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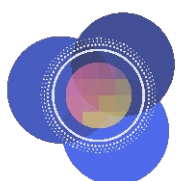


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CADERNOS *de* **REGIONALISMO ODR**



GRUPO DE PESQUISA VINCULADO À REPRI
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REDE DE PESQUISA EM POLÍTICA EXTERNA E REGIONALISMO

Cientific Comission

Karina Lilia Pasquariello Mariano
Cairo Gabriel Borges Junqueira
Bárbara Carvalho Neves
Heitor Erthal
Luan Olliveira Pessoa

OBSERVATÓRIO DE REGIONALISMO

Coordination

Cairo Junqueira
Regiane Nitsch Bressan

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Foreign Policy and Regionalism: the governments plans of Brazilian presidential candidates in the 2022 elections

Editorial Board

Bárbara Carvalho Neves
Heitor Erthal
Luan Olliveira Pessoa

Diagramming and Graphic Design

Bárbara Carvalho Neves
Heitor Erthal
Luan Olliveira Pessoa

Revision

Bárbara Carvalho Neves
Davi Antonino Guimarães
Flavia Loss de Araujo
Heitor Erthal
João Victor Motta
Luan Olliveira Pessoa
Maurício Luiz Borges Ramos Dias
Paulo Cesar dos Santos Martins
Thiago Vicino Fernandes

Researchers

Bárbara Carvalho Neves
Cairo Junqueira
Davi Antonino Guimarães
Flavia Loss de Araujo
Heitor Erthal
João Victor Motta
Luan Olliveira Pessoa
Maurício Luiz Borges Ramos Dias
Paulo Cesar dos Santos Martins
Thiago Vicino Fernandes

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Observatório de Regionalismo - Programa de Pós-Graduação San Tiago Dantas

Praça da Sé, 108 - 3º Andar - Sé - São Paulo - SP - CEP: 01001-900

Telefone: (11) 3116-1770 / (11) 3116-1780

Site: <http://observatorio.repri.org/>

E-mail: observatorioderegionalismo@gmail.com

CADERNOS DE REGIONALISMO ODR
DOSSIER - 2022

Foreign Policy and Regionalism: the governments
plans of Brazilian presidential candidates
in the 2022 elections

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CIRO GOMES

Flavia Loss de Araujo
João Victor Motta

Received in: 24 August 2022
Accepted in: 29 August 2022.

Candidates

Ciro Ferreira Gomes (Partido Democrático Trabalhista), presidente
Ana Paula Andrade Matos Moreira (Partido Democrático Trabalhista), vice-presidente

Coalition

Partido sem coligação (PDT)

Previous political positions

State Deputy in Ceará (1983-1988); Mayor of Fortaleza/CE (1989-1990); Governor of Ceará state (1991-1994); Minister of Finance (1994-1995); Minister of National Integration (2003-2006); Federal Deputy for Ceará (2007-2011); Health Secretary of Ceará state (2013 and 2015).

Previous presidential campaigns

1998, 2002, 2018

International Relations Advisor

PDT's Secretary for International Relations (under the responsibility of Márcio Bins Ely)

The year 2022 marks the fourth candidacy for the presidency of the Republic of Brazil by Ciro Gomes, after his best result in the 2018 elections¹. The presidential candidate from Ceará² will run again for the Democratic Labor Party (PDT)³ with a coreligionist as a candidate for vice president, a public servant and former vice mayor of Salvador (Bahia), Ana Paula Matos.

Ciro Gomes worked as a lawyer and university professor⁴, but he stood out for his solid public trajectory, having been elected to different legislative and executive positions, and nominated as a minister twice, in governments of different political spectrums. In the current electoral dispute, the pedetista candidacy will come out without coalitions with other political parties. For the fifth time, the PDT presents its own presidential candidacy⁵ and, this time, with a government plan guided by the so-called “National Development Project (PND)”. Defended by Ciro Gomes at other times and in the previous election and presented in the candidate's book entitled “Projeto Nacional: O dever da esperança” (National Project: The Duty of Hope), launched in 2020.

The program is part of an analysis of the country's socioeconomic situation, with notes on economic stagnation, growth in unemployment, the increase in poverty and misery, in addition to pointing out issues such as the growth of violence. In these elections, unlike the previous ones, Ciro Gomes and the PDT present a leaner government program, oriented to a few themes, such as: economic and technological development, labor agenda (creation of jobs and social security), tax issues, environmental guidelines, role of state-owned companies -in particular, Petrobras- education, health, culture, combating poverty and misery, combating corruption, public security and social and animal rights.

The developmental orientation of the government program guides the proposals and the tone of the text for a macroeconomic agenda focused on job recovery, reforms and industrial development, with few changes compared to the previous program. Although smaller, Ciro Gomes' government plan is similar to his previous campaign.

The surprise in the PDT Government Plan for 2022 is the absence of foreign policy in its program presented to the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), since there are no structured mentions on the topic or mentions about regional integration. In summary, the plan presents the following sentence about international politics: “trade and diplomatic negotiations will follow two essential principles: the defense of national

interests and the sovereignty of the country”⁶(GOMES,2022).

There are mentions about multilateral spaces, such as the United Nations (UN), with respect to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO). However, compared to the presidential candidate's previous programs, there is a reduction in debates on international issues, with no mention of regional organizations.

In this way, the main proposals of Gomes' candidacy are present on an auxiliary campaign website available online since 2016 (GOMES, 2022b). This platform details some of Ciro Gomes' proposals, including his agenda for foreign policy. In this space, the constitutional principles of Brazilian external action are highlighted, such as peace and self-determination. Given the scarcity of information on the government plan, this text will use the campaign website, an interview with the candidate given in March 2022 and the book “Projeto Nacional” to analyze its proposals for Brazil's international action.

Ciro Gomes' foreign policy orientation indicates a preference for "break with the interdictions of financing and technology transfer, in addition to opening more diversified markets”(GOMES, 2022b). In that sense, the BRICS⁷ emerge with centrality in its proposition, for enabling the creation of “new political, legal, commercial, technology transfer and funding sources dynamics”(GOMES, 2022b), moving away from dependency relationships with the US.

In this sense, its construction presents a dynamic of defense of spaces such as Mercosur and other multilateral processes not subordinated to the central powers. The understanding of Ciro Gomes' proposals about South America and Latin America starts from the fact that integration with these territories is a constitutional provision, emphasizing that this integration must be built beyond geographic proximity, emphasizing the need for a unity against the ‘European colonial exploitation and the consolidation of a 'non-Latin America’, which, according to the arguments, was imposed on the region and “was strengthened by the post-war international division of labor”(GOMES, 2022b).

In this way, the PND “cannot do without integration with Caribbean and Latin American countries due to the convergence of interests and the possibility of mutual help” (CIRO GOMES, 2022). Ciro Gomes has recently made statements that diverge from the leftist and progressive governments that ruled in Latin America in the first

decade of this century (period of the so-called “Pink Wave”), as when he characterized the Cuban regime as a dictatorship (GOMES, 2021). At the same time, Gomes criticizes the US blockade, which he considers wrong and harmful to the Caribbean country.

In the book “Projeto Nacional”(GOMES, 2020), in which it exposes the PND, Ciro Gomes makes some remarks on the subject. Once again, he emphasizes the role of Mercosur in the region - he inserts its participation in the construction of the bloc as minister of Itamar Franco, points out that the integration project did not achieve its original promise and considers that it suffers from attempts to make it unfeasible by foreign powers. For the presidential candidate, Mercosur was an important factor in improving Brazil's external image.

Gomes, in his book, reinforces points of his program presented on his online platform, in which Latin American integration is “an economic and strategic imperative foreseen in the Constitution”, in addition to distancing itself from the propositions that it calls “Bolivarian discourse”. In addition, it preaches a certain precaution in relation to the USA, recalling the interventions in Brazil and other Latin American countries carried out during the Cold War period.

In summary, the document says that “Latin American integration and the BRICS continue to be the best opportunities for strategic partnerships for the country, thanks to some complementary characteristics between the economies of the blocs”(GOMES, 2022). In an interview given in early 2022, the candidate argues that it is necessary that our foreign relations approach the guarantee of our sovereignty, the defense of the environment, the fight against terrorism, in addition to pointing out its economic agenda associated with the Brazilian international insertion (regime of industrial preferences, technological transfers and regimes of alternative financing to the IMF)(MYNEWS, 2022).

In his book and during the interview mentioned above, there are quotes about the principles of Barão do Rio Branco, in addition to emphasizing the importance of building a foreign policy based on pragmatism. It also reinforces the need for these principles to be stable so that we can coherently position ourselves on major global and regional issues from the mediation of conflicts and non-alignment with great powers that are in moments of tension with each other. An important point to be mentioned, during the interview, Ciro Gomes points out the need to rethink the national defense

strategy, based on the need to provide the country with dissuasive elements.

Regarding the Mercosur-EU agreement, an important issue for the conjuncture of South American regionalism, Ciro Gomes declares himself in favor of free trade but understands that trade relations were never really liberal, therefore, the agreement must be rethought and balanced from interests and needs of internal construction and development. In this sense, the relevance of Mercosur for Gomes goes beyond the trade agenda and should continue to advance in regulatory, social security, tax, infrastructure and related issues.

Finally, in the sphere of regional integration, the focus is on proposals for South American regionalism, emphasizing Mercosur; and in the construction of an economic policy that includes issues such as industrial development, productive requalification and Brazilian repositioning vis-à-vis the world. It is important to highlight the lack of depth on foreign policy and regional integration at the government level, with the absence of terms such as South America, Mercosur, integration and the like. It then bequeathed to other spaces and pronouncements the deepening of its positions and central pillars: multilateralism, non-intervention, sovereignty and defense of national interests.

Thus, the program lacks greater detailing of international and regional policies, with the great distinction compared to previous elections, with public positions contrary to some political regimes in the region, such as Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua; in addition to the greater recurrence of criticism of former President Lula's foreign policy and his association with governments considered by Ciro as undemocratic. In relation to the current president Jair Bolsonaro, Ciro's positions are effusive and completely at odds with his conduct of foreign policy, especially with regard to the environmental issue.

Notes

¹ With 12.47% of the votes in the first round, ranking third. In 1998, it reached 10.97% (third place) and in 2002, 11.97% (fourth place).

² Born in Pindamonhangaba (SP), he moved as a child to Ceará, his family's state, where he built his political career.

³ In his political career he went through seven parties: PDS (1982), PMDB (1983-1988), PSDB (1988-1997), PPS (1997-2005), PSB (2005-2013), PROS (2013-2015), PDT (2015-present). Information available at: CPDOC-FGV. GOMES, Ciro (Verbetes), online.

⁴ He was professor of Tax Law at the University of Fortaleza and professor of Public and Private Law Institutions at the University of Vale de Aracá.

⁵ In presidential elections, the party presented its own candidacy in 1989 and 1994, with Leonel Brizola; in 2006, Cristovam Buarque; and in 2018, Ciro Gomes himself.

⁶ Looking at the platform's source code, we see that the Foreign Policy area was originally published in 2018, and last modified in 2022.

⁷ Acronym for the group of countries formed by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Flavia Loss de Araujo

PhD candidate at the Institute of International Relations at the University of São Paulo (IRI-USP), Master's Degree from the Inter-Units Graduate Program in Latin American Integration (PROLAM-USP), professor at the School of Sociology and Politics Foundation of São Paulo, researcher at the Observatory of Regionalism and at Group Research Network on Foreign Policy and Regionalism (REPRI), member of Reflection Group on Integration and Development in Latin America and Europe (GRIDALE) and the Study Center CiGlo (Ciudades Globales), <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0289-674X>. Contact: flavialossaraujo@usp.br.

João Victor Motta

PhD candidate and Master in International Relations at the PPGRJ San Tiago Dantas (UNESP-UNICAMP-PUC-SP), Bachelor in International Relations from PUC-SP, researcher at the Observatory of Regionalism, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5937-9647>. Contact: joaovictor.dmb@hotmail.com.

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