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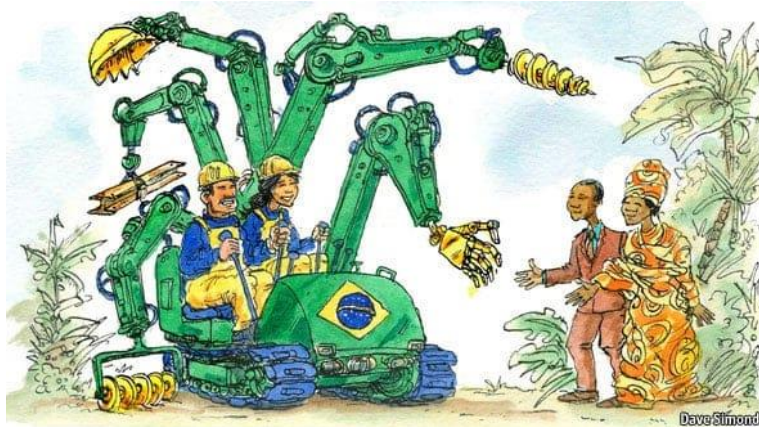
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# Does Brazil support development in West Africa? The example of Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal

Dirk Kohnert <sup>1</sup>

*Brazil in Africa - A new Atlantic alliance?*



Source: © [Dave Simonds](#), Moatize, 2012

**Abstract:** Brazil's foreign and trade relations with Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) date back to the Portuguese slave trade. Of the 9.5 million people captured in Africa and brought to the New World between the 16th and 19th centuries, nearly 4 million landed in Rio de Janeiro, i.e. ten times more than all those sent to the United States. Still today, about 51 % of the population see themselves as black or mixed. Racial inequality remains deeply engrained in many respects, notably concerning persistent inequality. Nonetheless, oppression and marginalization of black Brazilians have been largely ignored in modern Brazilian-African relations. Instead, a pronounced nationalism suffused Brazil's political life. It guided Brazil's foreign and trade relations and defined how Brazilians interpreted the opportunities of African independence movements. Only Brazil's President Lula da Silva acknowledged the common historical roots during his first time as president from 2003 to 2011. In fact, his election was driven by the overwhelming support of Afro-Brazilians. Trade relations in the first half of the 20th century were largely limited to South Africa, which accounted for 90 % of Brazil's African trade. Brasília's foreign and trade policy since the 1960s focussed on Nigeria, an important oil supplier, and the five Portuguese-speaking former Portuguese African colonies (PALOP) and the Lusophone Commonwealth (CPLP), founded in 1996. Up to date, Brazilian's trade relations in West Africa, apart from Nigeria (34 % of Brazil's African trade) remained fairly modest. Nevertheless, Ghana and Senegal played a decisive role in shaping Brazil-African relations in the early stages of African independence since the 1960s. Because Brazil has meanwhile considerable energy and commodity resources of its own, its approach concerning African trade is less commodity driven than the Chinese or European, but orientated at resource diversification, sustainable development and cooperation to develop these resources, e.g. bioethanol plants in Ghana and other African countries. Therefore, African governments see a greater sense of mutual partnership and reciprocity in their relationship with Brazil. However, corrupt political African elites themselves urged the Brazilian government and companies often into informal political and business norms, with controversial and corrupt investment in commodity extraction, infrastructure and land-grabbing. Apart from that, Brazil tried to create a niche for Brazilian management services, knowledge and technology transfer, suited supposedly exceptionally well for tropical markets.

**Keywords:** [Brazil](#), [South Atlantic](#), [Sub-Saharan Africa](#), [West Africa](#), [Nigeria](#), [Ghana](#), [Senegal](#), [Ivory Coast](#), [international trade](#), [migration](#), [sustainable development](#), [democratization](#), [postcolonialism](#), [informal sector](#), [nationalism](#), [BRICS](#), [China](#), [France](#), [Great Britain](#), [ODA](#), [NGOs](#), [African Studies](#)

**JEL-Code:** E26, F22, F24, F35, F52, F54, F63, I31, J46, J61, L31, N14, N17, N37, N47, O17, O35, O55, Z13

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# 1. Introduction

[Brazil's](#) foreign and trade relations with [Sub-Sahara Africa](#) (SSA) date back up to the [Portuguese slave trade](#). The first African slaves were deported to Brazil in 1538, mainly to work on the sugar cane plantations. In the following centuries hundreds of thousands of African slaves were shipped to Brazil. At the [Valongo wharf](#), at the heart of the docks of [Rio de Janeiro](#), disembarked the largest number of slaves imported to the Americas. More than 600,000 slaves passed through it up to the early 19th century (Bourcier, 2012). Of the 9.5 million people captured in Africa and brought to the [New World](#) between the 16th and 19th century, nearly 4 million landed in Rio, i.e. ten times more than all those sent to the [United States](#). Brazil was also the last American nation to abolish slavery, on 13 May, 1888. At that time Rio represented the largest urban concentration of slaves since the end of the [Roman empire](#), i.e. more than 40 % of the population. According to a census of 2011, still today, whites (*brancos*) account for less than half the population. About 51 % see themselves as black (*preto*) or mixed (*pardo*, 43%), an increase of more than 5% on 2000. Racial inequality is deeply engrained in many respects, notably concerning persistent social and economic inequality. Two-thirds of Brazilian's poor are *pretos* or *pardos* (Bourcier, 2012).

After [Brazil's independence](#) (1825) and the official end of the [Atlantic slave trade](#) (1850) Brazil largely lost interest in SSA. Up to date, Brazil is the biggest gathering of people of African heritage outside of Africa. The presence of 109 million people (slightly over 50 % of the Brazilian population) with African heritage is the legacy of the arrival of 5 million African slaves on Brazilian shores during the 17th to 19<sup>th</sup> century. The resulting institutions and customs framed Brazilian social comportment. This included even their return journey to Africa. For example, wealthy emancipated former Brazilian slaves returned to their roots (Ojo, 2022). They created since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Brazilian vestiges in settlements in [West Africa](#), e.g. in [Accra](#) (Ghana), [Lagos](#) (Nigeria), [Lomé](#) (Togo) and [Porto Novo](#) (Benin), where up to date families proudly keep Portuguese names and their status as descendants of Brazilians (Dávila, 2010f). Famous examples are the [Brazilians in Nigeria](#) and the first Togolese President [Sylvanus Olympio](#) (1958 – 1963), who belonged to the renowned Olympio family, which included his uncle [Octaviano Olympio](#), who counted among one of the richest people in Togo in the early 1900s (Amos, 2001).

However, the oppression and the marginalisation of black Brazilians have been mainly blanked out in modern Brazil-Africa relations. For the greater part Brazil's political leaders neglected and de-emphasised this shameful relationship (Monyae, 2022). Only Brazil's President, [Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva](#), acknowledged the connection during his first time as president between 2003 and 2011, not least, because his election was driven by the overwhelming support of [Afro-Brazilians](#) (Monyae, 2022).

Trade relations in the first half of the 20th century were largely limited to [South Africa](#), which accounted for 90 per cent of Brazil's trade with Africa (Seibert, 2011). [Brasília's](#) foreign and trade policy since the 1960s focussed on [Nigeria](#), an important oil supplier, and the five Portuguese-speaking former Portuguese African colonies ([PALOP](#)) that were modelled similar to the [British Commonwealth](#). The Lusophone Commonwealth, of the [Community of Portuguese Language Countries](#) (Portuguese: Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa; CPLP), was founded in 1996, in [Lisbon](#), by [Portugal](#), [Angola](#), [Brazil](#), [Cabo Verde](#), [Guinea Bissau](#), [Mozambique](#), and [São Tomé and Príncipe](#). Up to date, Brazilian's trade relations in [West Africa](#), apart from Nigeria (34 % of Brazil's African trade; North Africa 36 %, South Africa 10 %), remained fairly modest in comparison with Southern and Portuguese speaking Africa (Seibert, 2011; Seibert & Visentini (eds.), 2019; Tjønneland, 2015).

President [Lula da Silva](#) set new accents in Africa policy since 2003. Brazilian foreign trade with Africa quintupled, with more than half going to [Angola](#), [Nigeria](#) and [South Africa](#). Lula's new Africa policy was part of Brazil's global claim to a greater role in world politics and in [South-South cooperation](#). Strategically, his Africa policy served to secure raw materials and markets (Seibert, 2009). Brazilian's African trade grew from just under US\$ 4 bn in 2003 to over US\$ 17 bn in 2011. However, under his successors, [Dilma Rousseff](#) (2011-2016), [Michel Temer](#) (2016-2018) and [Jair Bolsonaro](#) (2019-2022) Brazil-African economic and diplomatic relations suffered. In 2021, the value of trade between the two sides was a mere US\$ 7.4 bn. As a matter of fact, amongst the [BRICS](#) countries, Brazil has the least amount of trade with Africa. Lula's second presidency since January 1, 2023 brought an opportunity to reverse the decline in Africa-Brazil relations.

**Cartoon 2: Peer pressure on Zuma<sup>2</sup>**

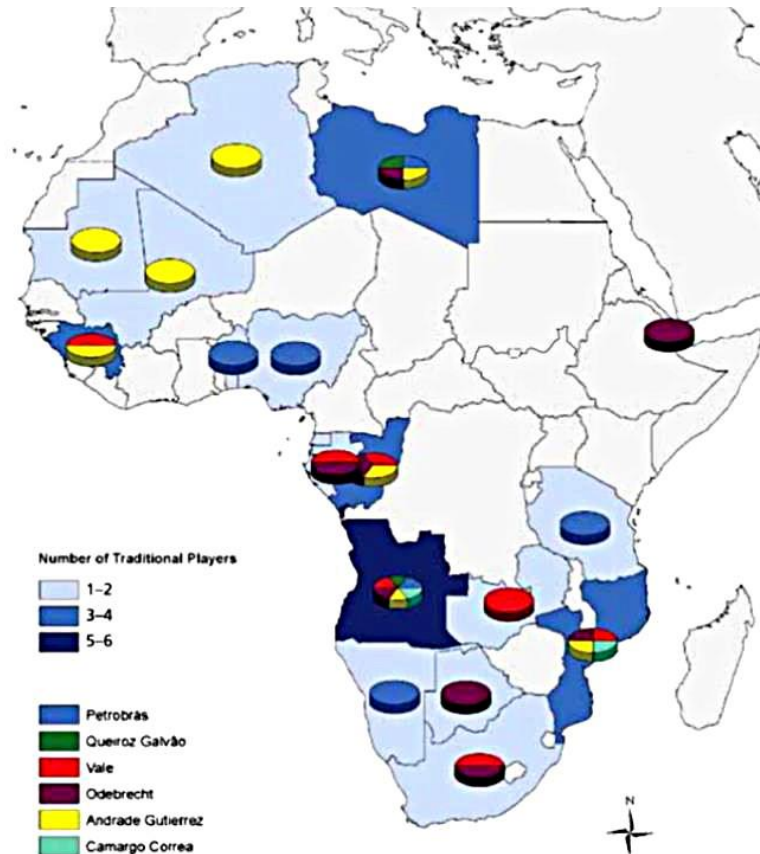


Source: © Brandan Reynolds, 2022

A crucial area of co-operation could be to intensive support in the agricultural sector. Brazil meanwhile counts among the global most important food exporting nations for crops like coffee, soya bean, cocoa, beef, maize, and sugar cane. Therefore, it would be well-poised to assist [SSA](#) to solve its perennial problem of food insecurity (Monyae, 2022; Lopez, 2016). Concerning South-South cooperation in agriculture Brazil followed two different models. Firstly, a profit-orientated agribusiness package of export crop production and technology transfer for large-scale farming. Secondly, a package focused on peasant farming and food-security (Hochstetler & Yumie & Inoue, 2019). An example for the latter was the multilateral program 'Purchase from Africans for Africa' that joined [Brazil](#), [Mozambique](#), the World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) to promote local food purchase from small holders for school feeding and other institutional markets. Brazil-African cooperation in environmental assistance is still in its infancy. Among others, Brazil offered assistance in the design of water projects to a range of countries and shared technology and strategies for monitoring deforestation and stopping forest fires. Brazil's development assistance flourished during the first [Lula](#) administrations (2003-2010), plunged under [Dilma Rousseff](#) (2011-2016) and reappeared low-profile under [Michel Temer](#) (2016-2018), in the context of limited foreign policy ambitions (Hochstetler & Yumie & Inoue, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Allusion to the possible return of controversial former South African President [Jacob Zuma](#) to power, following the example of Brazilian President [Lula da Silva](#) and Israeli President [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) in 2023.

**Graph 1: Brazilian companies in Africa (2010)**



Source: White, 2013, p. 128

It is therefore not surprising that rivalries between Brazil and other global players, not least the other [BRICS](#) members, [Russia](#), [India](#) and [China](#), have grown over Africa's resources and markets. However, because Brazil meanwhile built up significant energy and commodity resources of its own, it could afford to follow a much broader strategy of resource diversification (e. g. from resources interests exclusively in Brazil), assistance of sustainable development, and cooperation to develop sustainable resources. The construction of various bioethanol plants from Mozambique to Ghana and Zimbabwe are just an example. This created also the impression that African governments believed that there is a greater sense of mutual partnership and reciprocity in their relationship with Brazil free from the stigma of post-colonial exploitation (White, 2013).

Yet, corrupt regimes in SSA did its bit that this dream did not come true. They urged the Brazilian government and companies to correspond to their informal political and business norms which resulted in often controversial and even corrupt investment in commodity extraction and infrastructure (Dye & Alencastro, 2020). Thus, the Brazilian pretended 'exceptionalism' was not born out on the grass-root level. Thereby, two Brazilian companies, the conglomerate [Odebrecht](#) the biggest engineering and contracting company in Latin America, notorious for its bribery scandals, and [Vale S.A.](#), a Brazilian multinational corporation engaged in mining and metallurgy, played a central role (Dye & Alencastro, 2020; Alencastro, 2019). To make matters worse, the [informal sector](#), both in West Africa and in Brazil, is especially pronounced (Fauré, 2007), with distinctive rules according to the social strata to which its members belong, which has been accentuated in recent years by the impact of Islamist terrorism on the informal sector in SSA (Kohnert, 2022b).

Also, a growing [Brazilian nationalism](#) left its imprint on Brazilian-Africa relations. It gained new impetus with the so-called ‘Independent Foreign Policy’ introduced by President [Jânio Quadros](#) (1961) who sought autonomy from traditional allies like [Portugal](#) and the [United States](#). But its roots were already laid by intellectual protagonists like the Brazilian sociologist [Gilberto Freyre](#), who in the 1920s and 1930s propagated a nationalistic cultural and economic transformation of Brazil from an agrarian to an industrial society, including both, private enterprises and the free market, as well as extensive state intervention. This nationalism interpenetrated Brazil’s politics and guided its foreign and trade relations by outlining how to profit from the opportunities and pitfalls of African decolonization (Dávila, 2010e). Thus, [President Lula’s](#) ambitious projects across [SSA](#) not only served to justify his compassionate Africa policy, but also underscored his national project (Dye & Alencastro, 2020). Twenty-one years of dictatorship, decades of hyperinflation, and the high degree of social inequality, all that had contributed to the complex of inferiority among Brazilian’s poor and middle-classes which had been finally covered by nationalism (Amorim, 2014).

In the following, the focus is placed on Brazil's foreign relations with [West Africa](#) which have been neglected compared to other SSA regions. Thereby, both [Anglophone](#) and [Francophone West African countries](#) with long-standing relations to Brazil will be included, i.e. [Nigeria](#), [Ghana](#) and [Senegal](#). A review of the literature on Brazilian relations with [SSA](#) in general serves as a starting point, followed by an analysis of the contribution of Brazilian-West African relations to sustainable development in the case of the above selected countries.

## 2. Brazil foreign- and trade relations with Sub-Saharan Africa

**Cartoon 3:** *Brazil’s exploration of Africa*<sup>3</sup>

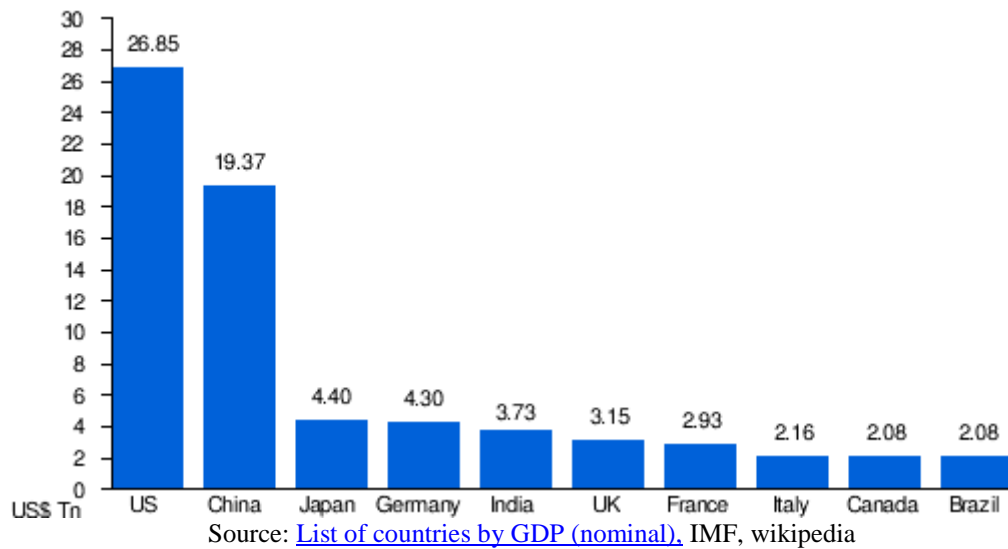


Source: © Toni Dagostinho, [caricatura do Brazil](#), 7 August 2020

With a population of 215 million in 2022, Brazil ranks among the top ten world powers by GDP. Its GDP in nominal terms comprises almost half of all Latin America and the Caribbean and its economy is the third largest in the Americas (IMF, 2023).

<sup>3</sup> Categories of cartoon: Brazil, Africa, colonialism, decolonisation, slavery, USA, Europe, exploration, mercantilism, Black Movement, Negro, politics, race, racism.

**Graph 2:** Largest economies in the world by GDP (nominal) in 2023 (IMF estimates <sup>4</sup>)



Brazil is the world's largest producer of coffee, orange juice, sugar and soy. Other important cash crops include corn, tobacco, tropical fruits, wheat, cocoa and rice. As for the export production of meat, Brazil is the world's largest exporter of beef, exported to 180 countries, bringing in more than US\$ 5 bn. In 2014, Brazil produced 3.314 bn metric tons of pork, exporting 540,000 tons. Egypt constitutes the main market for Brazilian meat (US\$ 750 m in 2014), followed by South Africa (US\$ 102 m in 2015) and the region of West Africa – ECOWAS (US\$ 70 m in 2015) (Lopez, 2016).

Since the Portuguese [Carnation Revolution](#) of 25 April 1974 which overthrew the autocratic [Estado Novo](#) regime in [Lisbon](#) that had been in power since 1933 and thus ended the [Portuguese Colonial War](#) in Africa, Brazil also showed a significantly greater interest in African affairs. Hitherto, the Brazilian power elite had rather shared a reactionary “[lusotropicalism](#)” identity with Portugal and its African colonies (Dávila, 2010). According to a widely propagated social imaginary coined by the Brazilian sociologist [Gilberto Freyre](#) (1900-1987), a partisan of Portuguese colonialism, Brazilians partake a different feeling of national identity, superior to that of other people in Europe and the United States. This imaginary followed the heavily biased view that Portuguese colonists were exceptionally distinguished by openness and lack of racial prejudices, allowing them to mix freely with Native American and African women. The former Portuguese colony was said to be the result of a particular fusion of Portuguese and African peoples, shaped by a supposed special capability of the Portuguese to extend ‘civilization’ into the tropics and to soften racial dividing lines through a fusion of races, characterised by the short formula of a ‘racial democracy’ (Dávila, 2010e).

Since the 1970s, this conservative Luso-Afro type of relationship was gradually replaced, although [Brasília](#) was still criticized by African governments for lack of support in their liberation struggle (Selcher, 1976). Brazil's new foreign and trade policy since 1974 was called ‘responsible pragmatism’. The country was still highly dependent on oil imports and the pragmatism related to the challenges presented by the Arab oil embargo of 1973, which shook the Brazilian economy. Therefore, Brazilia sought to improve diplomatic relations with

<sup>4</sup> "[World Economic Outlook Database, April 2023](#)". IMF.org. [International Monetary Fund](#). 10 April 2023. Retrieved 17 April 2023.

oil-exporting countries and their allies, and tried to distance itself from the United States and Israel. Furthermore, it entailed opening new markets for Brazilian exports to sustain the pace of economic growth attained during the 'Brazilian miracle' of the early 1970s. It also pushed Brazilian's nuclear program, the development of its arms industry and the pursuit of energy independence through huge hydroelectric projects (Dávila, 2010g).

During the 1980s, the black movement in Brazil became more determined as the country returned to a democratic debate while simultaneously sliding into economic recession. The latter hit African Brazilians especially hard. The black movement propagated the 'return to Africa', back to the roots, and cultivated perceived superior African values based on skin colour. Many black Brazilian activists looked to African countries, like the liberated Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola as models for black African sovereignty, similar to earlier generations of Afro-Brazilian's who had favoured Nkrumah's Panafricanism and Senghor's concept of Négritude in the early 1960s (Brookshaw, 2007). It also too the process of democratization in South Africa and the successive break-down of the Apartheid regime as role model for combatting racial inequality and pursuing policies of inclusion in Brazil (Dávila, 2014).

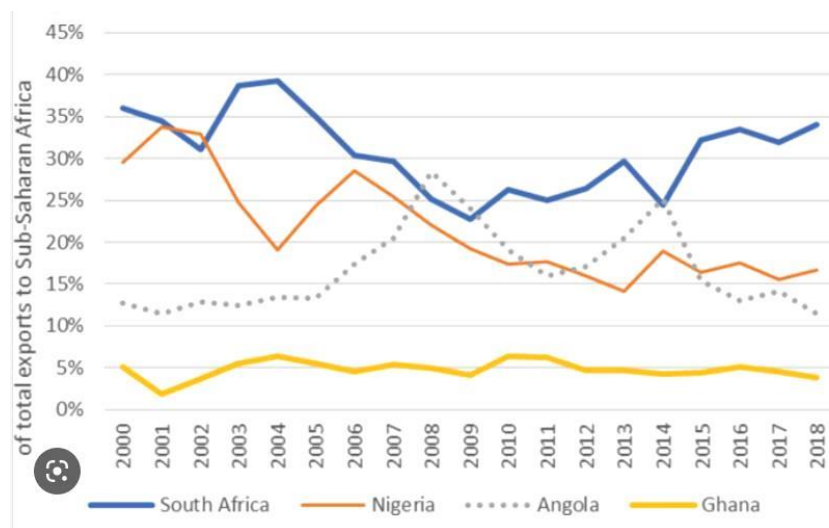
Besides technical aid, Brazil now sent relief assistance to former Portuguese colonies. Brazilian authorities felt that cultural similarities would facilitate mutually useful future relationships. But on the African side there was no automatic, overwhelming receptivity for Brazil. Nevertheless, complementarity of interest existed in the medium and long run on both sides to allow substantial trade, largely based on exchange of Brazilian food products and manufactured goods for a wide variety of African raw materials, especially oil, coal and minerals. Thus, Brazil built-up promising new economic partnerships and export markets in SSA that would support the industrial and consumer expansion of the early 1970s, known as the Brazilian 'economic miracle'. This inevitably meant to break the fealty to Portugal and to renegotiating Brazilia's relationship with Lisbon (Dávila, 2010f).

Concerning foreign investment, Brazil was quite competitive, e.g. in joint ventures in mining, steel production, fishing, assembly plants, and oil exploration, extraction and refining, the latter notably through the state-owned Brazilian multinational corporation Petrobras, which was already active in several African states. Already the 1973 oil crisis had forced Brazil to consider the benefits of a closer association with the large oil-producing African countries, namely, Angola, Nigeria, and Gabon. Yet, Brazilian interest in SSA was not confined to goods. It extended to experts and technicians working in a variety of projects, including road-building in Mauritania, construction of tile and brickwork factories in Ghana, and improvement of telephone communication networks in Nigeria (Dzidzienyo & Turner, 1981).

Although in strictly economic terms a strong general relationship with larger African states such as South Africa and Nigeria persisted, other sectors in which Brazilian technical assistance was considered profitable included road-building, education and literacy campaigns, tropical medicine, telecommunications, housing, settlement programs, and public administration and finance (Selcher, 1976). Also, Brazilian development assistance in SSA increasingly included agriculture, which involved agribusiness, contract farming, technology development, and training (Scoones & Amanor & Favareto & Qi, 2016). Brazilian professionals built on specific cultural framings and imaginaries associated with South-South cooperation on an equal footing to claim a distinct vision and practice of corporate responsibility. This interest was matched by African power elites, for example in Mozambique, which exploited Brazil's commodity-driven economy of South-South relations by gatekeeping practices to reaffirm its political power and augment individual economic profit (Cezne & Hönke, 2022).



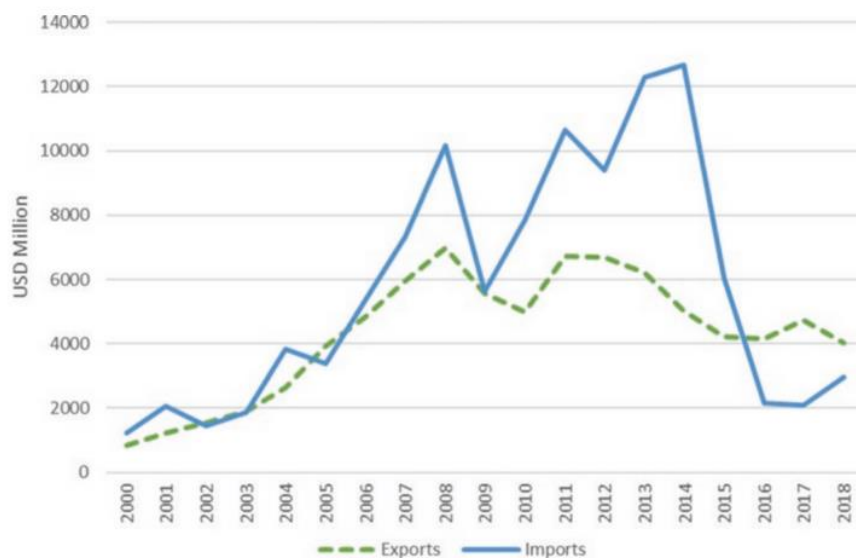
**Graph 3: Brazilian exports to Sub-Saharan Africa (2000–2018)**  
Major trading partners, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana



Source: Schor, 2021, p.49

Brazilian South–South development assistance under [Lula's](#) administration since 2003 resulted in a complex interaction between domestic and external drivers like the [World Bank](#) and the UK's Department for International Development ([DFID](#)). The *Bolsa Família* programme, established in Brazil in 2004 by unifying previous cash transfer initiatives like the ‘Zero Hunger’ programme, and since 2012 the ‘Purchase from Africans for Africa Programme’ (PAA Africa), became the flagship of Brazilian South–South assistance and main social development ‘policy exports’ to Africa (Leite & Pomeroy & Suyama, 2015). In the PAA Africa program, five African countries were included, i.e. [Ethiopia](#), [Malawi](#), [Mozambique](#), [Niger](#) and [Senegal](#). Already before, in 2006, the Africa–Brazil Programme on Social Development had been launched to exchange experiences in cash transfer in six SSA countries. The exchange led for example to a ‘Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty’ project in [Ghana](#) (Leite & Pomeroy & Suyama, 2015).

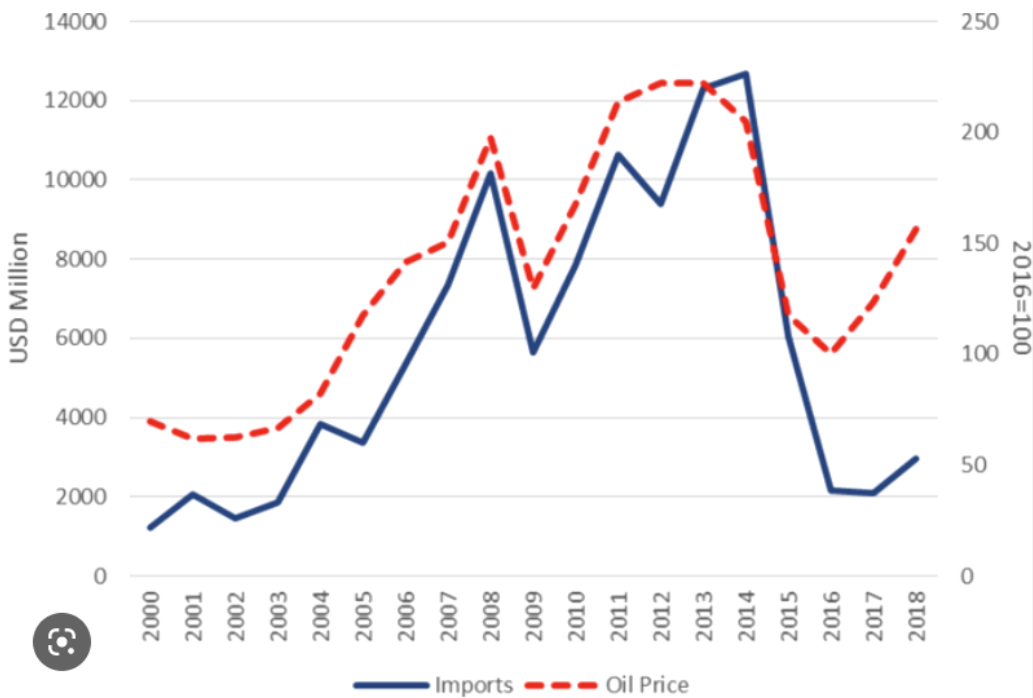
**Graph 4: Brazilian exports and imports to SSA, in US\$ m**



Source: Schor, 2021, p.45; Comtrade

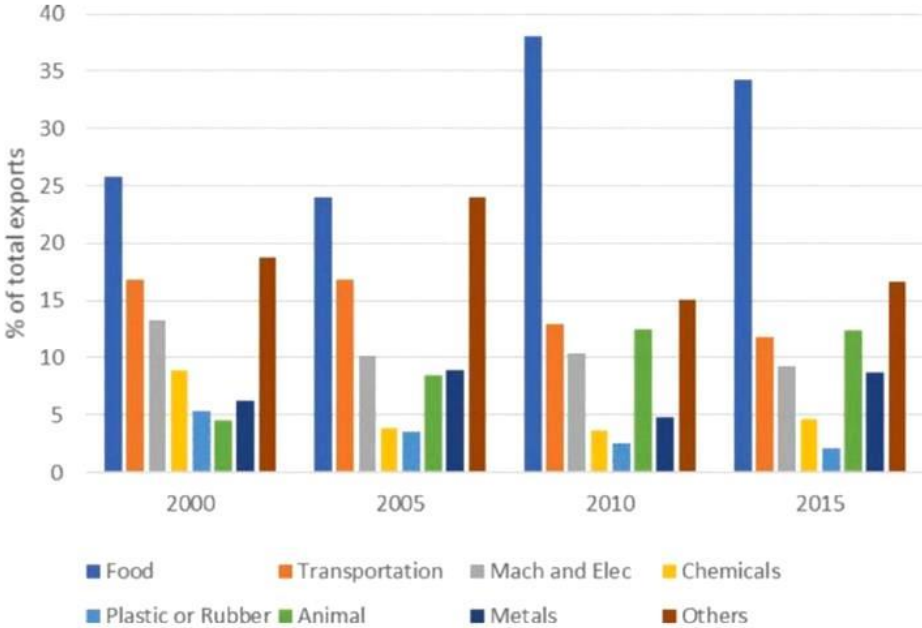
In the first decade of the 21th century Brazil’s trade with [Sub-Saharan Africa](#) increased due to President Lula’s Africa initiative fourfold. Yet, a significant part of this booming trade was due to rising prices of oil which still constituted the bulk (on average about 70 %) of Brazilian imports from SSA as well as the income growth in Brazil’s African trading partner countries. Exports from Brazil to SSA were much more diversified. Nevertheless, they concentrated on a few countries, namely [Angola](#), [Nigeria](#) and [South Africa](#), and on major food products like corn, soya beans, sugar, molasses and meat (Schor, 2021).

**Graph 5:** Brazilian imports from SSA and oil-price development, 2000-2018 (in US\$ m)



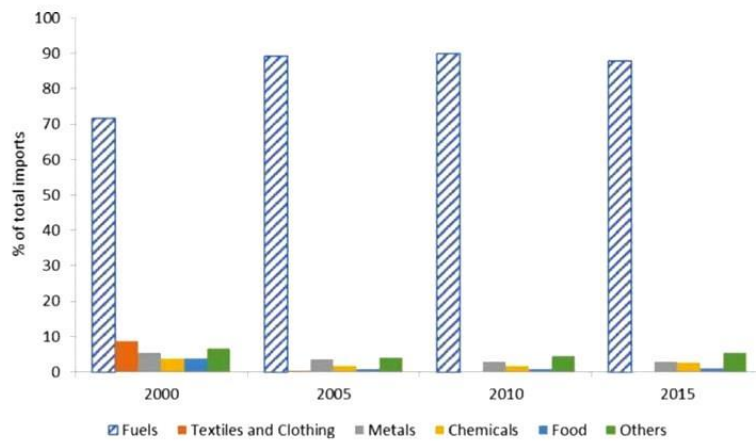
Source: Schor, 2021, p. 46

**Graph 6:** Brazilian exports to SSA by major product category, 2000-2015 (% of total exports)



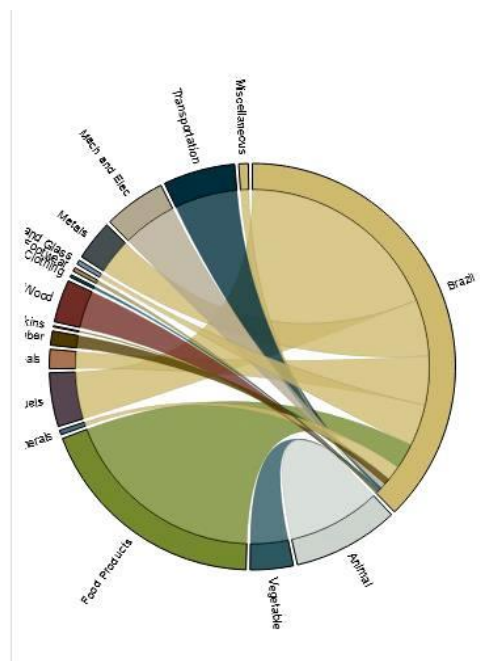
Source: Schor, 2021, p. 48; WITS, World Bank

**Graph 7: Brazilian imports from SSA by major product category, 2000-2015**



Source: Schor, 2021, p. 48; WITS, World Bank

**Graph 8: Value of Brazil product exports and imports to SSA, 2019**



Source: World Bank, [WITS](#), 2023

Besides, [Brazil](#) developed in the past decades to a trading-hub of [drug trafficking](#) (Harris, 2022). As cocaine markets expand all over the world, notably, [Eastern](#) and [Southern African](#) countries received much larger illegal shipments of [South American](#) drugs than previously thought (Delgado, 2023). Although Brazil does not produce cocaine, its vast coastline and 10,500 miles (17,000 kilometers) of weakly patrolled borders (more than half of which is jungle) presented an attractive opportunity for traffickers. Ten Latin American countries share borders with Brazil, including the three largest cocaine-producing countries (Bolivia, Colombia and Peru) and one of the largest marijuana producers (Paraguay) (Brune, 2011). Moreover, the growing legitimate trade between Brazil and Africa opened a new corridor for illicit traffic. Nigeria, where organized crime has been involved in drug smuggling since the 1970s, is a hotspot in the Brazil–Africa connection. Moreover, Brazilian authorities claim that the huge revenues from illicit drug trafficking triggered arms smuggling trade. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration identified West Africa as a developing hub of narcoterrorism collaborating with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Hezbollah to smuggle

cocaine to Europe. Drug trafficking was not new to either Brazil or West Africa. However, the level of sophistication of global drug traffickers raised international concern. Drug dealers used own goods containers and own jet aircraft network linking the cocaine-producing regions of South America and West Africa for eventual transport to Europe (Brune, 2011).

Drug trafficking from Latin America through SSA increased because it was an excellent, hardly controlled transit route. Narcotics were sent mostly in shipping containers departing from the [Port of Santos](#), Brazil. In addition, human couriers carried smaller quantities of drug out of Brazil’s major international airports such as [São Paulo Guarulhos airport](#). African transit countries were mostly on the coast such as [South Africa](#), [Mozambique](#), [Kenya](#), and [Tanzania](#). Major receiving ports were [Durban](#) in South Africa, [Pemba](#) and [Nacala](#) in Mozambique, [Dar es Salaam](#) and [Zanzibar](#) in Tanzania, [Mombasa](#) in Kenya, [Walvis Bay](#) in Namibia, and the [Bijagos archipelago](#) of Guinea Bissau. Due to scarce control in these regions cocaine could easily be transferred from large ships to speedboats that travelled along the African coast (Delgado, 2023; King, 2022; Kohnert, 2010). From there the drugs were then forwarded to other continents, mainly in [Western Europe](#), or to new promising markets, such as the [Middle East](#) and [Asia](#). A smaller, but also increasing part was consumed in SSA. [Nigerian](#) narco-traffickers dominated this maritime and aerial transit trade since establishing outposts in [São Paulo](#), Brazil, in the late 2000s. By 2013, they were already coordinating up to 30 % of cocaine exports by boat or shipping container from the [Port of Santos](#), according to a report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime ([UNODC](#)) (Delgado, 2023).

**Graph 9:** cocaine flows out of Brazil via Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe and beyond



Source: *Insight Crime*; Harris, 2022

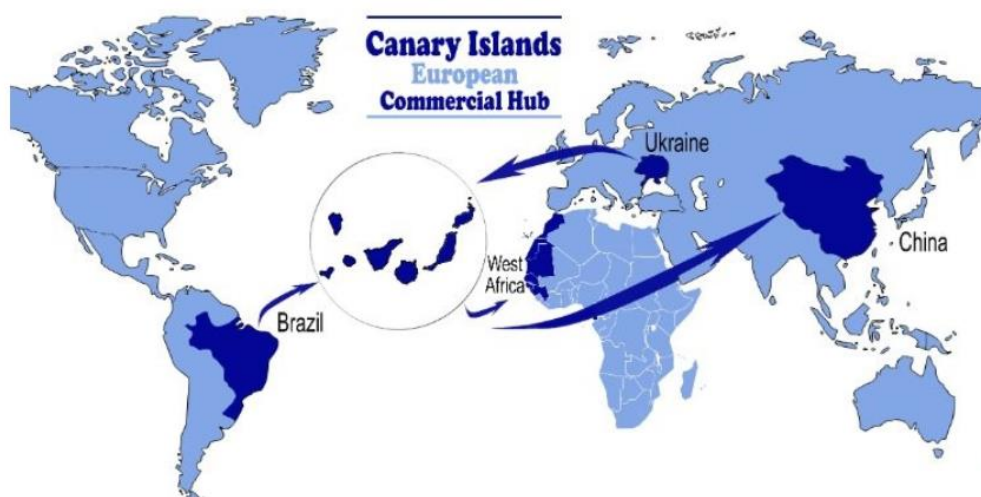
By improving political connections with SSA under a common South-South aegis in the first reign of President [Lula da Silva](#) (2003–2010), Brazil created trade opportunities and substantially increased development assistance. Thus, it aroused great expectations and secured quickly a foothold of its own in SSA. Yet, in the subsequent political meltdown and in view of controversial judicial investigations back home, Brazil’s overturns in SSA largely collapsed. It changed from a key player to an almost invisible one in merely half a decade (Alencastro & Seabra, 2010). Accordingly, Brazil failed to foster, as expected, the political and social renaissance in [SSA](#). Instead, it forsake any attempt to further influence significantly [Lusophone Africa](#), let alone the continent as a whole (Rotberg, 2021).

### 3. West African country case studies

As said before, Brazilian's trade relations in [West Africa](#), apart from [Nigeria](#) (34 % of Brazil's African trade), remained fairly modest in comparison with [Southern-](#) and [Lusophone Africa](#) (Seibert, 2011; Seibert & Visentini (eds.), 2019; Tjønneland, 2015). Hence, also research on Brazilian-West African relations has been neglected in comparison to Northern and Southern African regions. In the following three case studies, both [Anglophone](#) and [Francophone West African countries](#) with long-standing relations to Brazil will be included, i.e. [Nigeria](#), [Ghana](#) and [Senegal](#). Despite the low profile of Brazil West African relations, West African countries represent promising prospects for bilateral trade, notably the exportation of meat and other agricultural products from Brazil. Thereby, Lusophone [Cape Verde](#) and the Spanish [Canary Islands](#) could take advantage of its strategical important geopolitical position to become a logistic and commercial hub for Brazil's trade with West Africa (Lopez, 2016).

Proposals for a closer cooperation or even integration of the Francophone West African UEMOA member countries and MERCOSUR, through the formation of a common market between the two southern blocs, despite differences in economic indicators were pie in the sky. The lack of internal coherence regarding the convergence of the legal and socio-political framework between the two blocs on one hand and on the other, the lack of harmonization of competition and sector regulation were too big barriers to overcome. This the more so, because the UEMOA countries present enormous economic, political and social problems resulting of France post-colonialism (Celine, 2010; Kohnert, 2022). When comparing the dynamics of the two organisations, differences in terms of institutional design and regional leadership meant that ECOWAS and UEMOA were less ambitious than MERCOSUR in its trade agenda, but more decisive vis-à-vis the region's democratic stability (Ramanzini Júnior & Luciano, 2020).

**Graph 10:** *Brazil and West Africa: an opportunity for the Canary Islands*



Source: Lopez, 2016

Last, but not least, Brazil has become an important global player concerning security cooperation with West Africa. As of September 2021, Brazil had military and security agreements with several West African countries, like Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé

and Príncipe, Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal. Brazil’s aim was to become an alternative security provider in Africa in competition with other global players (Seabra, 2016). The cooperation aimed at a revitalisation of the [South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone](#) (Zona de Paz e Cooperação do Atlântico Sul, ZOPACAS). Also, the defence component of the Community of Portuguese Language Speaking Countries (Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa, [CPLP](#)) and the international stage of the [UN Peacebuilding Commission](#) (PBC) received similar Brazilian interest, because they entailed close ties with it’s African Lusophone counterparts. Brazil built upon offers of military training, technical-scientific assistance, and private–public investments in defence hardware. Brazil defence cooperation agreements signed between 2003 and 2014 included Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, and South Africa (Seabra, 2016). In August 2018, for example, [Nigeria](#) signed a US\$ 329 m deal for the acquisition of 12 A-29 Super Tucano light combat aircraft, a modified version of Embraer’s EMB 314 Super Tucano. This important sale gave yet another impulse in the nascent Nigerian-Brazilian defence collaboration which was consolidated in July 2022 (ADIT, 2022). Security cooperation with the small island states [Cape Verde](#) and [São Tomé and Príncipe](#) was also justified by their important geostrategic location at the entry-point of the South Atlantic and the confluence of lines of Atlantic maritime communications and the growing ‘new threats’ of transnational piracy, terrorism and human- and drugs trafficking (Violante, 2017; Silva, 2020).

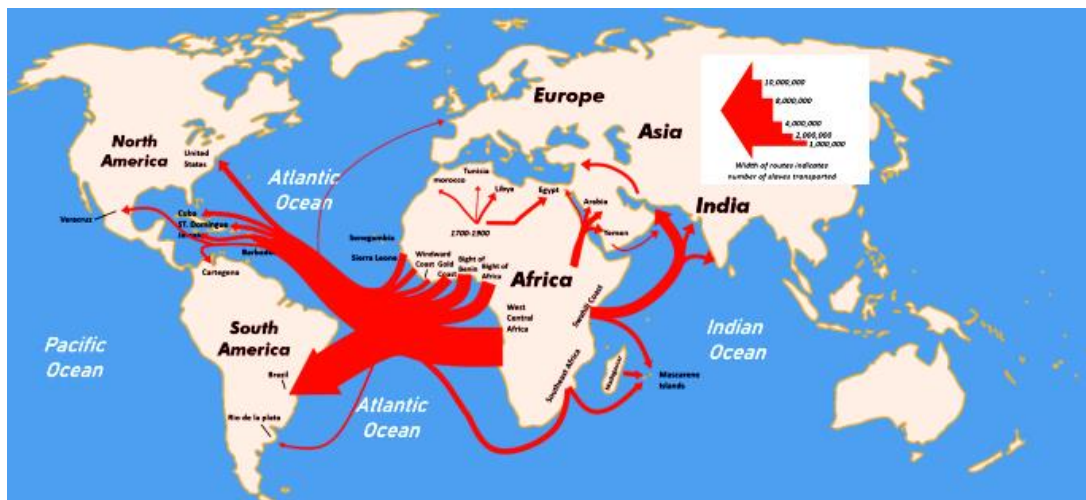
**Graph 11a :** Map tracing the route of international drug trafficking (2009)



Source : CIA, 6 November 2009, [Trafic de stupéfiants](#), wikipédia

### 3.1 Nigeria

**Graph 11: Nigeria - Brazil relations: Ties that bind, and binds that tie**  
*The slave trade: Width of routes and number of slaves transported*



Source: Ichimi & Agu & Dike, 2023

Because of its gloomy common historical roots of the slave trade, there was from the onset a deep understanding between Brazil and Nigeria (Tar & Wapmuk, 2023). Thus, Brazil was the only South American country to be invited to the Nigerian independence proclamation in 1960. Up to date, Nigerian - Brazilian bilateral relations have been characterized by continuity and change, both under military and civilian Nigerian governments. Bilateral relations were focused on three sectors, i.e. trade, development and technology, and security and defence in the South Atlantic. From the outset, both countries were considered regional powers and had a major role in maintaining order in their respective regions because of its economic strength, a relatively large population and a vast geographical area (Nadir et al, 2021).

As early as in the 1970s, Brazilian industrial products were marketed as especially qualified for Nigeria because they allegedly had designs and specifications especially adapted to the tropical market, supposedly simpler and more rugged (Dávila, 2010c). In some cases that was true, because products were simpler and cheaper, like the Mercedes-Benz passenger buses made in Brazil and exported to Nigeria, which had large, easy-to-open windows and rugged suspensions, indeed adapted to hot weather and rough roads. But in general Nigerian expectations were disappointed because the products did not reveal a particular tropical merit but to the contrary, were often criticized as shoddy. Nevertheless, trade between Brazil and Nigeria flourished during the mid-1970s and early 1980s. The Brazilian state-owned Petrobras imported hundreds of millions of barrels of Nigerian oil at elevated prices because of the oil embargo of 1973, and boosted again by the second oil shock after the Iranian Revolution of 1979. This also spurred the Nigerian demand for consumer goods from Brazil (Dávila, 2010c). The oil revenue funded Brazilian-Nigerian development projects, and hundreds of Brazilian engineers, technicians, and businessmen went to work on projects in Nigeria. In the 1980s for example, when the Nigerian government transferred its capital from Lagos to [Abuja](#), in the centre of the country, it contracted with ‘Novacap’, a development company that had also worked in the 1960s on the erection of [Brasília](#) as new national capital, to aid in the urban planning of Abuja (Dávila, 2010c).

Also, regarding the growing threat of Islamist terrorism in Nigeria and West Africa, Nigeria had to rely on trusted partners to combat terrorism and other sources of national insecurity (Tar & Wapmuk, 2023). Both countries are also members of the [Group of 77](#) (now 134

countries), founded to advance its members' collective economic interests and to create a greater joint negotiating capacity in the [United Nations](#) (Ichimi & Agu & Dike, 2023). Moreover, Nigeria is the only West African country maintaining with Brazil a Strategic Dialogue Mechanism in which bilateral Work Groups discuss topics such as agriculture, food, security, defence, trade and investment. (Ichimi & Agu & Dike, 2023).

Because of its oil exports to Brazil, Nigeria continued to be the country's biggest trading partner in Sub-Saharan Africa, beside South Africa. The oil reliance also made Nigeria a strategic partner for Brazil, as it makes it less dependent from highly industrialized countries such as the USA (Melos & Merola, 2019). In addition, an agreement for the import of liquefied natural gas ([LNG](#)) was signed with Nigerian in 2007. Also these exports flourished. In 2009, Brazil imported 75 m m<sup>3</sup> LNG from Nigeria; in 2010, it rose to 869 m m<sup>3</sup> (Nadir et al, 2021).

Although the discovery of Brazilian own oil reserves in the Brazilian pre-salt layer, in 2007, gradually relaxed its dependency on foreign resources, Brazil was unable to capitalize on this development because of fragile security in the [Blue Amazon region](#) due to the lack of sufficient military resources. Therefore, [Brasília](#) sees, in partnership with other countries of the South Atlantic, a way of maintaining its sovereignty over the oil region, and, therefore, the importance of strengthening ties with Nigeria, another great producer with the same great difficulties regarding military capabilities (Melos & Merola, 2019).

Another concern of both Brazil and Nigeria was the threat of a stealthy 'Iraqization' of Nigeria, caused by the growing search of the United States for alternative oil-sources, regarding increasing cost for the US to exploit this resource in the troubled Middle East. This threat arose first with the announcement of the President George W. Bush administration in 2008, that, by 2015, 35 % of the country's oil imports could come from West Africa, which in fact was already achieved beforehand in 2013 (Melos & Merola, 2019).

Another danger for Nigeria was the threat of contracting a "[Dutch disease](#)" by the continuing reliance on oil exports to the detriment of the agricultural sector and industrialization, thereby enriching only local and foreign elites. Also in this case Brazil was ready to step into the breach within the scope of the South Atlantic alliance (Melos & Merola, 2019).

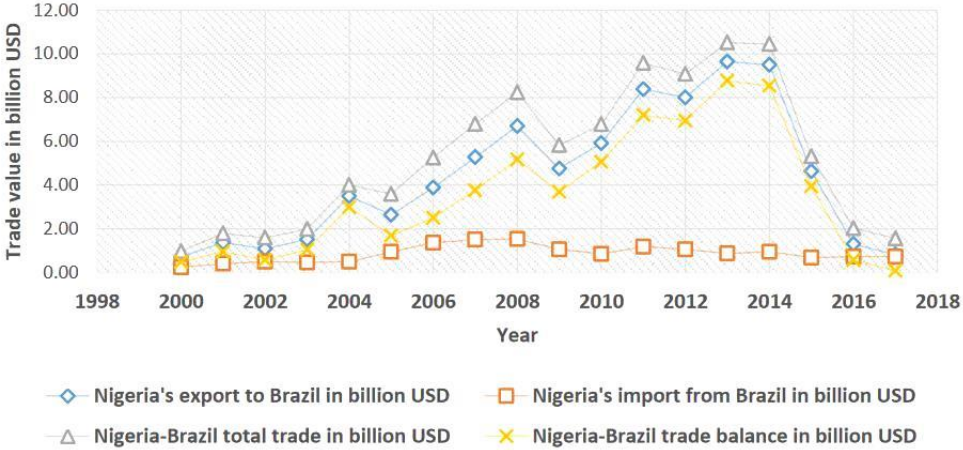
Nigeria also appears as a member of the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone ([ZOPACAS](#)), created in 1986 under a Brazilian initiative. The organization tried to prevent a similar development as in the North Atlantic, where a strongly militarized [NATO](#) alliance was created during the [Cold War](#) by members under the command of [USA](#). ZOPACAS, on the contrary, was meant as a means for countries of the South Atlantic, under Brazilian and South African leadership, to oppose Western advances in the region, allegedly aiming to subjugate it to the interests of the North Atlantic with the 'integration' of both regions, as indicated by the return of operations of the [US Fourth Fleet](#) in Central and South-America and growing US investment in [AFRICOM](#). ZOPACAS was also relevant with respect to the securitization of valuable offshore natural resources on both sides of the South Atlantic (Melos & Merola, 2019) and with respect to better control drug trafficking.

Trade flows between Brazil and Nigeria since 1997 reached its peak in 2013, when it attained US\$ 10.523 bn., but it declined in 2015, reaching the lowest level in 2020 with US\$ 1.22 bn. It recovered gradually in 2022, but reached still just a quarter of the level between 2008 and 2014 (RFI, 2022). During the [Presidency of Jair Bolsonaro](#), the 'Green Imperative project' was approved. It aimed to mechanize and modernize Nigerian agriculture, transforming it into a major centre of sustainable food production for local and regional consumption. A funding



of US\$ 1.2 bn was approved for such actions to be carried out. A major initial phase of the project was the training of manpower, where Brazil played a central role in offering agricultural technology transfer (Nadir et al, 2021). The project was designed by the Brazilian [Fundação Getulio Vargas](#) (FGV). The first phase of the project was completely private, managed by Arab funds through [Deutsche Bank](#) and guarantees granted by the Islamic Development Bank ([IsDB](#)) (Romildo, 2019). However, the project was delayed by the [COVID-19 pandemic](#) (Rodrigues, 2022). Moreover, South-South cooperation between Brazil and Nigeria in bio-energy field lacked the expected results, considering long-standing material ties. This was possibly due more to systemic constraints faced by rent-seeking of the Nigerian petro-State, than to the ‘Dutch disease’ and fiscal rigidity (Cardoso, 2019).

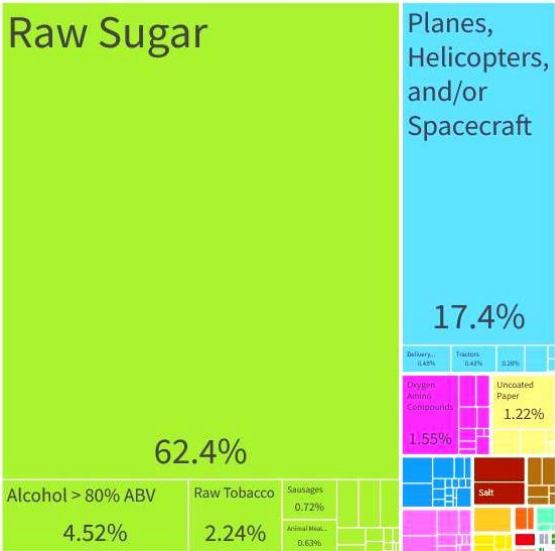
**Graph 12:** Brazil-Nigeria - trends in export, import, total trade and trade balance (2000 - 2017)



Source: Ibrahim & Sari, 2020, UNCOMTRADE statistics, 2018

Analyses of the trends, composition and trade intensity of Nigeria-Brazil trade for the period of 2000-2017 revealed a significant increased from 2000-2014 and a major declined from 2015-2017. The share of major products exported to Brazil over the period concentrated on mineral fuels. Nigeria exported more than it imported from Brazil throughout the period 2000-2017. Therefore, the balance of trade had been in favour of Nigeria (Ibrahim & Sari, 2020).

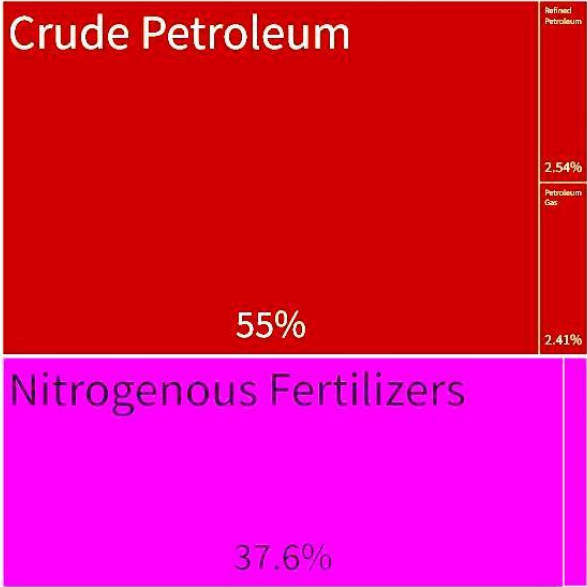
**Graph 13:** Exports from Brazil to Nigeria, 2021 (total US\$ 959 m)



Source: [oec.world](#), 2023

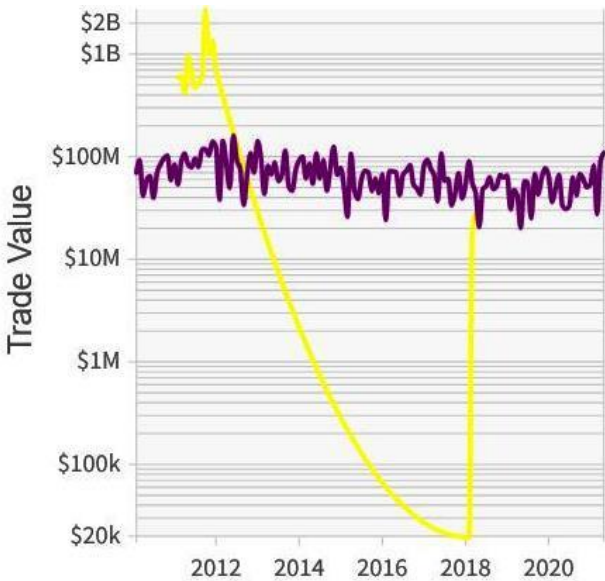
During the past 26 years exports of Brazil to Nigeria increased at an annualized rate of 5.42%, from US\$ 243 m in 1995 to US\$ 959 m in 2021. The main products that Brazil exported to Nigeria were raw sugar (US\$ 598 m), planes, helicopters, and/or Spacecraft (US\$ 167 m), and Alcohol (80% ABV (US\$ 43.4 m). On the other hand, the exports of Nigeria to Brazil during the last 26 years increased at an annualized rate of 2.97 %, from US\$ 505 m in 1995 to US\$ 1.08 bn in 2021. The main products that Nigeria exported to Brazil were crude petroleum (US\$ 594 m), Nitrogenous Fertilizers (US\$ 405 m), and refined petroleum (US\$ 27.4 m). In 2021, both countries did not export any services among each other ([oec.world](https://oec.world), 2023).

**Graph 14:** Exports from Nigeria to Brazil, 2021 (total US\$ 1,08 bn)



Source: [oec.world](https://oec.world), 2023

**Graph 15:** Trade between Nigeria (yellow) and Brazil (blue), 2012-2020 (in US\$)



Source: [oec.world](https://oec.world), 2023

## 3.2 Ghana

[Ghana](#), the second-most populous West African country after [Nigeria](#), has been one of Brazil's closest partners in [West Africa](#). Both countries also share a common history of the slave trade and its aftermath. The close cooperation is reflected for example in Brazilian's support of Ghana's first President [Kwame Nkrumah](#) and his advocacy for [Pan-Africanism](#), as well as in the continuing political dialogue, bilateral trade, and the strengthening of technical cooperation.

In the 1960s and 1970s, relations were marked by a common agenda focused on the support of the [Organization of African Unity](#) (OAU), the condemnation of [apartheid](#) and people's self-determination. In the 1980s, Ghana supported the draft resolution, presented by Brazil at the UN, for the creation of the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone ([ZPCAS](#)). Bilateral relations received a new impetus since the 2000s, with an intense exchange of visits by high authorities, including the Presidents of both states. Moreover, Brazil and Ghana share valuable cultural ties, e.g the [Tabom community](#) or *Agudas*, formed by descendants of wealthy returned Brazilian slaves, mostly of [Yoruba](#) descent, to Southern Ghana, especially to the [Greater Accra region](#), between 1829 and 1936. Brazilian president Lula da Silva underlined the central role of memory in the reverse migration story of the Brazilian-African diaspora in Ghana during his visit of the *Tabom* community in 2005. It was the glue that bound the past with the present with lessons for the future (Essien, 2016).

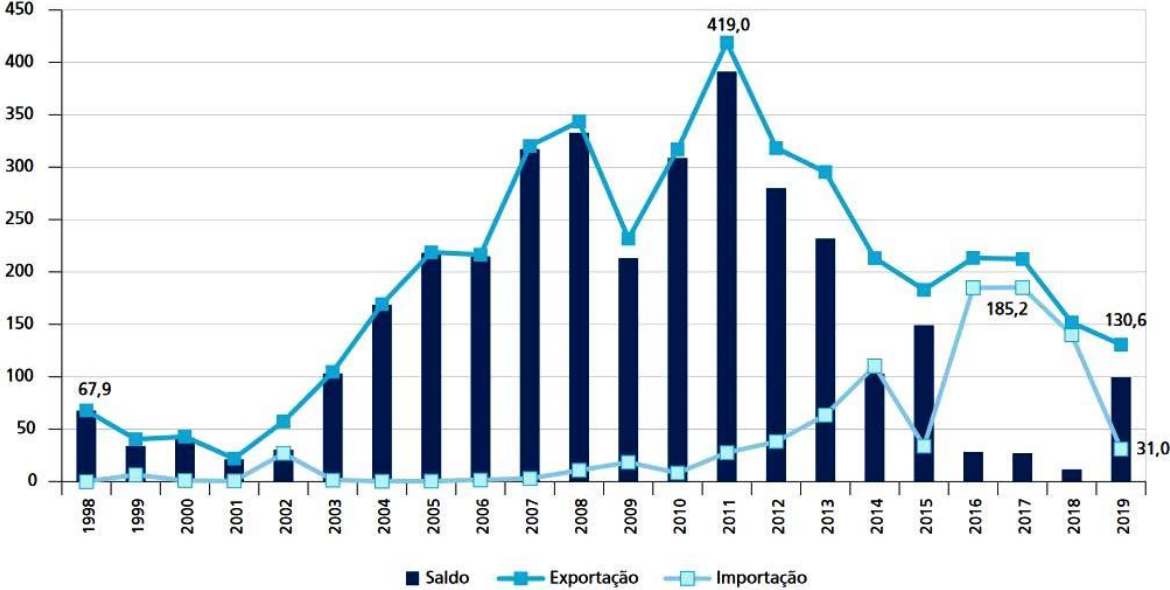
Brazil and Ghana established diplomatic relations immediately following Ghanaian independence in July 1960. Ghana was chosen since it was the first West African nation to gain independence, and because Kwame Nkrumah's pan-Africanism seemed to make him a spearhead for the liberation and unification of the continent. Shortly later, embassies in [Dakar](#) (Senegal) and [Lagos](#) (Nigeria) followed (Dávila, 2010d). Up to date, the embassy of Ghana in Brasilia is Ghana's only embassy in South America (Gov.Br, 2023). However, the development of relations with African countries also exposed long-lived rifts between intellectual circles in different regions in Brazil. Not least, it revealed conflicts faced by Brazilians encountering an Africa based almost entirely on imagination (Dávila, 2010d).

In contrast with other [BRICS](#) member like [China](#), Brazil's impact on overall bilateral trade with Ghana remained modest. Trade was largely limited to a narrow range of agricultural commodities and raw materials. Brazilian investments in Ghana focused on building vertical linkages between agriculture and agro-processing, and building agribusiness capacities to create a niche for Brazilian technology transfer and management services and knowledge. The expansion of Brazilian agribusiness was not necessarily unfavourable for Ghanaian small-scale agriculture, particularly not if it stimulated vertical linkages between agriculture, agro-processing and agribusiness, and encouraged domestic production. Yet, it could also lead to new international competition of global players for African resources and to foreign agribusiness domination of African agriculture (Amanor, 2013). In this respect, [value chains](#) often represent the new economic imperialism of industrialized vis à vis developing economies by applying various state-of-the-art corporate strategies that enforce 'economical' and 'flexible' production, including labour management methods, aimed to reasserting their imperial dominance while continuing the dependency of their partners (Suwandi, 2019).

Brazil – Ghanaian trade was insignificant until 2001, with a trade flow of US\$ 22.7 m. But from then until 2011, exports grew strongly, reaching US\$ 419 m. In the following years it declined again, closing 2019 at US\$ 130.6 m. Imports, in turn, grew from 2011, reaching a record US\$ 185 m in 2016-2017, yet it fell again to just US\$ 31 m in 2019 (Graph 16). The trade balance was always largely in favour to Brazil. Approximately one third of Brazilian

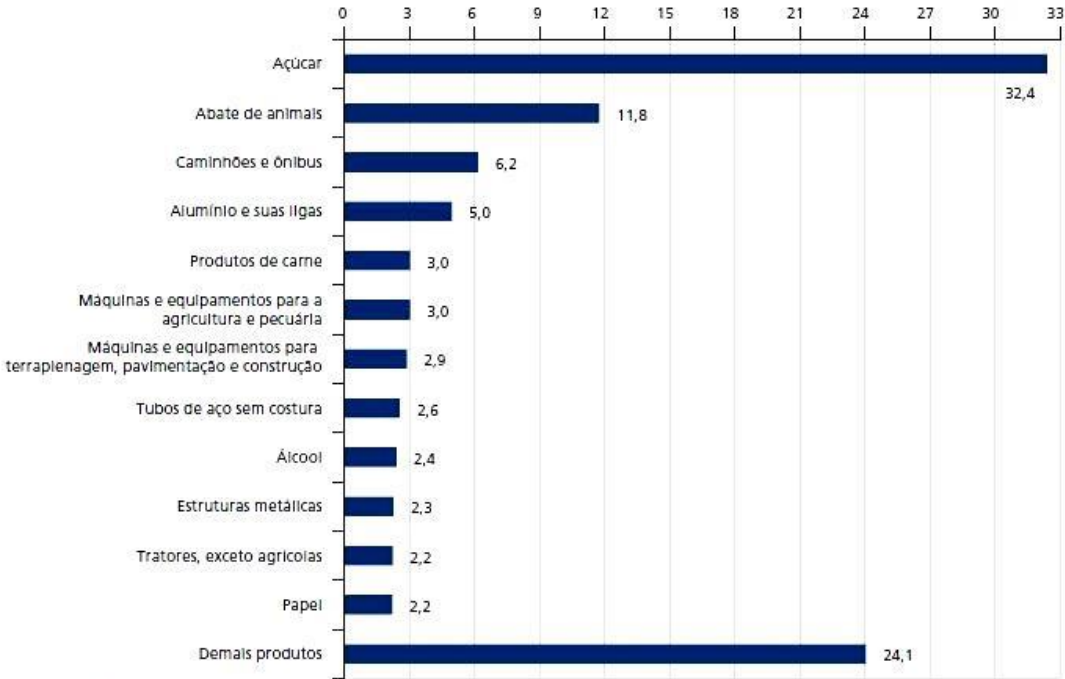
exports to Ghana constituted of sugar, with animal slaughter (meat) accounting for 11.8 % (Ribeiro & Garcia & Assis & Ribeiro, 2020).

**Graph 16:** Brazil-Ghana trade 1998 – 2019, exports and imports (in US\$ bn)



Souce: Ribeiro & Garcia & Assis & Ribeiro, 2020

**Graph 17:** Composition of Brazilian exports to Ghana product groups (average of 2014-2019)



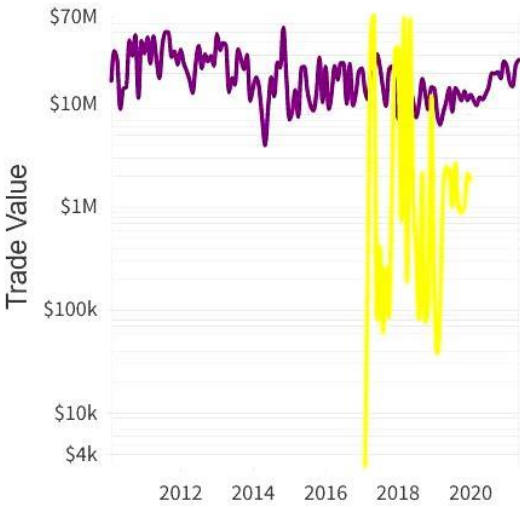
Fonte: Secex-ME.

Souce: Ribeiro & Garcia & Assis & Ribeiro, 2020

During the last 25 years the exports of Ghana to Brazil increased at an annualized rate of 18%, from US\$ 1.88 m in 1996 to US\$ 119 m in 2021. In 2021, Ghana exported US\$ 119 m to Brazil. The main products exported were Cocoa Beans (US\$ 115 m), Cocoa Paste (US\$ 1.41 m), and Cocoa Shells (US\$ 852 k). Exports of Brazil to Ghana during the past 26 years increased at a considerable lower annualized rate of 6.58 %, from US\$ 64.7 m in 1995 to US\$ 319 m in 2021. The main products exported from Brazil to Ghana were raw sugar (US\$ 123

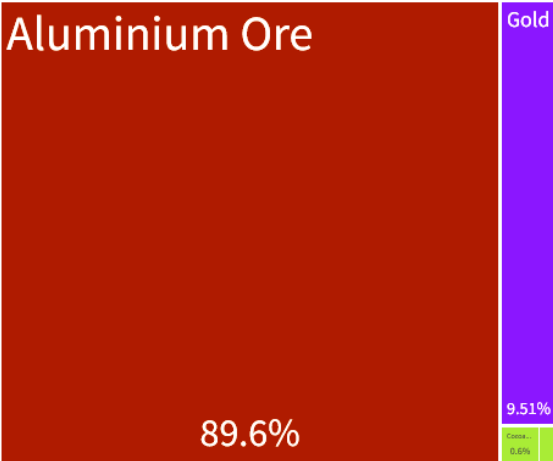
m), Poultry Meat (US\$ 44.8 m), and Alcohol > 80 % ABV (US\$ 26 m). In 2021, both countries did not export any services among each other (oec.world, 2023).

**Graph 18:** Trade between Ghana (yellow) and Brazil (blue), 2012-2020 (in US\$)



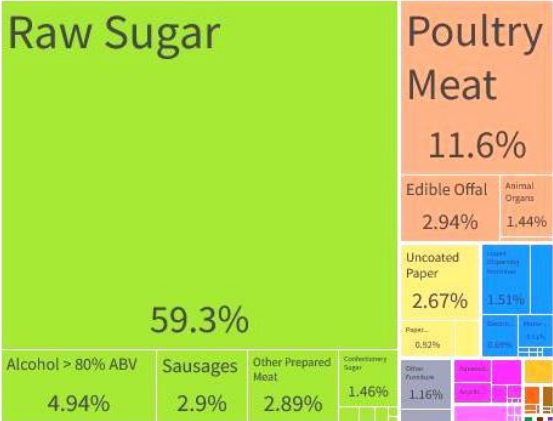
Source: oec.world, 2023

**Graph 19:** Exports from Ghana to Brazil, 2021 (total US\$ 1,82 m)



Source: oec.world, 2023

**Graph 20:** Exports from Brazil to Ghana, 2021 (total US\$ 27 m)



Source: oec.world, 2023

### 3.4 Senegal

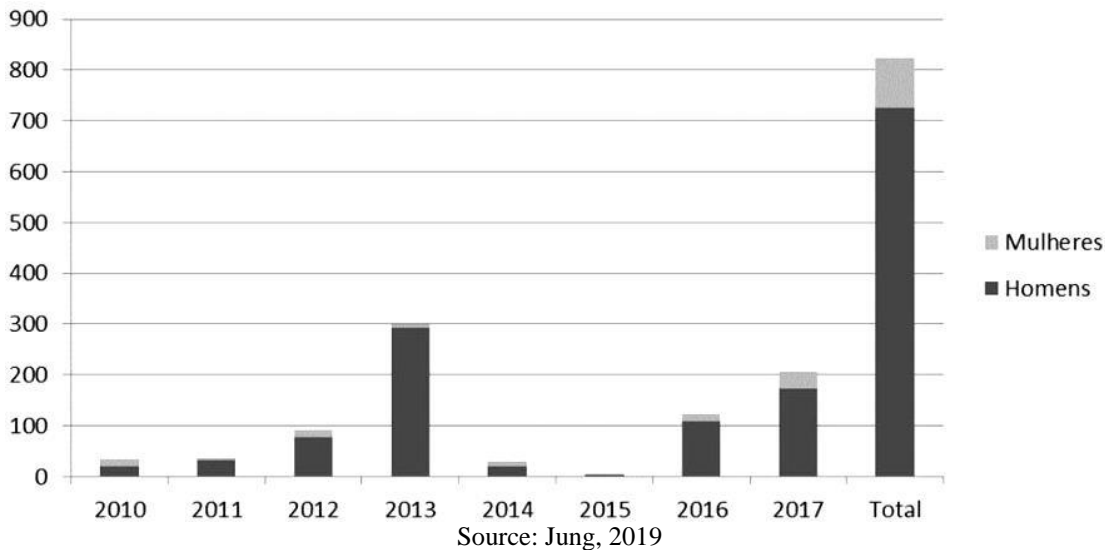
Diplomatic relations between Brazil and [Senegal](#) date back to before Senegal's independence in 1960, when [Dakar](#) became the administrative capital of [French West Africa](#) created in 1895. Also Brazil had a consulate honorary in [Dakar](#) before 1960. Brazil was one of the first countries to recognize the Senegal's independence. Dakar opened its embassy in Brazil in 1963. Bilateral relations intensified with the multiplication of high-level meetings and with the strengthening and diversification of sectors of cooperation (Editor Monções, 2016).

In September 1964, six months after the right-wing coup of Brazilian's Military Regime (1964-1985), supported by the US government, Senegal's President [Léopold Sédar Senghor](#) visited [Rio de Janeiro](#). He was the first head of state to visit Brazil since the military coup. With the domestic political opposition routed or exiled by [Brazil's military dictatorship](#), the latter was determined to forge an anti-communist 'South Atlantic Defence Pact', binding [fascist Portugal](#), the South African [apartheid](#) regime, the [anti-Peronist dictatorship in Argentina](#) (1976-1983), and Brazil (Dávila, 2010b). Senghor, however, was strongly interested to end Portuguese colonial rule, especially the fierce [Guinea-Bissau War of Independence](#), which threatened the stability of his own neighbouring country. Therefore, he promoted the idea of an 'Afro-Luso Brazilian Community', akin to the British [Commonwealth of Nations](#) and the sphere of influence of [Françafrique](#) in the former French African colonies of [Francophone Africa](#). Senghor's proposal of a '[Lusogtropicalism](#)' was in line with his ideology of [Négritude](#), aimed at raising 'Black consciousness' across [Sub-Saharan Africa](#) and the [African diaspora](#), e.g. in Brazil. Therewith, he suggested that Brazil could become the natural leader of a Portuguese-speaking world of independent nations (Dávila, 2010b). Under the government of the army officer [Ernesto Geisel](#) (1974-1979) Brazil favoured a security scheme stipulated by its National Security Doctrine for relations with South Atlantic Africa. In its perception, both Senegal and Nigeria, because of their respectively dominant role in duelling Francophone- and Anglophone colonial West Africa, were countries whose political power extended beyond their own continent. Therefore, they were crucial for the achievement of a new Brazilian African policy, as well as a new image of Brazil vis à vis Africa. Thus, Senegal and Nigeria influenced the way in which the Brazilian government received the independence of former Portuguese colonies, [Guinea-Bissau](#), [Angola](#) and [Mozambique](#) from 1974 onwards (Feijó, 2016). Later-on, Senegal also participated in the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone ([ZOPACAS](#)), created in 1986. Since 2005, Brazil and Western African countries, among them Senegal, cooperated in partnerships for development and the zero hunger objectives of the [Agenda 2030](#) for sustainable development goals, including school feeding components. The cooperation in fighting hunger was positively complemented by the actions of the [World Food Programme](#) 'Centre of Excellence'. Senegal already had cooperation projects with the Agência Brasileira de Cooperação (ABC) since 2005 for extensive and family farming, livestock and fishing that impacted on the food security of that country (Magalhães & Buani, 2017).

A particular problem in bilateral relations was the large influx of Senegalese migrants in Brazil during the past two decades. The migrants were attracted by job possibilities in the State of [Rio Grande do Sul](#), [Rio Grande](#) and [Salvador](#), where several mills and companies were located. The growing difficulties in migrating to Europe and North America triggered the search for alternatives by the diversification of migratory flows, among others, to destinations in the global south. For example, they took migratory routes via [Ecuador](#), which, with its open-door policy, allowed Senegalese and other migrants from the global south to enter legally into [Latin America](#). Brazil was not just a stage in the migration to North America but an undefined project, where the period and changes in routes were adapted to opportunities that appeared quickly and with the same speed disappeared again (Jung, 2019). Most

Senegalese were irregular migrants who did not come straight to Brazil from Senegal but from multiple entry points and they did not stay in the same zone or area for a long time (Editor Monções, 2016). Many of these migrants envisaged to realize the ‘American dream’ within a supposedly Brazilian ‘racial democracy’, by socio-economic-cultural insertion and the overcoming of ethnic discrimination (Prudente & Thioune, 2017). The procedural character of the first and subsequent displacements upon arrival in Brazil, as well as the individual agency changed in each region and over time. They also demonstrate how the construction of feelings of belonging to different social spaces was linked to the projects of new displacements, the formation of networks in different regions, the ‘moments of waiting’ and establishment and the circulation of knowledge about the territories. Spaces of agency constructed by these migrants both in migratory courses, taken from their region of origin, as in the spaces shared with other groupings in other figurations throughout this course, expressed affections, belongings, affinities and common interests, and all that configured possibilities and new courses of circulation. Migration processes, in addition to their economic dimension, were also established in relation to family dynamics. In this respect, the situation occupied in the family constellation and the commitment to maintain or not its position in relation to the groupings in different figurations mattered. Migration updated and transformed links, even if the geographic mobility processes were significantly supported by kinship, friendship or religious networks (Sangalli & Gonçalves, 2019).

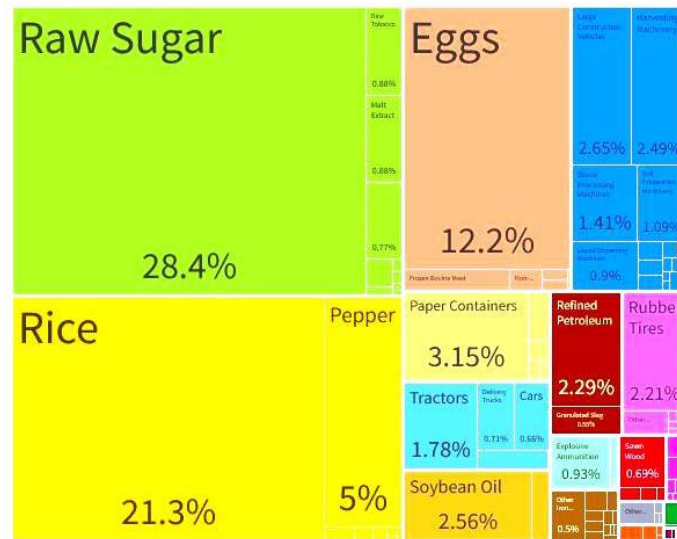
**Graph 21:** Senegalese migrants in Brazil by gender, 2010-2017 <sup>5</sup>



During the last 26 years the exports of Brazil to [Senegal](#) increased at an annualized rate of 6.01 %, from US\$ 35.8 m in 1995 to US\$ 163 m in 2021. In 2021, Brazil exported US\$ 163 m to Senegal. The main products exported from Brazil to Senegal were raw sugar (US\$ 46.3 m), rice (US\$ 34.8 m), and eggs (US\$ 19.9 m). Exports of Senegal to Brazil, on the other hand, were disparately lower. They increased during the past 26 years at an annualized rate of 7.1 %, from US\$ 2.62 m in 1995 to US\$ 15.6 m in 2021. In comparison, exports of [Ivory Coast](#) to Brazil for example, were more than five times larger. They increased during the last 26 years at an annualized rate of 14.4%, from US\$2.53 m in 1995 to US\$ 83.1 m in 2021. The main products exported from Senegal to Brazil were mixed mineral or chemical fertilizers (US\$ 8.93 m), phosphoric acid (US\$ 3.72 m), and scrap copper (US\$ 1.67 m). In 2021, both countries did not export any services among each other ([oec.world](#), 2023).

<sup>5</sup> Official numbers, compiled with data from the Ministry of Justice, Police Federal Department (SINCRES), 2018. The number of non-registered irregular migrants is probably much more elevated.

**Graph 22:** Exports from Brazil to Senegal, 2021 (total US\$ 163 m)



Source: [oec.world](https://oec.world), 2023

**Graph 23:** Exports from Senegal to Brazil, 2021 (total US\$ 15,6 m)



Source: [oec.world](https://oec.world), 2023

#### 4. Conclusion

Brazil's strategy to diversify its partnerships in the [South Atlantic](#), including [Sub-Saharan Africa](#), and more recently also [West African](#) countries, like [Nigeria](#), [Ghana](#) and [Senegal](#), was informed not just by technical cooperation, and the aim to guarantee access to crucial African resources and markets, but also by maritime security issues (Bravo e Paiva & Monfredo & Medeiros, 2019). An important cornerstone was the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone ([ZOPACAS](#)) agreement, whereby Brasília clearly distanced itself from the North Atlantic [NATO](#) alliance under the supremacy of the USA. Like other [BRICS](#) member countries Brazil did not accept the US hegemony. Additional defence agreements with countries such as Angola, South Africa, Nigeria, Namibia and Cape Verde demonstrated that



Brazil took into account West Africa in its attempt to guarantee the sovereignty of the defence of the South Atlantic (Silva & Oliveira & Brites, 2013).

The South Atlantic constituted a priority zone of Brazilian foreign policy to safeguard its sovereignty. Apart from ZOPACAS, the [IBSA Dialogue Forum](#), an international tripartite group ([India](#), [Brazil](#), [South Africa](#)) to promote international cooperation among these countries served the same aim. But also African countries were interested in participating in such alliances. Thus, Nigerian President [Olusegun Obasanjo](#), during a visit to Brasil in 2005, expressed interest in the establishment of an institutionalized structure for closer and independent cooperation of African countries with Brazil. One year later, this common goal resulted in the institutionalisation of a regular South America – Africa summit every three years, supplemented by meetings of chancellors between each summit, including high ranking sectoral ministers. The first summit in 2006 was held in [Abuja](#) (Nigeria), bringing together 65 countries from both regions. The second summit (2009) was held in [Venezuela](#) and, the third, in 2013, in [Equatorial Guinea](#), indicating an effective rapprochement between the two regions. These summits were also lauded because of its expected potential to serve as a space of interaction between different processes of economic and political integration in the South Atlantic, e.g. by favouring a relationship between the South American [Mercosur](#) and the West African [ECOWAS](#) and [UEMOA](#) (WAEMU) (Silva & Oliveira & Brites, 2013), which, however, was unrealistic in the foreseeable future.

Brazil's contribution to sustainable development of West African countries was often hampered by African autocrats and widespread corruption on both sides and all levels of cooperation as showed above. In addition, insufficient attention was paid to the class-specific effects of interventions in the informal sector in politics and business. Moreover, the consolidation of relationships between Brazil and West Africa developed gradually and erratically. The fluctuations in Brazilian foreign policy towards Africa over the past fifty years showed that there was still no solid and sustainable basis, and that government changes could still be decisive to shape the character of the relations (Silva & Oliveira & Brites, 2013).

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**Résumé :** [*Le Brésil, soutient-il le développement en Afrique de l'Ouest ? L'exemple du Nigeria, du Ghana et du Sénégal*] – Les relations étrangères et commerciales du Brésil avec l'Afrique subsaharienne (ASS) remontent à la traite négrière portugaise. Sur les 9,5 millions de personnes capturées en Afrique entre le XVI<sup>e</sup> et le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle et amenées dans le Nouveau Monde, près de 4 millions se sont retrouvées à Rio de Janeiro, soit dix fois plus que tout les esclaves envoyés aux États-Unis. Aujourd'hui encore, environ 51 % de la population brésilienne se considère comme noire ou métisse. L'inégalité raciale reste ancrée à bien des égards, en particulier en ce qui concerne l'inégalité persistante. Néanmoins, l'oppression et la marginalisation des Brésiliens noirs ont été largement ignorées dans les relations modernes entre le Brésil et l'Afrique. Au lieu de cela, un nationalisme fort a imprégné la vie politique brésilienne. Il a également déterminé ses relations extérieures et commerciales et défini comment les Brésiliens ont saisi les opportunités présentées par les mouvements d'indépendance africains. Seul le président brésilien Lula da Silva, au cours de son premier mandat présidentiel de 2003 à 2011, a reconnu leurs racines historiques communes. En fait, il doit son élection au soutien écrasant des Afro-Brésiliens. Les relations commerciales de la première moitié du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle se limitaient en grande partie à l'Afrique du Sud, qui représentait 90 % du commerce africain du Brésil. La politique étrangère et commerciale de Brasília dans les années 1960 et 1970 s'est concentrée sur le Nigeria, un important fournisseur de pétrole, ainsi que sur les cinq anciennes colonies africaines portugaises (PALOP) et la Communauté lusophone (CPLP), créée en 1996. Le commerce avec l'Afrique de l'Ouest est resté assez modeste, à l'exception du Nigeria (34 % du commerce africain du Brésil). Néanmoins, le Ghana et le Sénégal ont joué un rôle crucial dans l'élaboration des relations entre le Brésil et l'Afrique dans les premiers stades de l'indépendance africaine. Étant donné que le Brésil dispose désormais de ressources considérables en énergie et en matières premières, son approche du commerce africain est moins axée sur les matières premières que celle des investisseurs chinois ou européens, mais orientée vers la diversification des ressources, le développement durable et la coopération pour développer ces ressources, par ex. usines de bioéthanol au Ghana. Par conséquent, les gouvernements africains considèrent leurs relations avec le Brésil comme davantage basées sur un partenariat mutuel. Cependant, les élites politiques africaines corrompues elles-mêmes ont souvent fait pression sur le gouvernement brésilien et les entreprises d'appliquer des pratiques politiques et commerciales informelles, avec des investissements controversés et corrompus, p.ex. concernant l'extraction des ressources, les infrastructures et l'accaparement des terres. En dehors de cela, le Brésil s'efforçait de se tailler un créneau pour les services de gestion brésiliens, le transfert de connaissances et de technologie qui était, disait-on, spécialement adapté aux marchés tropicaux.

**Zusammenfassung :** [*Unterstützt Brasilien die Entwicklung in Westafrika? Das Beispiel Nigerias, Ghanas und Senegals*] – Die Außen- und Handelsbeziehungen Brasiliens zu Subsahara-Afrika (SSA) gehen bis auf den portugiesischen Sklavenhandel zurück. Von den 9,5 Millionen Menschen, die zwischen dem 16. und 19. Jahrhundert in Afrika gefangen genommen und in die Neue Welt gebracht wurden, landeten fast 4 Millionen in Rio de Janeiro, d.h. zehnmal mehr als alle Sklaven, die in die Vereinigten Staaten geschickt wurden. Noch heute sehen sich etwa 51 % der Bevölkerung Brasiliens als schwarz oder gemischt. Rassenungleichheit ist in vielerlei Hinsicht nach wie vor tief verwurzelt, insbesondere in Bezug auf die anhaltende Ungleichheit. Dennoch wurden Unterdrückung und Marginalisierung schwarzer Brasilianer in den modernen brasilianisch-afrikanischen Beziehungen weitgehend ausgeblendet. Stattdessen durchdrang ein ausgeprägter Nationalismus das politische Leben Brasiliens. Es bestimmte auch seine Außen- und Handelsbeziehungen und definierte, wie die Brasilianer die Chancen afrikanischer Unabhängigkeitsbewegungen nutzten. Erst Brasiliens Präsident Lula da Silva bekannte sich während seiner ersten Amtszeit als Präsident von 2003 bis 2011 zu den gemeinsamen historischen Wurzeln. Tatsächlich verdankte er seine Wahl der überwältigenden Unterstützung der Afrobrasilianer. Die Handelsbeziehungen in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts beschränkten sich weitgehend auf Südafrika, auf das 90 % des afrikanischen Handels Brasiliens entfielen. Brasília's Außen- und Handelspolitik konzentrierte sich in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren auf Nigeria, einen wichtigen Öllieferanten, sowie die fünf ehemaligen portugiesischen afrikanischen Kolonien (PALOP) und das 1996 gegründete Lusophone Commonwealth (CPLP). Der Handel mit Westafrika blieb, mit Ausnahme von Nigeria (34 % des afrikanischen Handels Brasiliens), recht bescheiden. Dennoch spielten Ghana und Senegal in den frühen Stadien der afrikanischen Unabhängigkeit eine entscheidende Rolle bei der Gestaltung der brasilianisch-afrikanischen Beziehungen. Da Brasilien mittlerweile über beträchtliche eigene Energie- und Rohstoffressourcen verfügt, ist sein Ansatz im afrikanischen Handel weniger rohstoffgetrieben als der chinesischer oder europäischer Investoren, sondern orientiert sich an Ressourcendiversifizierung, nachhaltiger Entwicklung und Kooperation zur Erschließung dieser Ressourcen, z.B. Bioethanol-Anlagen in Ghana. Daher sehen afrikanische Regierungen ihre Beziehungen zu Brasilien eher auf gegenseitiger Partnerschaft gegründet. Korrupte politische afrikanische Eliten selbst drängten jedoch die brasilianische Regierung und Unternehmen oft zu informellen politischen und geschäftlichen Praktiken, mit umstrittenen und korrupten Investitionen in Rohstoffgewinnung, Infrastruktur und Landraub. Abgesehen davon versuchte Brasilien, eine Nische für brasilianische Managementdienstleistungen, Wissens- und Technologietransfer zu schaffen, der angeblich hervorragend für tropische Märkte geeignet war.