval aviation must be focused on the entire coast, given its unusual length, and comprised of UAVs in addition to current aircraft. These aeronaval means could, for instance, utilize oceanic islands such as Fernando de Noronha and Trindade. UAVs, in particular, might be launched from naval platforms with a variety of missions depending on their size and aims. This would expand the use of traditional aircraft carriers for naval asset launches.

With that, an oceanic fleet would provide comprehensive protection throughout the AJB and beyond. This view contributed to the political debate by serving as a guide for the design of Maritime and Naval power as well as the prioritization of options in the face of limited and frequently contingent defense funds.

Still, in terms of security and defense, an autonomous policy has limitations. The search for partners in technology transfer is influenced by the strategic and geopolitical aims of players seeking greater integration into international affairs. In this context, the idea that the globalization process would benefit all of its actors defined the brief systemic unipolarity of the early 1990s as well as illusions of affirmative economic and strategic collaboration (Pecequillo, 2004).

Vidigal (1990) argued that, while liberalism can be beneficial, it should not be used without protective measures for important sectors of national industry, which could cause a regression to the pre-industrial state in addition to crises of governability.

In 2001, Vidigal criticized globalization as being harmful, highlighting its increase in the gap between the rich and the poor, exacerbated by a lack of conditions and international competition. He argued that liberal discourse failed to address the complex problems faced by developing countries. "[The] already huge gap between the richest and poorest countries, which did not know or could not, due to an absolute lack of conditions, face fierce international competition, [...] undeniably

exacerbates the defense of national interests” (Vidigal, 2001, p. 94, our translation).

Thus, liberal discourse has failed to address the complex problems of developing countries, such as a lack of infrastructure and precariousness in public services, health, education, and security, due to the technological curtailment and protectionism of rich countries (Vidigal, 1997, 2001).

In reality, there is no single global space; there are only globalization spaces. The objects that comprise geographical space are purposefully manufactured and placed in areas of greater interest, also known as special territories, taking into account the principles of hierarchy and selectivity. Consequently, the quest for more favorable locations intensifies the restrictive dynamics of spatial competition. The endeavor to acquire land and marine areas that yield higher profits confers a competitive edge and restructures the economy’s spatiality.

When considering the phenomenon of economic exploitation, it is imperative to acknowledge the significant influence of geopolitical factors on the decision-making process. According to Harvey (2005), the application of this model results in the perpetuation of hegemony as well as constant instabilities and crises due to the laws of intensified competition. Hence, it is not possible to believe in systemic balance or a tendency towards greater equality in the world system without a more inclusive globalization – another way of thinking about world relations.

The myth of beneficial globalization suggests that negotiation would replace conflict, shifting from military to economic. Therefore, the justification for upholding the maintenance of national Armed Forces would be rendered obsolete. Furthermore, the delegation of control to organized crime, specifically in the fields of drug trafficking and arms smuggling, is an unacceptable deviation from the primary objective of military power. This change undermines the military’s readiness and prompts its involvement in the national political process (Vidigal, 1997, 2001).

This subordination of strategy to economics is very visible in current globalization, which emerges as an economic phenomenon with neoliberalism as its ideological model of application. In the view of Figueiredo (2004), American hegemony seeks to naturalize capitalism in its application, preventing the consideration of other forms of organization, including capitalist ones. Because the US is a strong State, it induces its allies and many other States into peripheral subordination, by either reducing or

increasing central countries' military spending or by reducing the others to the mere role of submission, as systemic supporting players. As a result, an autonomous strategy is demonstrated as an instrument for minimizing losses and resisting the system's asymmetries and perversities.

International pressure on Brazil to adhere to control mechanisms, particularly the NPT and the CTBT, was intense in the 1990s. According to Lampreia, Fernando Henrique Cardoso's chancellor from 1995 to 2001, this decision was critical for accessing cutting-edge technology from developed countries as well as increasing the space for proposition in the new world order. But, most of the time, neither of these things occurred (Violante, 2017). In 1995, Brazil signed the MTCR; in March 1996, it ratified the pacts for the abolition of chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction; and in July 1998, Congress ratified the CTBT and NPT accession.

Vidigal (1988a) provided evidence that the strategic significance of nuclear weapons is derived from the perception that their mere existence can be politically employed to either uphold or alter the prevailing status quo. In light of the claim that contemporary dual-use advanced technologies have the potential to facilitate the production of weapons that are prohibited for less powerful nations, the world's biggest powers have implemented a system of technological segregation, selectively denying access to these technologies only to countries considered to be accountable. The classification of Brazil as "responsible" has not been inclusive, despite its strong political, diplomatic, and commercial ties with relevant stakeholders.

The limited access to sensitive technology by underdeveloped countries hinders their sovereign rights, as they are constrained by the exclusive group of nuclear-armed States and participants in the NPT.

In this statement, Vidigal expresses his strongest critiques of the globalization model, aligning with the perspectives put forth by Milton Santos. Vidigal further advocated for the convergence of the concept of freedom with that of equality. "The revolutionaries of 1789 likely recognized the challenges associated with reconciling the two ideals and consequently introduced a third principle, namely, fraternity". Nevertheless, the current model of globalization lacks this sense of harmony. According to Vidigal (1992, p. 128, our translation), "it is evident that impoverished nations are experiencing significant disadvantages, as they face a decline in competitiveness, increased dependency, deteriorating poverty levels and, subsequently, heightened political instability".

Vidigal's ideas, which included criticism to the strategic status quo, led to the tightening of relations with nearby countries. Like Meira Mattos (1977) and Therezinha de Castro (1999), he understood the importance of establishing a South Atlantic community in order to meet the challenges of maintaining the openness of the Maritime Lines of Communication through political, economic, and military concertation. From a small community in the Southern Cone, these ideas spread to the countries on either side of the South Atlantic, giving rise to the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone (Zopacas) in 1986, the Southern Common Market (Mercosur) in 1991, and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and its Defense Council (CDS) in 2008.

Milton Santos' ideas (1996, 2000) on cooperation between peripheral countries emphasize the importance of regional cooperation networks in strengthening their position in the global economy. This integration fosters local and regional economies, enhancing local resources and knowledge. Nevertheless, this endogenous development requires significant investment in STI and R&D to reduce dependencies related to central countries and transnational corporations.

The European Union is an example of the reality of this process, which, despite the diversity of identities and interests, causes a very important deterrent effect (Vidigal, 2001; 2004). The military power of a South American, or even Latin American, coalition is not relatively significant compared to the military power of the U.S. or other powers. Nevertheless, taking into account the political aspects, its deterrence capacity is great, going beyond its military capacity. To this end, Latin America or South America should be united around common interests, a possible consensus (Vidigal, 1989b; 1990).

The imperative to liberate oneself from excessive dependence on external sources in the realm of defense presents a tangible opportunity for mutually beneficial cooperation. Excessive dependence compromises the country's security against external threats or pressures. Therefore, the internal construction and production of military equipment, even if they are inferior to the state of the art, may provide the necessary autonomy during times of crisis or war (Vidigal, 1988b).

The more technologically advanced the items, the more they are controlled by global logic. This demonstrates the link between modern objects and hegemonic actors (Santos, 1994, 1996). In the Malvinas War (1982), for example, Argentina was unable to obtain Exocet AM-39 missiles

negotiated with France because they were a relatively cheap weapon compared to the damage they inflicted on the British Task Force.

New investments in STI and R&D may result from a higher percentage of GDP devoted to defense, but they may also result from cost reductions in the Armed Forces, restructuring, modernization, and increased professional training. Otherwise, such investments will be confined to the remaining operation, maintenance, and administrative costs. In the domain of research and development, shortages include not only a lack of money, but also a lack of skilled employees, which prevents the establishment of a critical mass of researchers needed to begin the process of developing one's own technology. (Vidigal, 1988b; 1989; 1997; 2004). (Vidigal, 1988b; 1989; 1997; 2004).

A more autonomous maritime strategy in the face of national objectives of regional leadership and greater international engagement, as exemplified by the pursuit of a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), is dependent on strategic vulnerabilities highlighted during the Cold War and emphasized by Vidigal (2001, p. 1, our translation):

The first and greatest strategic vulnerability of Brazil was (and continues to be) its dependence on external sources of energy, since its imports depend on the maritime route, and this traffic is vulnerable to attacks by aeronaval forces; 2) the main oil-producing areas are located in the EEZ, CP, and their adjacent waters. Added to this are the recent discoveries of the Brazilian pre-salt; 3) the third strategic vulnerability is the large extension of the Brazilian coast, that is, its extensive marine area under jurisdiction, which corresponds to the blue Amazon; and 4) the green Amazon, whose natural resources, especially fresh water, may cause conflict given the possibility of scarcity.

What strategies can be employed to address and overcome these challenges? It is critical to incorporate strategic high-tech programs into the planning process. Not to be overlooked is the urgency to reorganize

the waters under jurisdiction, which includes environmental, economic, social, and strategic considerations, as illustrated in the “Marine Sapatial Planning” tool. Some ongoing projects demonstrate this trajectory.

Several ongoing projects demonstrate this path. The Satellite Launch Vehicle project enables advancements in areas such as propellants, drivability systems, control, and others. Vidigal (1989) added that the acquired technology can be used to produce long-range (strategic) missiles locally if a political decision takes place. The Blue Amazon Management System (SisGAAz), which employs remote sensing satellites for communications, navigation, agriculture, meteorology, radiogoniometry, and other purposes, is also an essential tool for development. The duality of the Gripen fighter design can be seen in other Embraer projects, in the face of a highly competitive environment in civil aviation, as well as in its future use in maritime aircraft. Given its ability to disrupt maritime traffic and attack enemy naval forces, the SCPN-BR project has enormous significance for increasing deterrence, even in the face of much more powerful powers than Brazil.

Despite understanding that Brazil should not have nuclear weapons, which “for our conjuncture would not be appropriate and politically correct,” the Admiral defended the use of nuclear technology “[...] to a limit in which we can develop it, which is the nuclear-powered submarine” (Vidigal, 2002, p. 330, our translation). Through significant effort and immense sacrifice, the Navy successfully achieved mastery over the entire nuclear fuel cycle without any external assistance. The utilization of a conventionally armed nuclear-powered submarine significantly enhances the deterrent capacity of a non-nuclear nation. The acquisition of the capacity to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes will not only improve Brazil’s technological standing but also contribute to its overall prestige. (Vidigal, 1989; 2002; 2004). During the Malvinas War, the deployment of nuclear attack submarines within the Theater of Operations prompted the Argentine fleet to withdraw to its ports due to concerns over potential destruction by the opposing forces. This retreat was driven by the recognition of the strategic vulnerability it posed in relation to maritime border disputes with Chile in previous conflicts.

Vidigal (1989; 2001; 2004) stated that technical research should engage not just the military but mainly civilian sectors, such as universities and national private companies, in the so-called “triple helix” that is critical for national development. The State’s demand for defense

must be maintained in order to prevent disruptions in dual-use technical processes. The desire for immediate fulfillment and the dream that the hegemonic forces will take care of global security postpone this more independent process.

In the face of traditional and new threats, maritime sovereignty cannot relinquish autonomy in the defense of national marine spaces rich in natural resources, including adjacent areas to jurisdictional boundaries and strategic surroundings. The search for horizontalities (called irrationalities¹⁵ by the hegemons) is actually a search for counter-rationalities, which are defined as “forms of coexistence and regulation created from the territory itself and that remain in this territory despite the will for unification and homogenization” (Santos, 2000, p. 110, our translation).

The SCPN-BR, a strategic project originating from the PND, PNCTI, and PNRM, is a response to the current world model, which restricts emancipatory techniques to the periphery of the world system. It aims to develop capacities for national objectives, seek greater autonomy and independence, and neutralize threats in the medium and long term.

Finally, it is concluded that Vidigal’s naval strategic thinking and Milton Santos’s social and political thinking are more congruent than divergent, remaining current, especially by the questions and answers they pose throughout their discussions and the criticisms they present to the global development model. Both reiterate that the character and thus the thinking of the national elites, coupled with the restrictive elements of the economy and technology, are the ones that can contribute most to the overcoming or persistence of strategic vulnerabilities. In doing so, national capacities and potentialities can be developed or submitted to a development process that limits the demands for sustainable development in marine space.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The relationship between Strategic Studies, Political Geography, and Naval Strategic Thinking emphasizes the significance of considering

15 These irrationalities resemble the theory of founding insubordination, in which all successful emancipatory processes, the construction of real sovereignty, and development processes were the result of an ideological insubordination against the ideological order established by the dominant power (Gullo Omodeu, 2019).

space and its current division as a result of politics. However, in Brazil, the same policy demonstrates an inadequate level of prioritization of resources for the State to promote practical interventions in order to correct unequal spatial developments that were previously characterized by unequal external exchanges and have come to be exercised through dependence on technologies, patents, foreign direct investments, the imposition of monetarist policies, and other instruments of power.

The current world vertical reconstruction imposes the concept of development associated with the periphery on the major power blocs. But, only those techniques critical to the survival of the global manufacturing system are transferred. Sustainable development in maritime spaces, which is critical to the survival of the planet but also to sustainable development, requires a break with dependence rather than simply modernizing and industrializing the economy through hegemonized processes. As a result, politics becomes necessary in order to undermine the order imposed by hegemonic players and the alienated subordination of peripheral actors in their specific areas of development, which are described here in the oceanic spatiality that it contains.

States that possess knowledge have significant competitive advantages in comparison to military power. The scientific capacity associated with innovation plays a pivotal role in determining the comparative power of nations in relation to their national strengths.

The lack of progress in STI has a direct influence on the core goals of maritime sovereignty, compromising the fulfillment of the fundamental duties of Naval Power. Brazil's present condition of de-industrialization and delayed participation in the 4th Industrial Revolution, which is prevalent in many central countries, highlights the significant gap between Brazil and the world's leading powers in terms of hierarchy.

In this context, defense and development should not be separated. The SCPN-BR project and Marine Spatial Planning align with spatial interrelationships and strategies aimed at overcoming not only technological dependencies and structural gaps but also a strategic thinking deficit that addresses the lack of military-naval hard power to ensure the use, protection, and defense of its maritime spaces. This situation exposes Brazil to new interpretations of security within the geopolitical context of great powers, potentially impacting its independence and autonomy and even relativizing its sovereignty.

This paper shows that political geography and naval strategy

thinking in strategy studies, representing by Milton Santos and Vidigal's intellectual constructions are relevant to overcoming of vulnerabilities and ideological thinking subservient to hegemons. It is expected to continue to emerge from their ideas, programs, and strategic projects relevant to breaking the bonds of the underdevelopment of a country with enormous potential power and oceanic dominion, but that does not apply it satisfactorily, frequently obstructing itself.

GEOGRAFIA E O PENSAMENTO ESTRATÉGICO NAVAL BRASILEIRO NOS ESTUDOS ESTRATÉGICOS: REVISITANDO CONCEITOS NA ESPACIALIDADE MARINHA

RESUMO

É possível empregar preceitos e conceitos-chave da geografia política e do pensamento social, político e estratégico brasileiro que supere vulnerabilidades estratégicas ao desenvolvimento nacional? A partir dessa pergunta-problema, o objeto da pesquisa se refere ao saber aplicado na espacialidade marinha. O objetivo central passa pela discussão de conceitos relevantes da Geografia Política e do Pensamento Estratégico Naval brasileiro, como compressão espaço-tempo, racionalidades versus contra racionalidades, globalização e desenvolvimento desigual, a partir de autores clássicos como Milton Santos e Almirante Vidigal. Suas construções intelectuais, ao correlacionarem-se com os estudos estratégicos, visam estabelecer um pensamento estratégico autóctone de modo a superar cerceamentos políticos internos e externos efetuados por blocos hegemônicos de poder à soberania e ao desenvolvimento de Estados costeiros periféricos. A metodologia envolveu a análise qualitativa bibliográfica da temática, servindo de base para inter-relações e análises que proporcionaram um novo enfoque ao problema proposto, chegando a conclusões inovadoras.

Palavras-chave: Estudos Estratégicos; Pensamento Estratégico Naval Brasileiro; Geografia Política; Espaços Marinhos; Milton Santos; Vidigal.

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