

# BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA: THE END OF THE OFFICIAL CORDIALITY FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF LOGICS OF ANARCHY

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## ABSTRACT

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This article aims to analyze the bilateral relations between Brazil and Argentina in the transition from the 1970s to the 1980s, a period marked by a paradigm shift in the relations between both neighbors, which had traditionally been characterized by an official cordiality, with intermittent periods of cooperation and conflict. In this perspective, we seek to analyze, in the light of Alexander Wendt's theory (1999), and based on the Wendtian concept of cultures of anarchy, the paradigm shift observed in this bilateral relationship, which carried important implications for the two greatest economies in South America during the 20th century.

**Keywords:** Brazil. Argentina. Bilateral Relations. 1980s. Cultures of anarchy.

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## INTRODUCTION

"We will not preserve our national identity if we sail isolated in the sea of history" (JAGUARIBE, 2004) (Our translation)

The conciliation between foreign policy studies – subarea of international relations studies (HILL, 2003) – and the theoretical framework of this discipline is always enlightening to understand State actions and relations between countries. This conciliation is even more important to analyze periods of paradigm shift, which require careful attention and the use of appropriate conceptual tools to understand their motivations and consequences.

Experts in foreign policy and in relations between Brazil and Argentina must pay special attention to the 1980s, a period that laid the foundations of friendship relations, strategic partnership, and regional integration that exist until today between the biggest Southern Cone neighbors. Based on the analysis of the academic literature that studies the period, one can observe consensus regarding the representation of the 1970s as a period of deterioration of relations between Brazil and Argentina, and the following decade as a period of redetermination of these relations, symbolized by the logic of partnership. Meanwhile, the transition in the bilateral relations of the two countries, from rivalry – in the 1970s – to cooperation – in the 1980s –, is presented with the most diverse concepts, among Brazilian and Argentine experts: from competition to association (RUSSELL; TOKATLIAN, 2002); from official cordiality to integration project (SPEKTOR, 2002); from conjuncture instability to the construction of stability by cooperation (CANDEAS, 2005); from rivalry to integration (GULLO, 2006); from mismatch to understanding, followed by partnership (SARAIVA, 2012).

Before this relatively wide specialized literature, this article seeks to emphasize the dialogue between the studies of Russell and Tokatlian (2002), two Argentine theoreticians, when analyzing the place of Brazil in the Argentine foreign policy, and the analyses of Saraiva (2012), Brazilian scholar, when studying the place of Argentina in the Brazilian foreign policy. The selected works are relevant not only by the representation of perspectives they bring, but also by the complementarity of ideas, since these studies aim to show the role that each country attributed to its neighbor in its foreign policy agenda. From this approach, and assuming

the change in behavior between Argentines and Brazilians in their relations, this study aims to verify how such paradigm shift took place in the relation of the two greatest economies of South America in the 1980s.

To better understand the period that opened cooperation possibilities for joint development, factors such as perception, ideas, and identity arise as important conceptual tools, enabling an efficient analysis about this period. The use of these tools allows the application of Alexander Wendt's (1999) theoretical framework and, in particular, his considerations about the "cultures of anarchy" and their levels of internalization by states.

Based on the understanding that the structure is an intersubjective space of knowledge, but the structure by itself is objective and enables the observer to understand it (WENDT, 1999), this article seeks to analyze the relations between the two countries from the main studies on the transition from the culture of rivalry to cooperation, in the light of the logic of cultures of anarchy, between 1979 and 1989. The temporal demarcation shows the main milestone of the construction of cooperation from the Tripartite Agreement between Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay (CANDEAS, 2005) and the end of the Sarney-Alfonsín relationship, a peak period of the relations between the countries (SARAIVA, 2012).

This article is divided into three sections. The first one explains the theoretical framework used, presenting Alexander Wendt's theory (1999) regarding the three logics of anarchy and the three levels of internalization of norms and ideas. The second section presents a historical-descriptive analysis of the relations between Brazil and Argentina, showing the paradigm shift from the so-called "official cordiality" (SPEKTOR, 2002) to the development of a bilateral partnership, from the 1970s to the 1980s. The third and final section applies the Wendtian concept of logics of anarchy to the bilateral relations between Brazil and Argentina, showing the evolution from a Lockean culture in the 1970s to a Kantian culture in the 1980s.

## WENDT AND THE CULTURES OF ANARCHY

Endowed with positivist epistemology and postpositivist ontology approaches, Alexander Wendt's (1999) perspective about the international system enables the use of his theory to categorize relations between states, adding to it a conceptual framework that predicts how ideational variables affect international relations. Bringing the logic of coconstitution to the

discussion, his writings on Social Theory of International Politics endow the structure, formed by the interaction between States, with a temporal and variable nature, characterized by the articulation between material conditions, ideas, and interests.

From the expansion of the logic of anarchy – essential concept in the field of international relations –, Wendt (1999) creates three types of international structure: Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian. Readjusting the typology of Bull and Wight (1991, apud WENDT, 1999), Wendt divides the macrostructure based on the type of predominant role in international relations – enmity, rivalry, and friendship. Thus, there would not be a single logic of anarchy, but multiple logics, in which tendencies of conflicting or cooperative behavior would be established by culture, understood as “shared knowledge formed by rules, norms, ideologies, and institutions” (WENDT, 1999, p. 253). This recognition of the multiplicity of logics of anarchy is especially interesting for this study, since it allows the analysis of the paradigm shift that occurred in the relations between Brazil and Argentina from the 1970s to the 1980s.

Wendt argues that, in the center of each type of culture of anarchy, there is a predominance of one position of the subject, who is endowed with collective representations regarding security: 1) enmity, represented by the view of the other as a threat, in which there is no limit to the use of violence; 2) rivalry, marked by the vision of the other as an adversary, in which violence can be used to pursue national interests and, finally, 3) friendship, characterized by the view of the other as an ally and partner of cooperation against foreign threats (WENDT, 1999, p. 258).

In this sense, Wendt (1999) works with three levels of internalization of norms and ideas, according to which, the more internalized, the more consolidated will be the culture of a particular structure (WENDT, 1999, p. 255). In the first level of internalization, subjects know the norm, but only practices it when forced to, which thus requires some type of sanction or higher power to ensure its implementation. In the second level, subjects practice the norm only when it is aligned with their interests. Thus, a culture of friendship in the second level of internalization of the subjects is represented by Wendt as a strategy, being temporally limited:

Friendship is a strategy, an instrumentality, that states choose in order to obtain benefits for themselves as individuals. No sacrifice for the group except as necessary to realize their own, exogenous interests [...] (WENDT, 1999, p. 306).

Therefore, to preliminarily apply Wendt's concept to the object of this article, a culture of friendship between Brazil and Argentina, in the second level of internalization of norms, would be characterized by the assimilation of cooperation as an instrument to achieve the national interest of the subjects. Consequently, as the cooperation was no longer strategic for the national interest of one of the subjects or both, the Kantian culture would cease to exist.

In the third level of internalization, the subjects completely internalize the norms, accepting their legitimacy and wishing to comply with them:

States identify with each other, seeing each other's security not just as instrumentally related to their own, but as literally being their own. The cognitive boundaries of the Self are extended to include the Other; Self and Other form a single "cognitive region." Collective identity does imply a willingness when necessary to make sacrifices for the Other for his own sake, because he has legitimate claims on the Self (WENDT, 1999, p. 306).

According to Wendt, the predominant culture in the Westphalian international system is Lockean, because rivals recognize the sovereignty of each other as a right; this consolidates sovereignty as an institution (WENDT, 1999, p. 297), which leads to the dominance of the third level of internalization in the modern international system, because of the assimilation of the norms, with acceptance of their legitimacy and desire to comply with them (WENDT, 1999).

Applying this conceptual framework to the specific case of the international relations between Brazil and Argentina, this analysis will focus on the microstructure, formed by the interactions between the subjects (WENT, 1999), who, in the Wendtian perspective, are endowed with agency as constituent parts of the macrostructure. The transition in the relations between the two countries in the 1980s will enable the classification of the logics of anarchy and the levels of internalization in a period marked by the end of the so-called "official cordiality."

## FROM OFFICIAL CORDIALITY TO PARTNERSHIP

Colonies of different metropolises and heirs of the Iberian rivalry in the Platine region, Brazil and Argentina developed, for most of their history as independent countries, relations marked by official cordiality – a set of guidelines represented by a tolerant posture that seeks cooperation, to attenuate potential disagreements (SPEKTOR, 2002). With the “main objective of preventing the dynamics between the two major powers in South America from going to a collision course” (SPEKTOR, 2002, p. 118), the official cordiality was established as the “conceptual milestone of Itamaraty to guide relations with Buenos Aires” (SPEKTOR, 2002, p. 118).

The historical origins of the official cordiality date back to the end of the Paraguayan War, a time when Argentina showed remarkable triumph conducting the political process in South America, with a Buenos Aires strengthened not only militarily, but also articulated in a dense network of bilateral relations. The cultural approach of the Spanish American countries gathered the South American nations around a power center located in Buenos Aires. Brazil, culturally apart from the other regions of the continent because of its Portuguese origin and left as a single monarchy amid a Republican environment, was forced, in a time of territorial consolidation and diplomatic agenda still under construction, to adopt a more defensive and necessarily strategic position (SPEKTOR, 2002). Therefore, since the period of Viscount of Rio Branco, the official cordiality (a project that did not predict submission nor declared hierarchy) represented, in many ways, the need for a diplomatic means to cool down the disagreements, controlling the moods and avoiding problems in the field of security (SPEKTOR, 2002).

Thus, the official cordiality marked the bilateral relations of the 19th century, characterized by conflicts and rivalries, but also of the 20th century, marked by mutual mistrust and disagreements until the end of the 1970s (CERVO; BUENO, 2015). Throughout this decade, relations were aggravated because of the fight over water resources in the Platine basin during the Government of General Ernesto Geisel, who was supported by his foreign minister Azeredo da Silveira in Brazil. The signing of the Itaipu Treaty by Brazil and Paraguay in 1973 for the construction of the Itaipu Dam marked the deterioration of relations with Buenos Aires. As culmination of the deterioration of relations, one can mention the Argentine allegations of lack of prior consultation about the construction

of the Dam, a complaint made in multilateral forums, claiming damage by the change in the course of international waters, potentially harming future projects of hydroelectric power generation and navigation.

On the other hand, in 1979, the Tripartite Agreement Itaipu-Corpus is regarded by the academic literature as a “qualitative and irreversible leap in the diplomatic relations of both countries” (CANDEAS, 2005, p. 23), starting a phase marked by the “construction of structural stability by cooperation” in Brazil-Argentina relations (CANDEAS, 2005, p. 23). According to Russell and Tokatlian (2002), the Corpus-Itaipu Agreement initiates a process of approximation, but not yet neutralizes the uncertainties and rivalries between the two neighbors. However, it is one of the greatest concrete examples of the policy of approximation, along with the coordination of positions in multilateral forums, such as the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) (RUSSELL; TOKATLIAN, 2002).

From the 1970s to the 1980s, both countries, but especially Argentina, changed the perception of the other. Russell and Tokatlian (2002), when analyzing the Argentine’s view on Brazil, conclude that Buenos Aires saw the country from a perspective of partnership since the beginning of the 1980s. According to the authors, three factors were crucial to the change of this view: 1) different growth rates, because, since the 1970s, the project of “Brazil power,” endowed with the largest industrial park in South America, represented a strong difference before a deindustrialized and weakened Argentina, 2) the end of the military regimes in both countries, which contributed to the formation of a common identity, with the memory of a dictatorial past and the search for a democratic future; 3) greater economic interdependence, recognizing the external debt crisis and the protectionism of the industrialized countries as elements of approximation between Argentina and Brazil (RUSSELL; TOKATLIAN, 2002).

Regarding the Brazilian view on Argentina, Saraiva (2012) argues that, despite the change of the Brazilian foreign policy from official cordiality in the Geisel Government (1974-1979) to the construction of understanding in João Figueiredo’s Government (1979-1985) and to the establishment of partnership in José Sarney’s Government (1985-1989), was fast and sequential, the transformation of the Brazilian perception about Argentina was more gradual. To illustrate the main historical events that

marked this new perspective, Saraiva (2012) highlights the: 1) Tripartite Agreement Corpus-Itaipu (1979) – symbol of the reconciliation between Brazil and Argentina, enabling the technical compatibility of both Dams and representing a historic transition in their bilateral relations. Many authors consider it the biggest milestone of the transformation from a geopolitical dispute to a cooperation policy; 2) Cooperation Agreement for the Development and Application of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy/ Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (1980), which predicted the right to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and reiterated its contribution to the Latin American development, enabling the two countries to overcome difficulties and limitations (VIEIRA, 1997); 3) Brazilian solidarity with Argentina during the Falklands War (1982), because, although officially neutral to the conflict, Brazil worked actively giving logistic support to Argentina and assuming the role of mediator between Argentina and England, during the period of suspension of their bilateral relations (SARAIVA, 2012), symbolizing the role of a Brazil that “protected Argentine interests in the United Kingdom” (BRASIL, 1985):

President Sarney reiterated the historic Brazilian support to the Argentine sovereign rights over the archipelago [...] President Alfonsín, showing his satisfaction at this position, expressed the recognition of his Government for the action of Brazil in its position of protective power of Argentine interests in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (BRASIL, 1985).

In addition, the rise of President Raul Alfonsín to power in 1983 brought new goals for the Argentine foreign policy (SARAIVA, 2012): 1) emphasis on integration with Brazil, aiming to achieve benefits based on the overflow of Brazilian industrialization, and 2) effort to put Argentina back on the world stage, since it was recognized as pariah state, especially after the Falklands War and the rupture of relations with the United Kingdom. Recovering the Wendtian theoretical framework, one can point out that, for the author, the interests (which goals are politically defined as national goals) and identity (how a state and its population see themselves and are seen by the other subjects in the international system regarding



values, sociocultural characteristics etc.) of states are partly constructed endogenously, by internal factors, and partly exogenously, from systemic influences. Thus, starting from these references, one can list a series of context and structural internal and external variables that affected the change of perceptions between Brazil and Argentina, going from “official cordiality” to “partnership.”

Among the exogenous factors, it is possible to highlight the international economic situation of the 1980s, characterized by a new technical-productive paradigm marked by advances in computing, microelectronics, and telecommunications, which represented the emergence of a new global economic order. In this scenario, the Latin-American reality, already marked by the difficulties of increased external debt and stagflation, becomes even more aggravating, by witnessing the increasing relative importance of technology as a production factor at the expense of those that the region had in greater abundance, such as labor and raw material. In this context, there were many common economic challenges between Brazil and Argentina, marked by the search to reduce the technological delay and the gap in productive efficiency between developed and developing economies. The Declaration of Iguacu, milestone of the approximation between the Governments of Sarney and Alfonsín, registered this concern:

The Presidents had the same analysis of the difficulties that the economy of the region faced, because of the complex problems arising from external debt, the increasing protectionist policies in international trade, the permanent deterioration of the terms of currency exchange, and the foreign currency drainage that developing economies suffer (BRASIL, 1985).

The two largest South American countries converged in their diagnosis on the international scene, especially expressed by the deterioration of terms of trade and a return to the division of the international system in North and South. They also agreed with the collective solution of increasing the autonomy of decision and reducing vulnerabilities (PARADISO, 2005, p. 279), from structural reforms and reformulation of the old development strategies, marked by a primary-exporter Argentina and a Brazil with substitutive industrialization.

These two strategies allowed them a certain isolation from the rest of the continent, but no longer suited a scenario of emergency of economic blocks with large integrated markets (Idem). Still according to Paradiso (2005), the common pursuit of a new development strategy aiming to integrate markets and renegotiate the external debt led to the approximation between Brazil and Argentina (PARADISO, 2005, p. 280), marking the beginning of a perspective of integration as an instrument for the national economic strengthening.

In addition to the set of variables in the domestic level of the economic field of both countries, the foreign policies of Brazil and Argentina were marked by a more autonomist profile in the 1980s. The gradual appreciation of the regional sphere, understanding the need to modify the perceptions based on mutual suspicion, was particularly favorable to a new stage in the bilateral relations, leading to a process of approximation (CORTES; CREUS, 2009).

The pace with which the two neighbors promoted their economic development strategies until the 1970s was very different (CAMILIÓN, 1973 apud RUSSELL; TOKATLIAN, 2002). Economically, Brazil went through a recession with the slowdown of the Second National Development Plan (PND – II Plano Nacional de Desenvolvimento) and abandonment of the project of “Brazil power” of the Geisel Government. Meanwhile, the situation of Argentina, which combined economic stagnation and disintegration of production capacity, was an important element for the construction of the joint perception of the importance of cooperation and mutual assistance. In addition, Brazil started to see Argentina as a complementary and important market for Brazilian manufactured products. This can be verified in the bilateral trade balance, which began to present surplus for Brazil in the 1980s (SARAIVA, 2012).

Politically, Argentina went through a period of institutional instability between 1973 and 1983 (PARADISO, 2005) and though internal challenges economically, which caused the sense of rivalry to lose strength. Furthermore, the end of Brazilian and Argentine military regimes allowed the search for integration as an instrument to strengthen democracy, from the mutual observation of the democratic maintenance in the region. In 1985, after a long period of rivalry, the two countries decide to initiate “a historic process of integration, with the main objective of performing a joint reinforcement for development” (GULLO, 2006, p. 114), already symbolized in the Declaration of Iguazu, a document that recognized

the democratization of both countries as creator of even more favorable conditions for close cooperation (PARADISO, 2005, p. 278):

The recently successes achieved by the two nations in their respective processes of democratic consolidation created particularly propitious conditions for the improvement of their ties in several sectors, as well as for a more intimate and close collaboration internationally (BRASIL, 1985).

Recognized as a milestone of the bilateral relations between Brazil and Argentina, the Declaration of Iguazu had two main objectives: the creation of a high-level Joint Working Group, chaired by the foreign ministers of the two countries, and the commitment to peaceful nuclear cooperation (OLIVEIRA, 1998). From then on, the goals of integration became more extensive, making room for several other agreements. In 1986, the then president José Sarney signed the Act for Brazilian-Argentine Integration, establishing Programa de Integração e Cooperação Econômica (Program for Integration and Economic Cooperation – PICE), which, in turn, evolved to the Integration, Cooperation and Development Treaty, in 1988.

Saraiva (2012) highlights the importance of discourses for the formation of ideas, in which historical events of signature of agreements and official visits provided the construction of an imaginary of cooperation, alliance, and partnership. As a result, the possibility of international conflicts between the two biggest countries in South America was overcome, and a number of partnerships was developed in several areas – trade, military, technology, science, and politics.

## FROM RIVALRY TO A KANTIAN CULTURE

The studies of Russell and Tokatlian (2003) and Saraiva (2012) complement each other and help one to understand contemporary bilateral relations between Brazil and Argentina, since they focus, respectively, on the Argentine view on its Brazilian neighbor and in the Brazilian view on its Argentine neighbor, with special attention to the period in which the countries were closer.

Using the Wendt's concept of anarchy – absence of central

authority in the international system (WENDT, 1999, p. 246) –, one can characterize the bilateral relations between Brazil and Argentina with the predominant presence of the Lockean anarchic culture from the beginning of the 20th century to the 1970s and with a Kantian anarchic culture from the 1980s on, with the gradual transition from rivalry to friendship. Wendt characterizes the Kantian culture from three assumptions: 1) disputes are resolved without violence or threat of violence; 2) states tend to act in cooperation if their safety is threatened by a third party (rule of mutual cooperation); 3) expectation, on the part of the subjects, of the continuity of the Kantian nature of these relationships, which are distinguished from a mere alliance, whose nature is temporary (WENDT, 1999, p. 316).

In this line, regarding the first assumption, Brazil and Argentina resolved their 1970s dispute around the region of the Platine Basin without violence or threat of violence, but based on the conciliation of interests with the Corpus-Itaipu Agreement, which was much more symbolic than functional. In addition, when British troops threatened to expel the Argentine military from the Falkland Islands, Brazil acted cooperatively via logistic support and mediation between the warring countries. Finally, the set of treaties and agreements signed over the second half of the 1980s represent the perception of long-term commitment on the part of both countries regarding the continuity of these relationships, being different from temporary alliances and characterized as a partnership for gradual and progressive integration.

From 1979 to the end of the Sarney-Alfonsín Governments (1989), the consolidation of the Kantian culture in the bilateral relations of Brazil-Argentina gradually took shape, reaching its height with the Declaration of Iguaçu (BRAZIL, 1985) and with the gradual elimination of rivalries, made possible by the Corpus-Itaipu Agreement of 1979 and the Nuclear Cooperation Agreement of 1980. In a Kantian culture, safety does not come from a central authority, since it does not exist in conditions of anarchy, but from the shared knowledge of the peaceful intentions of the other subject (WENDT, 1999). In this sense, there is no example more paradigmatic than the Nuclear Cooperation Agreement between Brazil and Argentina (1980), based on the shared knowledge that the nuclear development of neighboring country served only to peaceful purposes. As a result of this agreement, which has its origins in the peak period of the relations between both countries, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC) was created in 1991 and exists

until today, representing the greatest integration link between Brazil and Argentina in the nuclear field.

Concerning Wendt's internalization levels, the relations between Brazil and Argentina in the 1980s can be characterized as intermediate between the second and third levels of internalization of norms. There does not seem to be a complete identification with any of them, since the subjects were not prepared to make sacrifices for the benefit of the other (third degree) – especially in the economic and trade sphere, in which the interests of domestic subjects tend to strongly affect decision-making – and also did not see the cooperation and partnership as temporary instruments (second degree) – most of the agreements signed at the end of the 1980s highlighted the perennial nature of the partnership of Brasil-Argentina, rejecting an instrumental and temporary use of the agreements. In this context, elements of the Kantian culture were internalized in both countries in the 1980s, with the recognition of a common identity, common goals, and the gestation of a long-term integration project, fulfilled in 1991 with the signing of the Treaty of Asunción, which brought Paraguay and Uruguay together and led to the creation of Mercosur, starting a new phase with more extensive and ambitious goals of cooperation and integration.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Progressively, Brazil and Argentina internally deconstructed the view of the other as a rival and built the view of partnership throughout the 1980s, which allows one to observe, from a constructivist lens, a passage from a Lockean bilateral relationship to a predominantly Kantian culture that was on the way, although inconclusively in the 1980s, to the internalization of ideas of friendship of the third and final level of internalization of norms and ideas.

From a series of internal and external variables, among them the internal democratization of the Governments and the common vulnerability before the new international scenario – marked by the oligopolization of capital and intensive use of technology –, the construction of a common identity encourages the use of channels of cooperation and approximation between Brazil and Argentina. If the past of the two neighbors was characterized by the predominance of divergent identities – Portuguese colony and Spanish colony; Empire and Republic; North American influence and British influence –, the situation in the 1980s

was marked by the common identity of two Latin American economies delayed before the updates of advanced capitalism and undermined by the increased external debt interest.

Thereby, the Brazil-Argentina relations in the period of Raul Alfonsín (1983-1989) and José Sarney (1985-1990) – recognized leaders of the democratic transitions in both countries – establish the peak period of their bilateral relations (SARAIVA, 2012), leaving an important legacy for the following decades, with important consequences up to this day for the two greatest economies in South America in the 20th century and originating members of Mercosur: the consolidation of the culture of friendship and cooperation between Brazil and Argentina. The use of a Wendtian theoretical framework helps us to understand the changes in the foreign behavior of Brazil and Argentina in their bilateral relations, in a crucial decade for the formation of a political and economic environment in South America that would bring, in the last decade of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century, important changes that focused on regional integration processes, connecting the domestic dynamics of each country, the immediate environment composed by the relations between the South American countries, and the inconclusive and flexible arrangements and correlations of power between states inserted in an international system in indefinite reconfiguration.

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